

ALTERNITY

Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

FUSION

A GUIDE TO CYBERTECH



CHAPTER ONE: New Rules

SR Trudeau

A L T E R N I T Y®

Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

FUSION

A GUIDE TO CYBERTECH

Credits

Based on the ALTERNITY® rules by **Bill Slavicsek** and **Richard Baker**

Designer: SR Trudeau

Additional Design: Neil Spicer

Editors:

Cover Artist: SR Trudeau

Interior Artist: SR Trudeau

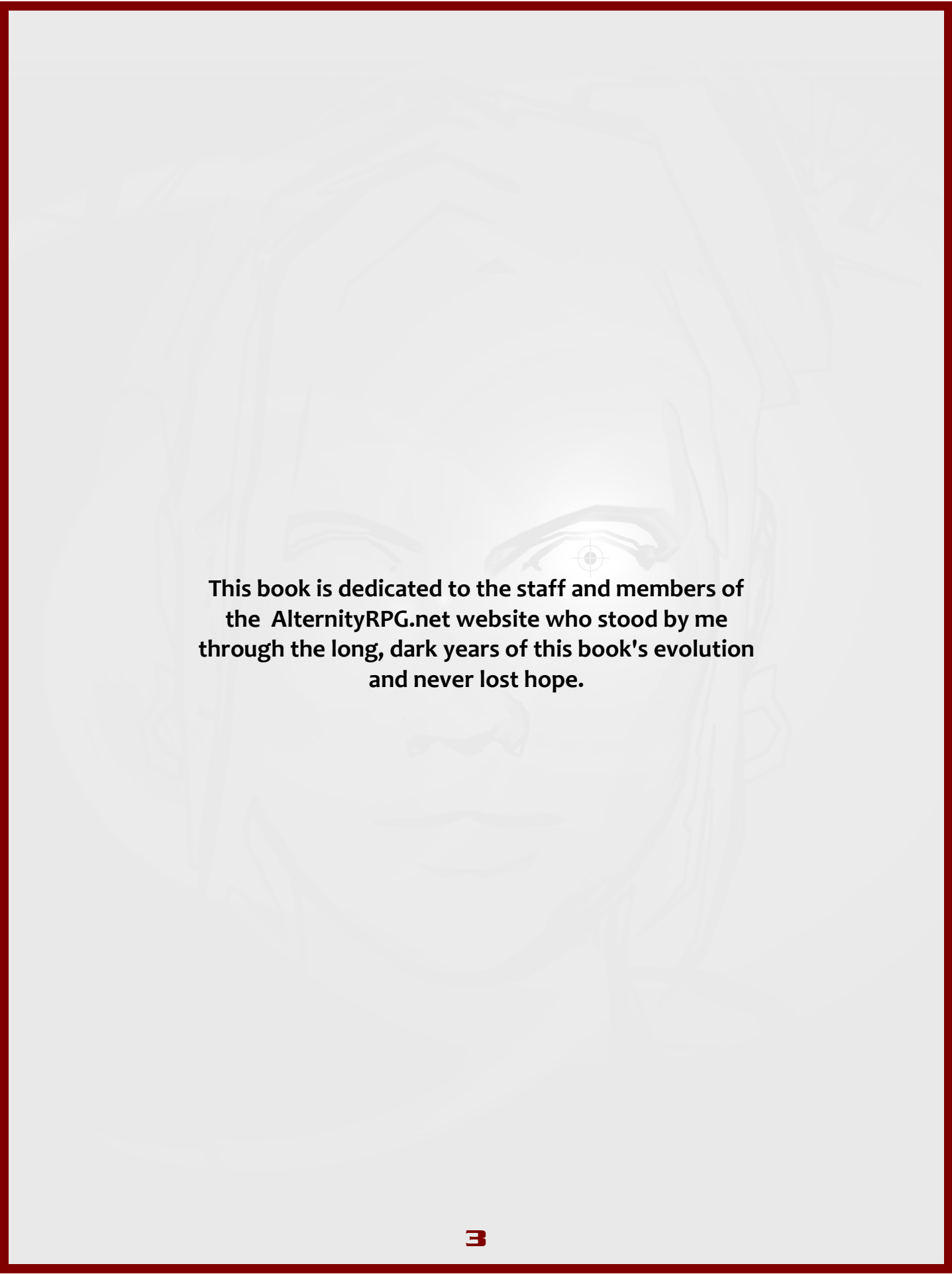
The ALTERNITY logo is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is reproduced here without permission.

This material is fan-created and provided free of charge to any and all interested parties. Permission is granted to make and distribute copies of this document in its entirety if done so free of charge.

This material is protected by copyright. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of the author.

This material is a work of fiction. Any similarities to actual people, places or events is purely coincidental.

©2009 SR Trudeau. Made in Canada.



**This book is dedicated to the staff and members of
the AlternityRPG.net website who stood by me
through the long, dark years of this book's evolution
and never lost hope.**

Chapter One:

New Rules

Cybernetic Prevalence

Cybernetic Prevalence (CP), is a tool for determining the proliferation of cybertech within a given society. In order to have a CP score higher than zero, a society must at least possess the necessary technology to create cybernetic devices. Our society, for example, is just on the cusp of achieving a CP score of 1. Whereas a society such as the Borg from the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* television series would be very near the top with a score of CP4.

Obviously, the higher the CP score, the easier it becomes to purchase and implant cyber gear. Prices fall and the gear itself evolves to have less impact on the biology of the host. These two side effects of CP are discussed in detail later in this chapter under the headings, **Cyber Tolerance** and **Price Scale**.

CP0 Societies that have progressed to a level in which cybertech becomes possible do not necessarily invent the technology. A cultural taboo against modifying the body may be in place or their science simply failed to go in that direction. Either way, this society has not adopted any cybertech whatsoever and it simply does not exist.

As a default, this category also covers those societies who do not yet possess the necessary technology to create cybertech.

CP1 Societies who have just discovered cybertech and those who have had it for much longer but only make use of it at minimum levels fall into this category. Very few implants have been developed and even fewer are actually used by individuals. This could be due to strict governmental regulation,

extreme cost or they have been limited to medical purposes only. Cybertech is rare and may not be widely accepted. It could even be seen as a grotesque mutilation that is shunned by most people.

CP2 Societies that have accepted the existence of cybertech and use it sparingly fall into this category. Cybertech remains expensive, but the military, corporations and the wealthiest of individuals do use it to their own advantage. It is in this type of society that cybertech implants begin to appear as a true enhancement over the frailty of flesh.

CP3 Societies in this category have managed to bring down the cost of cybernetic enhancement and many people seeking an advantage over their competitors have opted to use it. Cybertech is common and relatively inexpensive. On the flip side of the coin, this is also the point at which oppressive governments and corporations begin to abuse cybertech, forcing it upon their citizens and/or employees.

CP4 Societies that have either embraced cybertech with an almost religious fervour or have had it forced upon them by an oppressive government or corporation fall into this category. Cybertech is everywhere and implanted in everyone. In a consumer-based society, dozens (maybe even hundreds) of corporations vie for control of an ever growing marketplace, driving the cost of cybertech to its lowest possible levels. Alternatively, the government or other ruling body may force all individuals to accept a monitoring device that tracks their movements, habits, associations and possibly their most private thoughts.

One possible exception to this could be a society of colonists, who require cybernetic implants

in order to survive the planet's harsh environment. Although every member of the society would have at least one implant, they could be of any level from CP1 to CP4.

CP5 These societies have evolved to the point in which natural development and cybernetic enhancement has blurred to indistinction. Mothers pass on just as much cybernetic information and material as genetic information and material to their children. A lack of cybernetic enhancement is considered an anomaly and is treated as if it were a disease.

Cyber Tolerance

Cyber Tolerance (CT) represents the body's ability to host and provide energy to cyber gear. Cybertech can only function if it is implanted into a living host and is given full access to the body's constant supply of bioelectric energy. At first glance, it may not appear that a body could produce enough energy to power even one piece of gear, let alone a dozen or more. But it can.

It is important to remember that cybertech assumes many hidden technologies like superconductors, quantum-based computers, super-materials and nanotechnology. When these tools of the future are combined, energy requirements drop sharply.

However, the body cannot produce limitless energy on demand. So, cybertech adopts a form of energy rationing using its cytronic circuitry. Energy is channeled throughout the body, away from where it is not being used to where it is needed. This 'energy traffic' is controlled by the Main Cytronic Processor (a technology described later).

The next problem on the list is the energy production capacity per pound of flesh. The more flesh you remove in favor of artificial components, the less energy there will be available to use. Eventually, if enough flesh is taken away, the remaining energy being produced won't be sufficient for both technological and biological use. This will lead to intermittent cytronic failures, nerve disorders, brain damage and, if left untreated, death.

Balance is the key here. A delicate game of risk management in which the player must tread

carefully and pro-actively. Mistakes will be costly. The technology won't abide them, the body will suffer for them and the unique cyber-disease called cykosis is counting on them.

In game terms, CT is just a number. The number begins as the hero's natural Constitution ability score. This number is then modified by a short list of factors. The list is given in a specific order. Following that order is the only critical part of this process. You are free to experiment with different CON scores or modify the factors in any way you wish, but the order of the list must not change.

CT Score Factors

- 1) Constitution score.
- 2) Achievement Benefits.
- 3) Cyber Prevalence.
- 4) Perks and/or Flaws.
- 5) Optional Enhancements.

The natural, unmodified Constitution score always comes first. It is the foundation on which everything else is built, from CT to hazards to cykosis.

Some Achievement Benefits make it possible to modify the hero's Constitution ability score. These changes would be made now.

Cyber Prevalence comes next. Simply put, the higher the CP level the more gear a hero can cram into his body. Consult the table provided below.

CP	CT Modifier
1	0.25
2	0.50
3	1.00
4	2.00
5	4.00

Perks & Flaws may also have an effect on CT. They are considered transient modifiers, able to appear and disappear through the course of a hero's career. Because of this, Perks & Flaws may only affect the modified CT score, after Achievement Benefits and Cyber Prevalence.

Cyber, psionic, mutation and FX modifications are special cases. Some cybertech can increase both

Constitution and/or Cyber Tolerance. Some psionic, mutation and FX abilities can increase or decrease both Constitution and Cyber Tolerance. It will be up to the GM to decide which procedure is appropriate for his or her gaming world. The only advice I would give would be to try to fit each factor into one of the existing factors on the list. If it is a permanent change, treat it like an Achievement Benefit. If it is a temporary change, treat it as a Perk or Flaw. If the ability makes it possible to use new technology or ignore the limits of current technology, treat it as Cyber Prevalence.

Not all of these factors may apply, especially at hero creation, and in the game you are playing they might not even exist. As each factor becomes available, however, the CT score should be recalculated according to the list.

Price Scale

As with most things in life, the price of any given product is greatly affected by its level of technology and the ease or difficulty with which it can be acquired. Cybertech is no different.

Technology is represented by the existing Progress Level scale found in Altermity. Every item in this book has a suggested Progress Level rating. Likewise, acquisition is represented by the existing Availability scale found in Altermity. Every item also has a suggested Availability rating.

Each level of these scales raises or lowers the cost of an item by a factor of 10. So, a PL6 item being purchased by a hero living in a PL7 society would be only one-tenth the listed cost. This also means that a PL6 hero attempting to purchase a PL7 item would find the cost has increased by ten times the listed price. Availability has the same effect. Attempting to purchase a Controlled item without the proper permits increases the price of that item by a factor of 10. This also means that a hero with proper permission to own Military grade items can purchase Controlled items at one-tenth the listed cost. Or even Common items at one-hundredth the cost.

More than one factor may apply to a single item. It could be made cheaper by its old technology, but more expensive due to its restrictions. A nuclear weapon, for example, follows this model. By PL7, nuclear weapons would be extremely cheap and easy

to construct. As a weapon of mass destruction, however, they would remain guarded by a Military rating.

Note: You may find that several factors combine to make an item essentially free. There is nothing wrong with that. This should even be a common event in high CP societies.

The Cytronic Network

This section provides a detailed description of how FUSION cybertech actually works. It is important to be familiar with this system as many of the new rules and features are based on it.

Take a look at the diagram on the following page. It is a model of a typical cytronic network. Biological parts are in red. This includes the brain, the nervous system and various limbs and organs. Cybertech parts are in blue. This includes the nanocomputer, cytronic wiring and various pieces of gear. The gray box is also a piece of cybertechnology, but it has a very special set of functions that act independently of both the brain and nanocomputer, so it is treated as a separate entity in these rules.

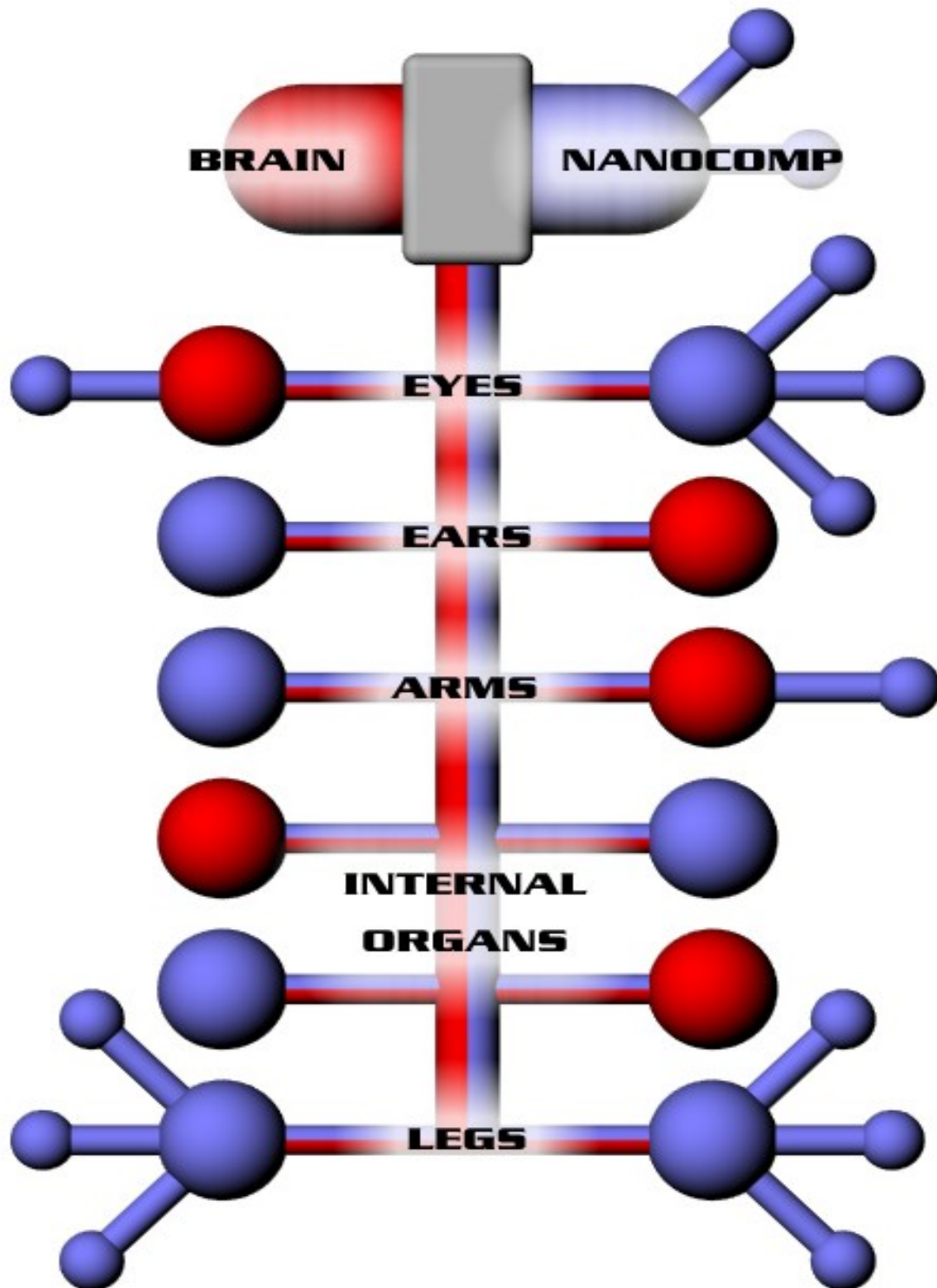
The first thing you may notice is that some gear appears to have gear of its own. These are special enhancements called Plugs. Each plug is specifically designed to enhance one single piece of gear. The benefit here is that since these plugs are attached to the gear, not the body, they usually do not have an impact on cyber tolerance. Also, in some cases, a plug is a cheaper alternative to replacing a piece of gear with a better model. The downside is that they are essentially a jury-rigged device and are the first thing to go when a hero suffers damage to his cyber gear.

Similarly, some plugs are designed to be attached directly to living organs. This is the case with filters, shunts, armor shells and other items that only affect that specific organ. They may or may not require a connection to the cytronic network depending on their function(s).

Another point of interest is the fact that the cytronic network goes everywhere, even to organs that don't have any gear. This is done to more easily facilitate the implantation of future gear and as part of the energy rationing system.

One last point concerns the sharing of

CYTRONIC NETWORK



information between the nervous system and the cytronic network. Unlike the cytronic wiring found in the *Player's Handbook*, the cytronic network does not allow this to happen. Instead, all signals (both biological and cytronic) pass through the Main Cytronic Processor (the gray box) for translation and routing. This unit is essentially a nanocomputer in itself, but the hero has no access to it and, therefore, no control over it. It functions automatically according to strict protocols and is very well protected against all attack forms.

Types of Cyber Gear

This refers to the level of control the hero has over a particular piece of gear. There are three types of gear.

The first type is Active. Active gear is fully integrated into the cytronic network and allows the hero full control over its capabilities. Sometimes these advanced gear systems can even be upgraded with new programming, granting them new abilities or improving performance. The nanocomputer itself is a perfect example of this type of gear.

The second type is Passive. Passive gear just sits there. It has no electronics, no connection to the network and cannot be accessed, programmed or upgraded (except by surgery, of course). Basic armor plating (both dermal and skeletal) are good examples of this type of gear.

The third type is Switch gear. As the name suggests, it can go either way. Sometimes this is an add-on that must be purchased. Other times it may be a built-in option. The best thing about Switch gear is that, once it is turned off, it is completely invisible to cytronic scanners and completely safe from any form of hacking. Some Switch gear even becomes immune to electrical and EMP attacks. You can read about these attacks in the Hazards chapter, complete with rules for an entire spectrum of energy attacks.

Qualities of Gear

Cyber gear is available in four levels of quality based on the MOGA scale. Like everything else in this book, the choice of quality is about risk. Lower quality gear can be had at much lower prices, but it

will cost you later in the form of high penalties applied to the hero's rolls for damage and cykosis resistance. Higher priced gear can actually help the hero later on in the form of bonuses to those same rolls, but this gear is very expensive.

Wetware (Marginal) is used cyber gear.

That's right, someone had it before you. It's cheap, plentiful and they can stick it in you right now. Best not to ask too many questions, though.

Cost: 50% listed price
Penalty: +1 step

Shelfware (Ordinary) is just what it sounds like, off the shelf of your favorite local chop shop. It's how most people acquire cyber gear.

Cost: 100% listed price
Penalty: none

Customware (Good) is the next grade up. It's similar to shelfware, but made specifically to order. This effectively eliminates complications down the road.

Cost: 150% listed price
Bonus: -1 step

Customware requires a CP score of 2 or higher.

Synthware (Amazing) is the cybertech state-of-the-art. It utilizes the latest in synthetic living tissues (hence its name) to create cyber gear that is resistance to damage and cyber diseases (including cykosis).

Synthware requires a CP rating of 3 or higher.

Cost: 200% listed price
Bonus: -2 steps

Qualities of Facilities

Once you have chosen your gear, it's time to choose a facility to have it implanted. The quality of the facility has a direct effect on the success of the surgery and the length of the recovery time. Facilities charge a fee based on a percentage of the listed cost of the gear being implanted.

Chop Shops (Marginal) are filthy hovels run by incompetent and unlicensed staff. Instruments are barely functional and cleanliness is a lost art. The only reason to visit one of these facilities is their 'no questions asked' policy.

Cost: 10%
Penalty: +2 steps

Outlets (Ordinary) are licensed dealers and installers of cyber gear. They are competent, but have only a minimum of surgical equipment available.

Cost: 20%
Penalty: +1 step

Clinics (Good) are usually attached to hospitals looking to cash in on the cybertech industry. They have access to much better equipment, but charge a much higher fee.

Cost: 30%
Bonus: -1 step

Cybersuites (Amazing) are highly specialized hospital suites found mainly in government and corporate funded institutes where the most advanced R&D in cybertech is carried out.

Cost: 50%
Bonus: -2 steps

Qualities of Surgeons

Once you have chosen your gear and the place to have it implanted it is time to shop for a surgeon. Surgeons also come in four levels of quality, again using the MOGA scale. A surgeon's skill score is the basis for the surgery roll, but it also effects recovery times post-op. Surgeons charge a fee based on a percentage of the listed cost of the gear being implanted.

Butchers (Marginal) are the lowest of the low. Most often they are former doctors who had their license pulled for performing illegal or immoral procedures or experiments. They are cheap and don't ask any questions.

Cost: 10%
Skill: 10

Installers (Ordinary) work under the supervision of surgeons in clinics and hospitals. Think of them as surgeons in training.

Cost: 20%
Skill: 12

Surgeons (Good) are quite skilled and very competent. They are also quite expensive.

Cost: 30%
Skill: 14

Cyber-surgeons (Amazing) are the specialists in the field of cybertech. Their skill blurs

the line between work and art. Paying the bill may cause some blurriness as well.

Cost: 50%
Skill: 18*

* *Cyber-surgeons are the elite and can have higher scores, at a price. For every skill point above 18 (to a maximum of 24) add 20% to the fee.*

Recovery

Recovery from surgery is based on the total Cyber Tolerance cost of all gear implanted during the surgery. Each point of Cyber Tolerance equals 1 week of recovery time. This time can be reduced (or increased) using a Constitution feat check, modified by the skill roll result of the surgeon and the quality of the facility.

The surgeon's skill roll result adds or subtracts steps to the feat check based on the MOGA scale. A Marginal result gives a +1 step penalty, an Ordinary result has no effect, a Good result gives a -1 step bonus, and an Amazing result gives a -2 step bonus.

The quality of the facility also applies step penalties or bonus as listed in their descriptions.

The result of the hero's feat check adds or subtracts a specific number of days from each week spent in recovery. A Critical Failure result adds 2 days, a Failure adds 1 day, a Marginal has no effect, an Ordinary subtracts 1 day, a Good subtracts 2 days, and an Amazing result subtracts 3 days. So, if a hero who is looking at two weeks of recovery time achieves a Good result, for example, he would only spend 10 days of a possible 14 in recovery.

Option: If preferred, a new feat check can be made at the beginning of every week, instead of rolling for it all in one go.

Training

Every piece of gear in FUSION already has a cost in skill points associated with it (if any). This, however, is only the *minimum* cost. The player is free to spend more skill points. By spending more skill points during training, and only during training, the player may choose a bonus towards either skill or resistance for one of the pieces of gear his hero is learning how to use.

Skill checks come up often when using the FUSION system, especially in times of great stress and danger, when the successful use of cyber gear is in question. Damage resistance comes into play nearly every time the hero suffers damage. They are important considerations.

In order to become eligible for this option the hero must first hire a cybertech trainer. The trainer will charge the hero a fee for every day he is employed. Training takes a number of days equal to the number of skill points spent on training. So, all totaled, the hero must spend both skill points and cash to gain the benefits of training.

The amount of this fee is up to the GM. Keep in mind that the fee will likely soar if the gear is illegal, highly advanced or very unique (custom designed by the player).