
NANOPUNK

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Chips...no one can have just one.

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INTRODUCTION

Cyberpunk 1.0: It evokes a certain film noir, gritty image of urban cowboys all teched out engaging in clandestine ops on behalf of the reigning world powers, who are now pretty much all corporations, rather than countries. Espionage, turf wars, netrunning – all seem to be part of the trope. But the world has changed since cyberpunk was invented.

Welcome to cyberpunk 2.0. Prepare to enter a unique gaming world and split yourself in two. Literally.

Cyberpunk 1.0 games allowed each player control of one character (a player-character or PC) and typically had the characters work together as an adventuring party against the game environment, which was under the exclusive control of the game master (GM).

That's not the way *Nanopunk* works.

Sure, there's a GM and players. Sure the players have characters and the GM sets the stage, the environment, so to speak. But the environment is filled with characters, and why should the GM be the only one to control multiple entities?

Now, I know what you experienced gamers are thinking. "It's hard to actively control two or more characters and give the role-playing of both equal attention." I agree. That's why your second character isn't really a person and isn't part of your adventuring party. Instead, your second character is actually one of the world's largest and most powerful corporations. It can act through its agents or through the nanotechnology that everyone (yes, even the other PCs) has embedded inside. And it's often working against the PCs.

At this point, I can hear more objections from the experienced gamers. "How are you going to have anything interesting happen when you depend on the players to make life hard for their own characters?" Fortunately, I don't have to solve that problem. The various mechanics of the FATE game system make this process much easier to manage. So if you aren't familiar with FATE, there is a *brief* introduction to the main ideas later on, but you really must read the rules.

A Note from the author

Nanopunk is intended to update the cyberpunk scenario by including ideas from current and projected technology and science (like climate change and nanotechnology). It was designed to offer players a new alternative – allowing players to control the corporations in the world, something that was never possible in games like *Shadowrun*. My image of *Nanopunk* is a blend of *Illuminati* and *Paranoia*. The setting, as a whole, is a mixture of influences from the recent *Bionic Woman* TV series, the movie *The Minority Report*, and the ubiquitous technology present in the story "Fast Times at Fairmont High" by Vernor Vinge. The role of Keeton is strongly influenced by aspects of *V for Vendetta* and *Max Headroom*. Also, I would apologize for the puns in the rules, but they're intentional, so just deal with it.

THE WORLD: AS IT WAS BEFORE THE FALL

As humanity stepped over the threshold into the 21st century, technology was clearly the dominant force behind human social, physical, and intellectual evolution. It gave us everything we wanted: efficiency, leisure, control. But in the late 20th century, we started to discover the price of progress.

By the middle of the 21st century climate change became the single biggest factor in the world, supplanting war, social conflict, drugs, economic issues, and everything else. Changes in precipitation patterns led to loss of agricultural lands over almost 20% of the planet. Erosion and rising tides displaced over a billion people living in coastal areas, forcing humanity into smaller and smaller spaces, huddled together for survival. Social infrastructures began to collapse, overtaxed by the sheer density of people. Health systems failed, diseases and malnourishment ran rampant through the populations. The world's governments lost all control, and wars broke out, further wiping out their infrastructures. By 2067, the world found itself barely resisting total anarchy, with terrorist nation-states popping up everywhere, most in control of nuclear arsenals and unafraid to use them.

Meanwhile, a few of the world's most diversified and forward-thinking corporations managed to hold their infrastructure together. Their research and development divisions, sharing ideas and technology, developed a solution to help the planet recover, to feed and calm the population of the over-stressed planet. Their solution had minor drawbacks, however. The most pressing issue was the need to implement "The Plan" on a grand scale, but the remaining world governments were still attempting to protect human rights from exploitation. They resisted "The Plan" until one final event precipitated action. A small asteroid passed by the few remaining

installations with space research capabilities, and impacted Southern China, wiping out one of the few semi-stable world powers. The resulting disaster pushed the governments of the world past the edge of their abilities to support health and maintain order.

The corporations seized this opportunity to bring "The Plan" forward. They convinced the governments to eliminate long-standing restrictions regarding experimentation on humans. By 2071, every corner of the planet was being visited by teams implementing "The Plan". These teams soon managed to inject 90% of the world's population with their solution: self-replicating nanobots. Thus, the governments opened the door to health and survival of the human race through a technology they did not carefully investigate and indeed, no longer had the resources to understand. Bankrupted by their desires to help the people of the world, they made a deal with the devil of commercialism.

The nanobots did their job. They roamed the bodies of their hosts, curing diseases, repairing damage at the cellular level, ensuring proper nutrients were absorbed. In short, their hosts experienced near-perfect health. Different varieties began to be marketed, endowing their hosts with radical new abilities. Taking advantage of the ubiquitous computing present in all major urban environments, the bots connected us directly to world-wide information and communication resources. They provided us with instant access to everything.

At the same time, a few groups around the world survived the catastrophes and avoided the teams implementing "The Plan." They wished to return to a simpler time, blaming our near-destruction on human progress and greed. These extremist groups drew from every walk of pre-disaster life. They soon discovered their paranoia was well-founded.

THE WORLD: AS IT IS AFTER THE FALL

Technology doomed us, but technology saved us. Now children are born with nanotech already in their bodies, passed from mother to child through the placenta. But the developers were clever – if you could pass your tech on, you'd only pay for upgrades or repairs. They designed it so that only one "species" of tech present in the mother would successfully pass into the child. Every birth now owes royalties to the corporations. Every child needs more tech to maintain their body at its best. When you buy tech, you buy it forever: licensing your right to use it as well as the potential rights of your children, your children's children, and so on, in perpetuity.

This makes the tech so expensive that few can outright own it. Realizing this, the corporations embedded "features" within the programming of the nanobots. These features are essentially a way of forcing you into the role of an indentured servant to the corporation. As a result, the corporations now control not only commerce and business, health and entertainment, but also our daily lives through the nanobots. Sometimes, their influence is small: the corporations of the future have recognized this as new ground for advertising ("Can't afford the nanobot treatment to keep you well during the current smallpox outbreak? These pop-up ads from Google won't interfere with your day-to-day life...") Sometimes, their work is more insidious as the corporations use the tech to build a network of spies and information gatherers. And sometimes the work is outright frightening, as you never quite know when you'll lose control of your own body or mind, the tech controlling your actions, transmitting your thoughts and perceptions, altering your mood, and molding you into the perfect corporate lackey.

As if these side effects weren't bad enough, when a loved one dies, we can no longer

conduct our time-honored rituals of burial to celebrate their life and share our grief. Burying someone with embedded tech is a serious crime. After all, the tech and toxic materials in the bodies of the dead are harmful to the environment, don't break down easily, are too expensive to just "throw away" and cannot be easily removed from the body. So now, when a loved one passes on, a collection team harvests their body. The general public knows little of what happens next, but rumors cover the entire range of possibilities, and more than a few recall the old film "Soylent Green."

So now we have the two-headed hydra of technology. The external head of ubiquitous computing that surrounds us: every tree, building and device is networked into a gigantic information storage, retrieval and processing system. The second head is in all of us: nanobots with different purposes, some to help, some to control. Combining these features opened new directions: The tech can be configured to make you perceive the outside world in different ways - like making a subway train appear to be a dragon or a doorway to a restaurant appear to as a dark forbidding cave.

The world is now owned by the corporations, who act as benevolent, greedy dictators. The world is faceless and generic. We're all tired and bored, listless and waiting. Little did we know we were waiting for something so close... Over the past several months, many corporate zombies have been re-programmed. A mysterious entity has emerged onto the global information grid. The entity calls itself Keeton, and has developed its own ways to control the 'bots to aid its effort in toppling the corporate control of our world...



Map of Earth after the Fall (taken from <http://resumbrae.com/archive/warming/100meter.html>)



Image courtesy of Microsoft Clipart.

THE GAME MECHANICS

The game mechanics are based on FATE 3.0. Details are provided below including a list of promising aspects and skills and special rules for handling the nanotech which is a new type of aspect for your character.

What makes this game different is that in addition to controlling a PC, each player also gets to design and run a second character. This character represents one of the major world corporations that controls the tech. During the game, the corporations get to use their aspects to **compel** characters with that corporation's tech to take an action on their behalf. Thus, you and the other players could work together to overthrow the corporations,

or work to root out and save us from Keeton, or work to help Keeton, or just try to survive the urban jungle. On the other hand, you can also succeed by thwarting the characters using the corporation to gain more power, root out threats, destroy Keeton, and maintain the status quo.

In addition to all his or her usual roles, though, the GM also controls the Keeton entity, which could break in and compel you to act at any time. So the world is a strange and dangerous place. Remember – just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out there watching and taking action.

When starting a new campaign or adventure, it's best to proceed along the following path.

1. Generate the corporations using the phases described in the Corporation section of the rules. Each player gets one, and they're created in a shared, public way, so that each corporation can respond to the others the way real corporations do.
2. While the players generate corporations, the GM secretly works out the details for Keeton.
3. Generate the player characters with all their faults and foibles.
4. Meanwhile, the GM makes sure no one does anything that fouls up a good gaming environment (like takes an aspect "Hates all people violently"). And probably orders pizza and wings for the group, if he/she knows what's good for them.
5. Determine which of the corporations control which of the nanobot swarms in each character's body. There is space to note this on the corporation sheets so that you know which characters and which corporations are likely to come into conflict.
6. The GM then sets the stage, using the characters to determine how they all know each other or will likely meet and interact to get the campaign started. The beauty of this world is that this step takes some work; everyone is pretty much a zombie to start with, and few have strong ties to others. It's not likely that you can start with the "you're in a tavern and so-and-so the lackey for the Great-and-Mighty Humdinger shows up looking for adventurers to quest for the Holy Snot Rag."

A QUICK SUMMARY OF FATE

Each player will need four (4) "Fudge dice". These are special six-sided dice with two sides labeled with a plus (+), two with a minus (-) and two left blank. These can be simulated by a normal six-sided die, using 1 & 2 as minus (-), 3 & 4 as blank, and 5 & 6 as

plus (+). Anytime you need to randomly resolve an action, roll the four dice and add them up, giving a result between -4 and +4. Then add any **bonuses** and see where your result falls on the **ladder of success** shown in table 1.

Most people are average at things they spend a lot of time doing (like their job) and are poor or mediocre at most other things. If your result is equal to or above the difficulty of the action you are attempting, the quality of the result is measured by the **shifts** it takes on the ladder to match them up. **Skills** make it easier for characters to accomplish many different actions. But the heart of *Nanopunk* is the **aspects** that describe what a character is like.

These aspects can be **tagged** (either **invoked** by the player controlling the character or **compelled** by another player, the GM or a corporation). Tagging an aspect can be used to do many things. The most common are to either

- Gain a fixed bonus of +2 on a roll
- Reroll all of the dice

Using aspects opens the door to the most important mechanic of the game: **Fate Points**.

+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible

Table 1. Ladder of Success.

Characters earn Fate Points by playing up the negative features of their aspects and can spend Fate Points to do tons of things that allow the player to have an impact on the story. You'll have to check out the FATE 3.0 rules to get more details on all the standard options.

Actions in FATE come in three varieties: **simple**, **contests**, and **conflicts**. These are all explained in detail in the rules for FATE. For the most part, the corporations that are

controlled by the players can take part in these sorts of actions as well. However, they have a new, special action thanks to all that shiny 'tech we accepted to save us from disaster.

Unlike FATE 3.0 (as outlined in *Spirit of the Century*) there are no stunts in *Nanopunk*. Otherwise, the rules hold pretty much the same, with a few modifications required by the setting and style of *Nanopunk*.

NEW ACTION: HOSTILE TAKEOVER

Controlling a corporation gives you a new way to gain and spend Fate Points and a new way to give Fate Points to the other characters in the adventure. The corporations can try to control character actions using the 'tech embedded in their body. This basically works like compelling an aspect, except that not all costs are equal.

For example, the nanotech aspect "Jacked In" gives a character access to the information on the 'net in a sort of passive way. If you are compelled by this aspect, your action must be somehow related to the aspect (like making

you give some information up, find something useful, or place an online ad for the corporation at your expense). As a result of carrying out the actions, you get a Fate Point, and it would cost you a point to resist. At the same time, the aspect "Netrunner" is similar but more powerful – you're actually represented by an avatar in the 'net and can move around and interact. Being compelled by this earns you a Fate Point as usual, but to resist it costs you three (3) Fate Points because the aspect represents more involved and powerful tech, making it harder to resist.

DESIGNING CHARACTERS

For those familiar with FATE, characters are developed through phases. During each phase, select the appropriate number of aspects for the character and select his or her skills. If you are unfamiliar with FATE, fix that by going and reading the rules, and then think of it this way: For this game, **phases** represent the life stages your character has gone through. **Aspects** describe what motivates your character, what he or she is like, what is important to him or her, and how he or she thinks. In contrast, **skills** give a picture of what your character can do.

For characters, we discuss your phases of development, the skills needed to survive in the world, and what you might be doing in the world of the future, as well as the different types of nanotech you might have access to. Keep in mind that you are either an average

CITIZEN or a typical *EXTREMIST* – you are not a hero of the post-modern world. Yet. So you don't have any particularly stunning abilities (like Stunts in FATE 3.0) or snazzy futuristic equipment. Certainly you can use aspects to get props and you can buy stuff with your Resources skill, but you're an average Joe or Jane. You don't have a Batmobile or a tool that cuts through every security device known to humanity.

That being said, you need to think carefully about your character's motivations. What is he or she trying to accomplish on a day-to-day basis? Over the course of the next ten years? Over a lifetime? Thinking about this, and taking aspects related to your motivations will help get you involved more easily as the game progresses. Your character gains two aspects during each phase.

CHARACTERS: PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Here's where we spell out the phases and the types of aspects that characters can have. First, you should decide whether your character is a *CITIZEN* of this brave new world, living in the cities and embedded with modern technology, or whether he grew up trying to resist it, living outside the grid, as an *EXTREMIST*. Table 2 gives an overview of the phases of character development. Each phase is described in more detail below.

If you want, your character can go from being an *EXTREMIST* at an early phase to being a *CITIZEN* at a later phase, but cannot go the other way; once the 'tech is in you, it never comes out. There are many reasons that you might become a citizen at a later time. You might have gotten sick as a child and your

parents took you to get help, which required 'tech. Maybe your family got "rounded up" in a raid and converted. Also keep in mind that while the Extremists are free from corporate and Keeton-based control, they lose a major way to earn Fate Points since they cannot be compelled by the other player-corporations.

In general, the different aspects can be **phrases, people, props, or places**. A new type of aspect in this game is **nanotech**; these are described in detail in a separate section. Each of these categories covers a wide range of possible aspects. Also keep in mind that you want, like all good FATE characters, to have a mix of interesting story and situation aspects. Throw in some negative aspects as well, to keep you in the game.

Phase	Aspects for Citizens	Aspects for Extremists
I: Birth	1 Nanotech, 1 other	2 Place or Person
II: Childhood	2 Person, Phrase, Nanotech	2 Non-nanotech
III: Adolescence	2 Non-place	2 Non-nanotech
IV: Early Adulthood	2 Non-place	2 Non-nanotech
V: Now	1 Non-place, 1 about Keeton	1 Non-nanotech, 1 that connects you to the others

Table 2: Summary of character development phases and aspects.

Phase I: Birth

This phase covers your birth and first few years of living. To represent this phase, take two aspects.

If you are a citizen, at least one aspect must be nanotech-related. The ‘tech is designed so that only one “species” of ‘bot infects the baby in the womb. This ensures that the corporations can gain your loyalties when you need to buy the other ‘tech late in life.

If your parents are extremists, living away from the grid, then take two aspects. One of these must be location-laden to represent the place you were born and your connection to it. Remember to jazz it up. “Memphis” is boring as an aspect, but “The pride of Memphis” has potential for complications.

Phase II: Childhood

This phase covers your life up until the age of about 10. Take two aspects representing what you did as a child and what was important to you. These might be friends or family. They might be hobbies or stories that were important to you. They might be events that shaped you.

Phase III: Adolescence

Take two aspects representing what you were like and what was important to you as a teenager. This could cover your high-school years, so you might take a close friend, a phrase that represents a major experience, an area of interest or hobby, or anything that

might be relevant. But remember that you are growing in a world dominated by the corporations and that all citizens are essentially indentured servants to them. At the same time, extremists are in constant threat of discovery and capture by corporate troops, so growing up is less stable and it is likely that you moved around often.

Phase IV: Early Adulthood

Take two aspects. These could be college-related, trade-related, or whatever. It’s recommended that citizens gain (if she hasn’t already) a profession and the skills associated with it. Because of the generic nature of the cities, you can pretty much go anywhere modern and be at home if you’re a citizen. That’s why it doesn’t make sense for citizens to have close ties with specific places. On the other hand, extremists live and die by knowing where they are and who they’re with, so they’re free to fill their background with these sorts of tidbits.

Phase V: Now

Take two aspects representing who you are right now and what you do. If you are still an Extremist, you must take an aspect that would force your character to meet up with or somehow get involved with at least one of the other characters. If you are a Citizen, one of your aspects should relate to the recent actions of Keeton; maybe you were involved somehow, maybe you’re just worried. Or maybe you are a spy (possibly unwilling or even unknown by you) for the corporations, hoping to get contacted by Keeton.

NANOTECHNOLOGY FOR DUMMIES

Each nanotech aspect you abilities beyond ordinary humans, but it also opens up more options for the corporations to compel you to do their bidding. Any compel that you accept pays one Fate Point. Resisting the compel takes a different amount of FATE, depending on the tech that is being tagged. These costs (1, 2, or 3 Fate Points) are listed for each type of nanotech below.

When you generate your character, be sure to determine which tech is controlled by which of the player-controlled corporations. To keep it all fair, the corporations should be assigned at random. This should be done in a way that gives all the player corporations an equal opportunity to participate. Suggestion: Number all the nanotech-based aspects of all players (so if there are five characters and each has 3 'tech aspects, each aspect would be numbered between 1 and 15.) Then put each number on a slip of paper, drop them all in a hat, and let each player draw, one at a time, until they are all gone. Player corporations should not control any tech embedded in their own character, so trade out any as necessary.

Basic 'Tech [all level 1]

Bull's Strength [1, physical] grants enhanced strength through chains of nanobots working together and applying additional forces through an electro-motive force

Eau du Jour [1, physical and mental] allows you to modify your pheromones to exude scents to affect those around you with basic emotions like anger, compassion, desire

Enhanced Senses [1, physical] this could be any single sensory upgrade, like better eyesight (past 20/20), extended hearing (outside normal range or lower levels of sound), or anything basic

Faster Than the Eye [1, physical] enhanced speed, through a mechanic similar to "Bull's Strength"

HMO [1, physical]: Helps the character fight most diseases, repair basic damage from aging, control the amount of cholesterol and fat and so forth absorbed into the body, so that aging is slowed.

Jacked In [1, mental]: Access to the net and the global communications grid through thought alone

Advanced 'Tech [all level 2]

Drink You Under [2, physical]: Like "HMO", but has more specialized features to also let you break down alcohol and other intoxicants so you're never drunk and never hungover

Human Remote [2, mental] allows you to control electronic devices by thought alone

Human Taser [2, physical] generate an electric field that stuns anyone who contacts you physically

If the number of tech aspects doesn't evenly split among the players, then make up for it by giving out Fate Points for the corporations.

Sample Nanotech Aspects

The aspects below have four components to their descriptions: the name of the aspect, the cost of resisting a compel targeting that aspect (1, 2, or 3), the types of actions that corporations can control using that aspect (either mental or physical), and a brief description. Feel free to add more and get creative, but it is suggested that you don't require more than 3 Fate Points to resist any compels. Some of the examples below have "Bam!" names, because they are pretty specific. Others are more bland, to allow you to personalize them to your character and her situation.

Please note that the ultra-level tech is mostly restricted; it's too expensive for a typical citizen to have. Unless your parents were corporate bigwigs and you inherited it...

Man (or Woman) of Many Faces [2, physical] can alter basic appearance at will by adding/subtracting a little flab or bone support, changing pigmentation or hair color/shape, altering eye colors, etc. without altering the basic structure of your face and body so that you always look like a “different you”

More Than Meets the Eye [2, mental]: Connects you to the net and allows you to overlay your surroundings with real data (like ranges to things that are also linked up)

Super Senses [2, physical] this could be any single sense that is way beyond normal, like heat vision (infrared), the ability to sense electrical fields, tremorsense to detect vibrations, sonar, lie/stress detection, or any beyond normal human ability

Use the Force [2, mental] you can interface with and move motorized devices by thought alone

Wall Crawling [2, physical] the nanobots can alter your skin surface to give you gecko-like features so that you can climb vertical, nearly smooth surfaces

Ultra ‘Tech [all level 3]

Energy Beams [3, physical] using the nanobots to generate an electrical field by lining them up, you can project a focused beam of EM energy that can stun others and overload electrical devices

Master of Disguise [3, physical] goes beyond “Man of Many Faces” to make you look like whatever person you want to imitate

NetRunner [3, mental]: Avatar-based, 3D interactive access to the net

Perfect Health [3, physical]: An advanced version of “HMO” so that virtually no aging occurs and essentially no chemical or biological agent will ever harm you; minor injuries are repaired easily and quickly; major injuries are reduced in seriousness

Rose-colored Glasses [3, mental]: A step past “More than Meets the Eye” that allows you to overlay anything with other images or sounds, so that cars look like horses, or buildings look like giant termite mounds

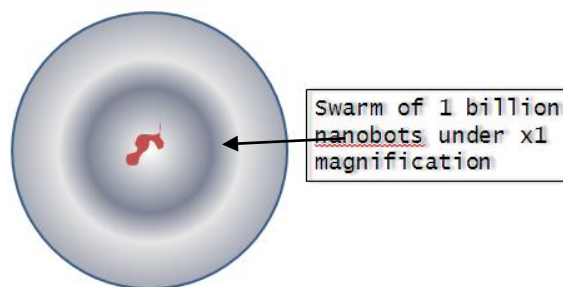
Scent by the Gods [3, physical and mental] allows subtle modifications to your pheromones – like targeting specific people with particular emotions

Speed of the Flash [3, physical] allows you to move faster than any natural organism, faster than those with “Faster than the Eye”, and faster than non-racing ground transportation

Strength of Ten [3, physical] grants near-unsurpassed way beyond that of “Bull’s Strength”

Variable level ‘tech

Knowledge Packs [1, 2, or 3, mental] allow constant access to certain knowledge and skills even when not Jacked In; at level 1, the pack has basic facts that make most any average knowledge check successful in that field; at level 2 you can either make good checks easy in one field or fair checks easy in two fields; at level 3, you can have one field at great, two at good or four at fair; this is different from the “Jacked In” series which only allow you to find info that is publicly available



WE GOT SKILLS

Nanopunk offers the standard FATE 3.0 skills with a few changes. These changes are necessitated by the post-modern setting. It is suggested that all characters have Resources. Citizens should possess better than average skills in Netsearch and a Profession skill. Extremists should have some Survival.

The Burglary skill has been renamed. It is now called Slicing and covers electronics systems for surveillance, security, and countermeasures.

The Mysteries skill has been removed. This is a world of hard, rational science, by Jove!

The following skills are modified:

- Academics is more about locating information and putting it together in a useful way, than about knowing random facts; it does give understanding of the basic ways of thinking of academic subjects, and how to help others to understand.
- Art now focuses on production of artistic items (like paintings, sculpture, and poetry) and does not cover performance art – see Perform below.
- Resolve now gives a character a way to attempt to resist a hostile takeover by a corporation. Any attempts are modified by subtracting the total level of all the nanotech swarms you possess.

The following skills are new:

- Hacking [craft/knowledge] is about programming computers, nanobots, and the like and about how to defend them from software attacks as well as carry out software-based attacks

- Profession [mundane] requires one to pick a specific profession (e.g., Profession {accounting}) and gives you access to all the basic skills and knowledge, as well as contacts, and ways of acting relevant to that profession.
- Streetwise [mundane] is about getting around in the world in various places; it's the urban counterpart to Survival.
- Perform [social/physical] covers art that is about interaction and performance, like dancing and acting.
- Netsearch [knowledge] is about formulating questions, searching databases, and evaluating the information available.
- Grapple [physical] is about hand-to-hand combat involving attempts to hold, throw, and unbalance one's opponent. It might involve specialized training in a martial art like Judo or Aikido, or it might be more like Wrestling.

Of course, you could always take an *aspect* that lets you “know” huge amounts of information about a subject. If you want to be one of those geeks who studies and memorizes even though the information is there for everyone at any time, then go right ahead.

Some skills can be granted or boosted temporarily. For example, if you have the appropriate Knowledge Pack (a type of tech) you could, say, download the ability to Pilot a helicopter on the fly.

ROLES FOR CHARACTERS

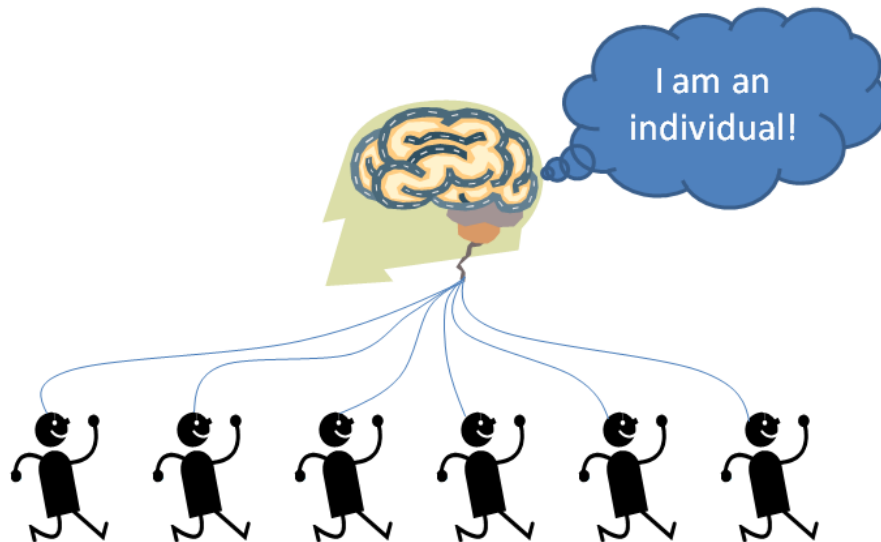
It's important to remember that people in the post-modern world are used to certain things. Like being surrounded by a barrage of advertising that targets them (think *Minority Report*) and losing control of themselves every once in a while. They're bored, and generic, and one city is largely like the others when it's completely covered in dynamic, personalized, real-time ads. So, when it comes to a character's motivation, you have to think differently from today's world. Ambition is there, but in a very different way. It's unlikely that you've got the urge to become president of the United States (especially since it's mostly just a name). You might want to be an action hero, but that looks really dangerous, and the low levels of Pax in the water make it hard to feel too aggressive. The recent Keeton stuff is a little frightening, though.

Characters could be

- the physical, willing agents of Keeton, aligned with and in-league with the entities behind his emergence

- active agents for the corporations, fighting against Keeton
- active agents for a particular corporation, fighting for a monopoly against the other corporations
- random people trying to get about their business while navigating the waters between Keeton and Corporation
- agents of the powerless government, attempting to maintain some form of social order amid the chaos of the times
- agents of an outside government, attempting to undermine the social order
- part of a utopian faction attempting to destroy all tech and return to the "glorious past"

The most important thing for a starting character to do, though, is to figure out what he or she does in day-to-day life and his or her relationship to the world. How do they feel about giving over most of their control to the corporations? What are their hopes and dreams?



DESIGNING CORPORATIONS

All the megacorporations are diversified into everything, having divisions for almost every conceivable part of your life: military, education, entertainment, food, health, fashion, etc. Each corporation is generated similarly to generating a character with the following differences.

1. Aspects: Obviously, being nameless, faceless conglomerates means that many of the tasty aspects that work for characters won't work for the corporation. But think of all the corporate slogans and ad campaigns that can be used as aspects...
2. Each corporation should have a short-term goal. Obviously, their long term goal is to wipe out all competition and make the world their slave, but that's not going to happen overnight.
3. Rather than skills, corporations have **influences** (see below) that function similarly to skills, but are used in corporation-vs.-corporation actions.
4. Corporations have "Wealth" instead of "Health". So when they lose assets (like blowing up a building or being the target of major industrial espionage) their wealth track takes a hit. This gives a measure of what the corporation can accomplish. All corporations start at a Wealth of 5.
5. Corporations have "Influence" rather than "Composure". This goes down when their public image is tarnished – like if the PCs expose a plot to dump chemicals in a playground. In general, this shows the corporation's strength. All corporations start with an Influence of 5.
6. Each corporation should spell out the main function of their nanobots (besides their marketed purpose, of course). This describes what the bots are programmed with as a general goal (like surveillance, advertising, mood control, etc.) This will give a sort of "default" for the background characters.

CORPORATE INFLUENCES AND ACTIONS

Corporations have a different set of skills than characters. The column labeled "Influence" in Table 3 shows each of the possible skills. A corporation begins play with six (6) influences. One is rated at Superb, two at Good and three at Average. The corporation can, of course, use the other six influences, but they are all rated at Mediocre. Corporate actions against characters require the expenditure of Fate Points. Corporate

actions against other corporations require both Fate Points and the use of controlled characters. Some influences (like Milsec) seem to offer a lot of power, but may not provide many options for gaining Fate Points. Fashion, on the other hand, seems weak, but can provide a great deal of Wealth and Influence, and offer opportunities to gain more Fate Points.

Category	Influence	Description	Normally Attacks
Mental	Finance	Monetary exchanges, investments, insurance, and the like	Wealth
Mental	Information	Libraries, information systems, print media, espionage	Influence
Mental	Research	Scientific and technological research	Influence
Physical	Food	Growing, harvesting, processing and transporting food	Either
Physical	Milsec	Equipment, support and training for military and security	Wealth
Physical	Transportation	Vehicles, public transportation, travel, roads, and tourism	Either
Social	Entertainment	Movies, games, resorts, theme parks, and vices	Either
Social	Fashion	Clothing, cosmetics and appearance-altering procedures	Wealth
Social	Residential	Living quarters, housing, furniture	Wealth
Technical	Health	Medicines, medical procedures, nanobot maintenance	Influence
Technical	Manufacturing	Raw materials production, disposal, and recycling	Wealth
Technical	Utilities	Production, distribution, recycling of power, water, waste	Either

Table 3: The 12 Influences for corporations and what they cover.

PHASES OF CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT

Generating the corporations first will help to create the history and back story of the world. Corporations are built in four phase, each giving a corporation two aspects that are either Location, Resource, Connections, Phrase, or Audience related (see table 4).

Phase 1: Before the Fall. Take two aspects, one of which is location-related to represent your original headquarters; that cultural milieu is embedded in the core of the company. If your corporation is a merger of existing modern corporations, you may want to take two location aspects or the one that is connected to the most dominant of the corporations in the merger. Remember to make these “Bam!” aspects not just bland ones. If you want Toyota, you might take “Exemplary Japanese Conglomerate” or “Japanese Hierarchical Company”.

Phase 2: During the Fall. Take two aspects describing how they reacted to the disasters at a corporate level and what the corporation did during the disaster. These might be “Protected Assets” or “Reached out to help”.

Phase 3: Immediately After the Fall. Take two aspects describing how the corporation established its control in the aftermath and began consolidating its power. Here, you might take aspects like “Pioneer in Self-Replicating Nano” or “Spread pacifying bio-agents through water supply that we rebuilt”.

Phase 4: Here and Now. Take two aspects describing the corporation’s current plans and structure. Make sure these really tell everyone what your company is like today. A corporate slogan might be useful.

Type of Aspect	Examples	What is relates to
Location	North America before the Fall, Indonesia, the Asteroid Belt	Significant location, resource hub, or headquarters
Resource	Secret research facility, Moon base, Robot army, Clones of the CEO	Stuff they have that is really significant and unique
Connections	McBurger, BBC, Yakuza	Kinda like subcontractors or partners
Phrase	“We’ll get you there!”, “Have a Cola and a Smile!”, “Moving forward”	Think “slogan” or “ad campaign”
Audience	Health nuts, Shopaholics, Bored people	The kind of people that the corporation really wants control of

Table 4: Types of Aspects for Corporations and samples.

MORE ABOUT HOSTILE TAKEOVERS

Corporations can attempt to take control of those infected with nanobot swarms manufactured by them. This takeover is different, depending on the location in which the character is; each location has a different amount of technology through which the corporations can exert their influence.

There are two ways a corporation can attempt to control a character. **Passive** attempts occur as a result of the character randomly showing up in an area where that corporation's tech is particularly strong – like walking into a shopping mall when you have Abercrombie & Fitch 'tech in you. These types of control attempts occur often – they are triggered pretty much whenever a character is surrounded by a lot of 'tech. **Active** control is more specific; the character is targeted by the corporation with a more specific agenda for action. These occur less often and usually only when the corporation has need of the character for its purposes.

Naturally, two corporations may attempt to control the same character at the same time. When that happens, the results are easy to determine. If one of the corporations is attempting an active control while the other is attempting passive control, the passive attempt fails, and the active attempt proceeds. If both are passive, they cancel each other out, and the character never notices. If both are active, a **contest** ensues. Both

corporations roll 4dF and add the total levels of all tech they control in the character. The higher roll wins the control attempt.

When a corporation wins an attempt to control a character, here's how to play it out.

1. The corporation's player attempts to tag the nanotech that is relevant to the action they want to take and offers a Fate Point.
2. Decision Time!
 - a. The player can then decide to accept the tag and the Fate Point, or
 - b. the player can reject the attempt, and pay the corporation the number of Fate Points required by the level of the tech tagged, or
 - c. the player can leave it to chance and roll a contest (see below).

If the attempt is successful, the corporation's player can pass a short note to the player he/she controls to tell the character what to do. This can't be too specific.

Contest of Wills

If a character chooses to leave the results to chance, then a contest ensues. The character rolls using the Resolve skill, modified by the total level of all the nanotech in the character. The corporation rolls 4dF and adds a modifier based on the technology level of the location (see below for location information.)

WHAT CORPORATIONS DO

When corporations interact, they trade wealth and influence. This will determine if they're getting ahead in order to "win" by wiping out all the competition. All corporations start equal, but that won't last long. In general, each time a corporation gets to make a move, it can either move:

1. against the general public (alone or with allies)
2. against another corporation, or
3. against a character, using an active hostile takeover.

Corporations don't act as often as characters can. They're bigger and more cumbersome,

they have inertia and bureaucracy. They can only act once every few scenes (the GM and group should decide exactly how often you want the corporations to act; once per three or four scenes is a reasonable balance.) Of course, they can attempt to passively control a character whenever they have the resources...

Moving Against a Corporation

Players can declare major actions their corporation undertakes using its influences against the other corporations. Corporations can also team up against to work against a common threat or to reduce the competition. Unless this action involves a specific character, though, the action can, at most, alter the other corporation's influence or wealth by one level. To really score a success, corporations have to make use of their most precious asset – the characters.

When moving against rival, the corporation describes its action and which influence it is bringing to bear. The target corporation can then resist using any influence that is reasonable, provided everyone agrees that the description of how the target corporation is responding works. If they resist using the same influence, there is no additional modifier to the roll. If the resistance uses a different influence, but one in the same category (physical, social, technical, or mental) then the target's roll is at -1. If the target uses an influence from a different category, the roll is at -2.

The results of the contest are, in a sense, a zero-sum game. Whatever one corporation wins, the other loses. The table below shows the results of any corporate action. If an attack uses a standard application of an influence (like using Milsec to carry out sabotage of a rival) everything proceeds normally. However, you can use an influence

to attack in a non-standard way. It's riskier, (you are at -2 for the contest) but if you succeed, you gain 1 Fate Point in addition to the results of the attack.

If a corporation ever has its Wealth drop to zero **and** its Influence drop to zero, then the corporation is dissolved. Its assets are seized.

Attacker Beats Target by This Many Shifts	Results (attacker/target)
Less than -3	-1 of Each
-1 to -3	-1
0	0
1 to 3	+1
More than 3	+1 of Each

Table 5. Corporate action results.

The specifics of this should be worked out by the player or players most directly responsible for the dissolution of the corporation. This might involve a raid, a takeover, looting during a riot, lots of explosions, or just about anything that seems appropriate.

Moving Against the General Public

If the corporation makes an action against the general public, they are basically attempting to gain Wealth, Influence, or Fate Points.

To determine the success of the action, the corporation selects an influence to use. Then they determine whether they are trying to gain Wealth, Influence or Fate Points. Roll 4dF, add the influence being used, and compare this to the total number of Wealth, Influence, or Fate Points that corporation currently has. If the result is higher (not equal to, higher) then they gain one more of that resource. If the roll is more than 3 lower than the target, they lose one of that resource. If the corporation is using an influence in a nonstandard way (such as using Milsec to gain influence) then they must beat the total by at least 3, instead of just by 1.

EXAMPLE CORPORATIONS

Below is a sample list of some of possible world corporations with a brief description of them and their agendas and roles in the world. We encourage as much creativity as possible when generating your corporations, but insist that every group include the CIA, since the Company is everywhere.

The Mafia gained control of a major pizza chain. As they began delivering to everywhere, and as their options grew more diverse, they required more protection from a scared and desperate public. So they merged with a private military contractor and now **Little Caesars** is picking up where Julius left off.

The **CIA** saw the writing on the wall as the world's governments began to implode. So they merged with the Culinary Institute of America and now produce food to die for. They run afoul of Little Caesars regularly, and have returned to their roots in producing and distributing narcotics.

Sony and Toyota merge under the boring, but clear corporate logo of **Toyota-Sony**. Now most cars on the road are moving display screens of information and entertainment, and driving is even more like Grand Theft Auto.

The wars among Google, Apple, and Microsoft expand, draining their resources and fragmenting them into hundreds of smaller companies that are quickly gobbled up by Sun Microsystems. But everyone implements their open-source software differently, creating mass confusion as everyone ups the level of **Java** in their system.

Time-Warner gave up on print journalism and teamed up with Chanel. Now they've turned all their paper resources into producing ultra-recyclable fashionable clothing that wears out every season and gives off attractive scents. In addition, **Chanel Surfing** now runs shows that are 90% ads for its own clothing, with 10% recycled content from 20th century TV.



In other news, the body of Dr. Hans Gruber was found today, the apparent victim of a gun shot. Gruber was best known for his controversial book **FROM LOGOS TO LOGOS**, a critical look at how, in his words, "corporations have drained our intellectual capacity and replaced it with shallow... commercialism."

KEETON

Recently the world order has been challenged. An entity called Keeton has taken responsibility for a series of actions that have affected both corporations and citizens. Everyone – citizens and extremists, alike – is aware of Keeton’s presence and knows something about his/her/its actions. Keeton’s regular broadcasts over the ‘net ensure that the public sees and hears the what, when and where of his/her/its actions.

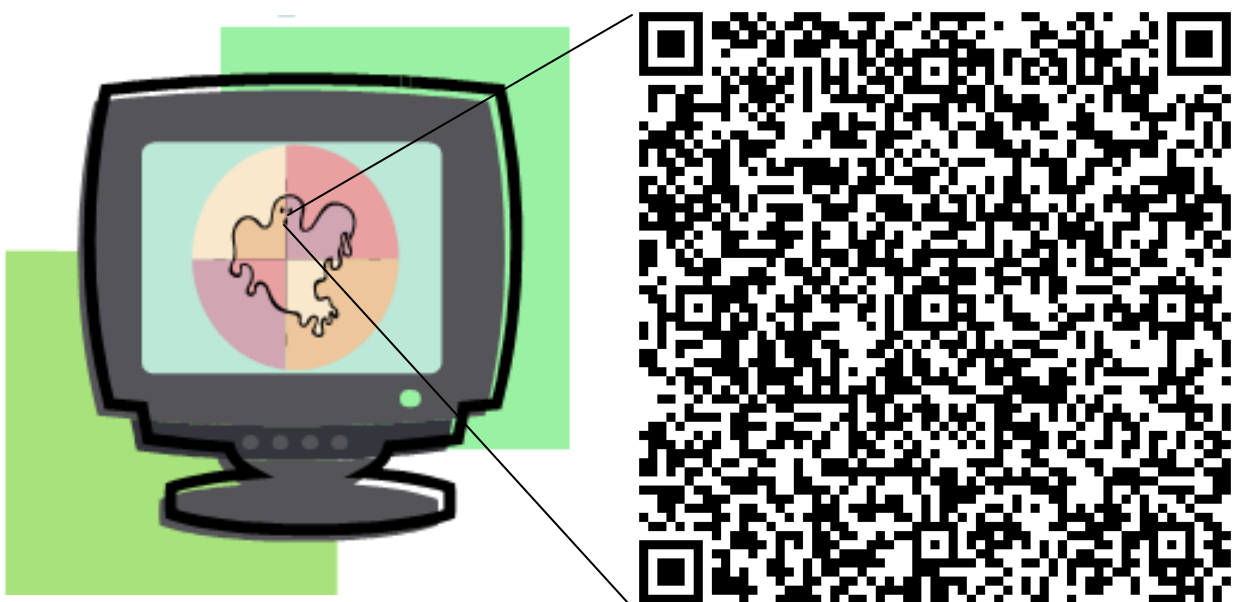
But only a select few know real details about Keeton. The details of Keeton’s actions – the places targeted, the damage done, the people involved – has been kept from the general public. But keeping a lid on certain information “to protect the public” is the easy part. What has most worried those in the know is not what has happened, but *how*. Keeton somehow has the ability to infect and control the nanobots manufactured by any corporation in the world using some “supervirus” that bypasses all of the security measures built into the devices. Typically, a group of citizens is taken over, forced to

commit a terrorist act – often involving the destruction of corporate facilities or publically releasing secure information – and then are wiped of the memory of the event. There is no clear pattern to who is targeted by Keeton to carry out its will.

The establishment is also worried about Keeton’s identity. After months of work, no one has ever seen him/her/it. Keeton’s broadcasts on the ‘net clearly use an avatar designed to look generic; it gives no clue as to Keeton’s real identity. They have no idea what Keeton’s agenda is or where he/she/it came from.

There is more about Keeton in the GM-only section.

For now, though, bear in mind that Keeton can attempt to control anyone at any time. When this happens, the affected individual becomes an agent of Keeton with limited knowledge of himself and no will to resist. After the event, you will have no memory of what occurred.



EQUIPMENT

The modern world has finally abandoned money – it's all credit or barter. Your Resources skill rates one's credit, and it can go up or down depending on the cost of the item purchased. Determine the rating of the item you wish to acquire. Roll Resources and determine the number of shifts, which determines the change in your Resources. You may, depending on the item, need to use Contacting to find a seller.

PRICES FOR ITEMS

Pricing items is easy start with a base price (See chart) and then modify it up one level for every aspect you add (some aspects cost two levels). If the item is legally controlled, add one level to the base cost. If it is restricted or top secret, add two levels.

Shifts	Result
< 0	Cannot acquire the item
0	Item acquired, resources down 2 levels
1	Item acquired, resources down 1 levels
2	Item acquired, no change in resources
3+	As 2, but each additional cuts the time to locate the item or adds to its value somehow

Table 6. Buying stuff.

Most of the equipment aspects in FATE are available without significant changes (Additional capability, Alternate usage [2], Armed, Armored, Independent, Conscious, Hair trigger, Miniaturization, Maximization, Craftsmanship, Rugged, Special effect [2]). Four of the aspects have been modified for the current level of technology:

Futurization [1]: This stuff is just around the corner, but not quite ready yet. It's prototype-level stuff, ready by 2100.

Speculative Science [2]: A bit on the fringe (in 2075) but still considered reasonable, just far ahead of where we are, like 2200.

Unbelievable [3]: This stuff violates the known and expected scientific laws.

Upgrade [2]: Grants a +2 to something, but requires no additional stunts or anything.

Rating	What it can typically buy
Legendary	Personal island, plane, Nanotech (no obligations)
Epic	Trip to space, small company, office building
Fantastic	Large or luxury vehicle, Plane, Helicopter, Mansion
Superb	Small house, Personal car or truck,
Great	Apartment/condo, Restricted weapons
Good	Personal motorcycle, AI pet, Nanotech (with obligations)
Fair	Large weapons, One month public transit pass (anywhere), Wearable computer
Average	Fancy clothes, Small weapons, One month of rent for apartment, Personal electronics
Mediocre	Good clothes, Night in good accommodations, Good meal, Single purpose electronics, Tools
Poor	One month public transit pass (within city), Basic net access
Terrible	Shabby clothes, One night in horrid accommodations, Adequate meal

Table 7. Sample Resource ratings for different items.

Below is a list of items that are commonplace, speculated about, and what's coming soon. This should help make a little sense of the world and set the stage for what is available and what everyone is used to seeing.

Day-to-Day Items: Cheap Solar Power, Wearable computers, Electric cars, Artificially "Intelligent" Pets, Intelligent homes, Space Travel, Voice interfaces, Regrowing body parts, Artificial limbs

Modern Marvels: AI Robots, Teleportation of molecules, Invisibility cloaks (at certain wavelengths), Downloaded people

Soon-to-Come: Interstellar travel, Antigravity, Teleportation of humans, Total invisibility, Cheap Fusion, Room temperature superconductors

PERSONAL THINGS

Characters can buy gadgets (normal items that they are linked to and have special abilities) using aspects. For each aspect invested in items, you get the base item plus three improvements. Alternatively, you could

take several items and spread the three modifications among them. Altogether, the items you take as aspects must have a total base cost (before improvements) less than or equal to your starting Resources skill.

SAMPLE GADGETS

Autocycle

Speed: Good, Stress: 2, Cost: Good, Improvements: Independent

Basically, it's a small motorcycle (electric, of course, with solar charging) that has an independent, voice-activated guidance and control system.

Hoverboard

Speed: Fair, Stress: 1, Cost: Average, Improvements: none

Hoverboards are like skateboards, but they don't touch the ground. They can maneuver at about 3 meters off the ground, but are tricky to control (-1 to all attempts).

Phased Plasma Rifle in the 40-W Range

Base Cost: Good, Actual Cost: Fantastic, Improvements: Miniaturization, Upgrade, Futurization

This is a rifle that fires slugs of plasma using a magnetic coil accelerator in the barrel. The slugs can melt through almost anything. The weapon has a range of 6 zones and an advanced scope. The power is provided by a miniaturized plasma torch. The weapon automatically add +2 when trying to hit something and does +3 damage.

Computer

Base Cost: Fair, Actual Cost: Good, Improvements: Additional Capability (holograms)

This is a hand-held computer roughly 12 cm by 6 cm by 1 cm. It can interface with nearly anything, project images using a holographic system, and has a virtual keyboard that is projected onto any surface. It's memory and computing capacity are essentially limitless, since it can also make use of the 'net to store and multi-process.

Multicorder

Base Cost: Mediocre, Actual Cost: Average, Improvements: Additional Capability

This device can scan for the presence of EM, radiation, heat, sound, and most anything known to modern science. In addition to detection, it can indicate strength and create a map of the intensity of the signal if you spend a few moments moving around an area.

GM SECTION

The following information should give GMs advice and ideas for designing exciting adventures. This section covers information about Keeton, the Nanobots, and the World, including Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and

Locations. Some of the information is about game mechanics, but there are some secrets here about the “way things really are” that should be kept from the players in order to add suspense and mystery. Good luck.

SECRETS ABOUT KEETON

It is left up to the GM to determine the exact nature of the Keeton entity. Regardless, much of the plot of any adventure should, at least tangentially, be connected to Keeton. Some suggestions for Keeton’s true nature are given below:

- The Keeton entity may be a new corporation, one that arose after the emergence of the current world order, built upon entirely new principles of economics. Keeton is a public image, designed to make everyone mistrust all other corporations, looking for answers from anyplace new that promises salvation.
- Keeton may be a sentient computer virus that has emerged from the ‘net – either accidentally loosed by some corporation’s R&D division or maliciously introduced by an outside agency.
- After the fall, world governments lost control and became less than figureheads. If a government agency wanted to restore their power, Keeton could help by undermining the public’s confidence in the current system.
- The extremists may have banded together to overthrow the system and wipe out all technology. Keeton is their public face, helping them to wipe out research, development, and distribution facilities that maintain and extend the corporations’ control.
- As the number of AI-driven nanobots increased and their connection to each

other developed, the ‘bots became the individual components of a collective consciousness that calls itself Keeton. This entity now wants more respect.

- For a really different scenario, Keeton could be the first wave of an alien force that has followed our probes, like Voyager and Pioneer, back to Earth and used their designs to defeat us. The aliens themselves might not even be biological; they could be artificial intelligences themselves, seeking to free the ‘bots from the control of the hosts.

Finding out who or what Keeton is and deciding whether to help Keeton or work against its efforts should be a major part of the long-term campaign.

Keeton can attempt to take control of anyone with embedded nanotech. To determine whether Keeton is successful, the GM rolls a **contest** of will. Keeton’s roll is modified by the level of technology surrounding the target of the attempt. So, if the target is in an area that is filled with lots of tech, Keeton might get a +5 on the roll. The target person’s roll is modified by both their Resolve and the amount of tech embedded. For example, if a character has three level 1 swarms and a level 2 swarm, the character has a total of 5 levels of swarms. So, after modification for the Resolve of the character, subtract 5 from the result.

If Keeton gains control, then the character is basically under a Hostile Takeover from Keeton, allowing the GM to give the character

some instructions. Normally, Keeton's actions are attacks against one of the corporations. Obviously, Keeton gives the GM a powerful way to interact with the players, one that could easily unbalance the game or create some friction. It's important that the gaming group work together up front decide how active Keeton should be. For example, Keeton could have a limited number of actions available. Keeton could be forced to act

randomly – so that when Keeton is in control, the corporation that is the target of the attack is chosen randomly. Keeton could have a character sheet, aspects, and Fate Points like all the other characters and be required to spend Fate Points to attempt takeovers. Finding a fair way to allow Keeton to act while also keeping the game unpredictable is the goal.

SECRETS ABOUT THE WORLD

As mentioned above, burial and cremation are no longer options for deceased loved ones. The bodies of the dead are transported to facilities for processing them. And, unknown to most, is that there is a way for the 'bots to animate a body, effectively making zombies that can be used for menial labor – like processing other bodies or harvesting crops – until decay takes over. This gives us a very easy way to harvest tissues and organs for black market (secretly run by the corporations) body parts as well as “Soylent Green” style food lines. The corporations have you coming and going.

Also keep in mind that everything in the modern home and city is on the info-grid. This means that, for example, toilets are

networked and have a variety of sensors to detect the current contents of the bowl and compare that to your medical records. This is, ostensibly, for your health, but also provides authorities with information about illicit drug use, alcohol abuse, disposal of chemical weapons...

Finally, the corporations have also attempted to use their technology to “repair” the damage done to the environment. Releasing huge swarms of nanobots designed to rebuild, they've actually managed to make large swaths of the earth even less habitable, due to the mutations and unexpected interactions in the swarms. These “Dead Zones” are sprinkled everywhere.

SECRETS ABOUT NANOTECH

The GM should pursue all possible opportunities for non-player controlled corporations and for Keeton to attempt control of the characters. Even more, take advantage of any chance to use the nanotech to make things interesting for the PCs. After all, the tech is an aspect... Imagine, a character with the HMO swarm is chasing someone on foot. If he catches them, he'll get the information he needs to find Keeton! But that HMO swarm is dedicated to helping keep the character healthy. Running too fast causes a lot of adrenaline, raises the blood pressure and generally seems to be bad. So the HMO

might try to calm the character down, which would result in losing the goal of their pursuit.

All nanotech either has a “physical” or “mental” feature. This describes what kind of control the swarm can exercise over the host and the types of actions that the host will undertake after the corporation gains control.

Physical swarms allow the corporation to control a character physically in some way that is related to the swarm. For example, if the corporation takes control through the Bull's Strength tech, then the corporation

could make the character move or lift or hold doors shut or whatever. If control came through the Eau du Jour swarm, then obviously the corporation could make the character exude pheromones to make others around him/her behave in certain ways.

Mental swarms allow the corporation to change your mind, literally. So a Human Remote might start controlling the local vehicle and driving the characters to the corporation's retail outlet, while a More Than Meets the Eye might be used to make you think that everything in the world is demonic, except for the friendly corporation.

Another important point relates to the actual nature of the nanobots everyone is so lost

without. Most view them as basically self-replicating machines. However, to achieve the scale and the robustness needed, the 'bots are actually made of organic molecules – DNA. They are a new life form on the planet, but one that is carefully controlled. Unfortunately, mutations can happen to any DNA-based life...

In the end, everyone is afraid of losing control to Keeton or the corporations, but they want to be enhanced, because it makes them better. They don't want the corporations to have too much control, but do want to give the anti-corporation Keeton a chance to win and free us all. Unless we're all afraid of Keeton and a world without control...

ALTERNATIVE GAME FORMATS

Rather than having all the players control a character and a corporation, you could randomly choose one player to be a human named Keeton while all the other players are corporations trying to control him and use Keeton in their battles against each other and against the forces that resist control.

This environment also offers a variety of opportunities for different modes of play and different campaigns. The most obvious mode of play is based on a normal sort of cyberpunk scenario. But one can also go for a

horror-based scenario, using the animated dead as an army under control of Keeton or the corporations. Since the nanobots can give special abilities to their hosts (like the ability to heal quickly or project EM waves) one could also set up a superhero-type scenario, with Keeton as a super-villain.

Instead of giving "orders" to a player when his or her character is taken over, you could physically pass the character sheet over to the controlling corporation's player for a few minutes. This takes a little more trust...

SAMPLE NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

For each of the characters below, there is a list of skills given as "Top 3 skills". One of these should be rated at Superb, the other two at Great. Then there is a list of some "Other Skills" that the character is likely to possess, either at the Average, Fair, or Good levels. Most of these NPCs lack the full array of 10 aspects; this and the incomplete skill list will let you modify them slightly to have a little more uniqueness and personality. And you probably don't want to fill in all the

details – let the players do some work with declarations, based on how you play the NPC.

Corporate Bodyguard

Top 3 Skills: Fists, Guns, Alertness

Other Skills: Grappling, Weapons, Pilot, Drive, Endurance, Might, Intimidation, Resolve

Aspects: Nothing gets by me, Humorless Meat Puppet, Unflinching

Nanotech: Human taser, Bull's strength, Enhanced senses

Cube-jockey

Top 3 Skills: Netsearch, Profession, Contacting

Other Skills: Academics, Rapport, Hacking, Engineering, Resources

Aspects: Hate my job, Unfulfilled, My name is Dilbert, The corporation is my friend, Wish the Pointy-haired boss would get a brain implant

Nanotech: HMO, Jacked In, Knowledge Pack level 2

CEO/Corporate Executive

Top 3 Skills: Leadership, Resolve, Resources

Other Skills: Netsearch, Contacting, Deceit, Profession, Gambling

Aspects: Knows everyone, Double-crossing is a way of life, Wheels within wheels, I am the corporation, Rules were made to be circumvented

Nanotech: Perfect Health, Human remote, Jacked in, Eau du jour

Animated Corpse

Top 3 Skills: Fists, Might, Grapple

Other Skills: Alertness, Intimidation, Endurance, Athletics

Aspects: Decaying flesh, Shambles a bit, Eerie buzzing noise, Secret purpose, Boring conversationalist

Nanotech: Pick any 4 physical – make sure some are out there (like Energy Beam)

Generic Citizen

Top 3 Skills: Any profession, Any knowledge, Any social

Other Skills: Streetwise, Any non-combat

Aspects: Is this all there is, Barely making it, Sports addict

Nanotech: HMO, Jacked In

Tech Addict/Netrunner

Top 3 Skills: Hacking, Streetwise, Netsearch

Other Skills: Gambling, Contacting, Rapport, Slicing

Aspects: Stares past you, Shambling through life, “Wanna see something?”, Trancending

Nanotech: Rose-colored glasses, HMO, Netrunner

Extremist Leader

Top 3 Skills: Survival, Leadership, Resolve

Other Skills: Science, Academics, Alertness, Contacting, Deceit, Empathy, Rapport, Stealth

Aspects: My body is my temple, Free will is not free, Protector of the Forest

Nanotech: None

Generic Extremist

Top 3 Skills: Survival, Slicing, Any combat

Other Skills: Any craft, Any knowledge, Alertness, Athletics, Resolve, Stealth

Aspects: I was at Woodstock IX, Trees are people too, Owe my life to the clan

Nanotech: None – that anyone else in the camp knows about

LOCATIONS

In this section, we'll discuss a few sample aspects for locations, and give sample locations across a variety of scales.

All locations need aspects to describe two things, at least. The first relates to the size or scale of the location. The second relates to the level of technology that infuses the area.

These are both rated on the standard ladder of success. In addition to these aspects, locations should also have a few notes about how they connect to other locations, especially important locations and information about which corporation(s) have major connections. Mix and match as you

need to. See the examples below for ideas about how this might work out.

Bonus	Rating	Scale	Tech
+8	Legendary	Planet	Mad Science
+7	Epic	Country	
+6	Fantastic	State	Weird Science
+5	Superb	Metropolis	
+4	Great	City	Modern
+3	Good	Village	
+2	Fair	Skyscraper	Fully wired
+1	Average	Building	Basics
0	Mediocre	Home	Primitive
-1	Poor	Room	Untouched
-2	Terrible	Closet	Isolated

Table 8. Scale and Tech ratings for locations.

Aspects for locations might describe the sights, sounds, or smells – the physical presence of the place. The aspects might describe the ambience – how it feels to be there. You might need an aspect to describe the types of people there. Whatever you need

in order to have it come to life, do it. There's no limit. Really.

Keep in mind that players can still use declarations to add aspects to a location that you might not have covered. That's okay. Remember: this is about collaboration, not ownership.

- Impulse buyer beware
- Uncomfortably loud
- Creepy noises and lights
- Ultra-antiseptic
- Miracle it's in one piece
- Haphazard workers
- Efficiently focused staff
- Bustling with life
- Customer is always right
- Gaudy, in a tasteless way
- No accidents in 5 days

Some Sample Locations

The City (Was New New York City, After Old New York city got flooded, but people were lazy)

Size: Metropolis

Tech: Modern (+4)

Aspects: Crowded, Noisy, Smells like a gym sock, Parking is scarce, Bright lights-big city, Dreamers and Cast-offs, Mixing pot

Shopping mall

Size: Skyscraper (turned sideways)

Tech: Modern (+3)

Aspects: Impulse buyer beware, You've got to have it, Cheap Eats, What's that smell?, Gaudy in a tasteless way

R&D Facility

Size: Building

Tech: Mad Science (+8)

Aspects: No accidents in 1 day(s), Ultra-antiseptic, Absent-minded researchers, Buzzing with potential, Full cavity search security

City Park

Size: Small Village

Tech: Untouched (-1)

Aspects: Peaceful but surrounded, Lots of hiding places, As green as it gets

NANOPUNK CHARACTER SHEET

Name:	Age:	Player:
Current Goal:		Fate Points:
Looks:		Refresh Rate:
		Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Extremist

Skills								
Superb	+5	_____	_____	_____	_____			
Great	+4	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____		
Good	+3	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
Fair	+2	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Average	+1							

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NANOPUNK CORPORATION SHEET

Name:	Player:
Description/History:	Fate Points:
	Refresh Rate:
	Current Goal:
	Bot Agenda:

[illegible]

		Influences			
Superb	+5	_____	-----		
Great	+4	-----	-----	-----	
Good	+3	_____	_____	-----	-----
Fair	+2	-----	-----	-----	-----
Average	+1	_____	_____	_____	-----

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