

“A Cyber Punk RPG of Shared Consciousness and Shared Consequences”

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Headspace is a role playing game that explores human emotion, memory and personal identity. The world of Headspace is a dark future where technology has begun to alter not just our bodies, but how we feel emotion and even think.

In this future an advanced neural networking technology, Headspace, has been developed which allows its wielders to connect, their very consciousness directly into each other's mind. Jacking into the Headspace comes with a cost; there is no going back. Once your minds are bound together, your every thought, sensation, emotion and even dreams are shared; over any distance at the speed of thought.

Why would anyone do this?

In Headspace, world governments struggle to maintain order and have all but completely usurped their authority to gigantic Corporations that now fight for control of Earth's few remaining resources. Within this future few stand against the tide of corruption and corporate greed. Fewer still have the resources and abilities to make a difference.

You could be that difference. You and your friends could be these people who stand against the corporate greed and make a better world for people left in the margins of society. But to accomplish such a great task with so few people you will not only need the latest weapons and cyber technologies but the ability to work together, seamlessly sharing your skills and abilities, operating not as a group of individuals but as a perfect team, within the Headspace.

Note: Headspace deals with complex emotions and often there negative consequences. This game regularly deals with emotional themes and memories associated with traumatic events.

What does Shared Consciousness mean?

- A balanced story showing good, the bad of the tech. It is powerful but that power comes at a personal cost.
- Once you jack in, it's until death do us part and even then...
- Sharing Knowledge, unlimited personal growth and team work.
- Dealing with other people's thoughts, dreams, and conflicting emotions.
- Questions of personal privacy.
- Questions of whether the emotion I have is really mine or the Headspace.
- All conversation involving the Operators is shared, since there is no off switch no Player has a seen by themselves etc..
- Ability to share other sensory inputs with effort.
- The Headspace gives all of the operators a shared psychological space. Any operator can speak telepathically across any distance with any other operator from your Cell (those who share the same Headspace implant). This means all operators can maintain conversations in all scenes whether they are all physically present or not. Very little information is kept private by the players.

Operators can even share sensory information including what they are seeing with some limited concentration.

The Headspace Social Contract

- I've thought about how to deal with this element of the game quite a bit. At Cons the X card is the first thing I explain before I even talk about my game.
- I've allocated a chunk to this for a few reasons. Firstly few games acknowledge triggers in the text and I want a game that deals with heavy emotional costs to bring it up quickly and easily and secondly I want to approach this discussion in a mature and meaningful way.
- I want to encourage play through mutual safe space.
- I don't feel Headspace is inherently a dangerous game to play, but people being clear up front are important. Also, while some players may love to explore emotional issues I fully respect that some people will just not want play this game for their own reasons.
- ASIDE, BUT RELATED: If you have thoughts on the "Hard Choices" of Headspace and if they should be re-worded to avoid hard triggers but still mean the same thing. They are supposed to be open to interpretation but that's a broad area.

Game Set-Up

You will need a few friends to play; one member of the group needs to play the role of the Game Master (GM). The GM is responsible for managing the grand elements (see Chapter XX - Running the Game). Everyone else in the game is a player and is responsible for playing an operator and representing that operator's actions in play.

Headspace can be played with between 4 and 6 people, including the GM. You will also need some paper, pencils or pens and at least two six sided dice (D6), preferably two for each player.

You will need a character sheet for each player and a stress track sheet to go in the middle of the table along with 7 simple tokens to track stress levels.

Chapter 2 – Playing the Game

Emotions are always in play

Human emotion is at the root of all operator actions in Headspace. The rules in this chapter rely heavily on emotions in play. Emotions are categorized into six core types: **Rage, Grief, Fear, Bliss, Lust** and **Pride**.

Rage is an emotion related to one's psychological interpretation of being offended and a tendency to react through aggressive retaliation. Rage can be expressed passively through annoyance and contempt, and in more aggressive behaviour through threats and physical violence. Physically, Rage causes an increased heart rate, blood pressure and levels of adrenaline.

Some examples are...

Grief is an emotion related to one's perception of loss, particularly the loss of someone or something which you have formed a bond to. Grief is most prominent when dealing with the loss of loved one or family, but it comes from all forms of loss.

Some examples of Grief are: Doubt, Greed, Shame, Remorse, Despair, Disappointment, and Hurt.

Fear is an emotion related to one's perception of a threat to one's well-being (health, wealth, status etc.) which causes a retreat from the threat. This can be internalized in the form of anxiety and depression or more extroverted in paranoia, escape and panic. Physically, Fear causes (XX)

Some examples are...

Bliss is an emotion related to one's perception of achieving happiness, from simple contentment to intense joy, most often to the ignorance of everything else.

Some examples of Bliss are: Amusement, Delight, Elation, Excitement, Happiness, and Pleasure.

Lust is an emotion related to one's perception or feeling of intense desire. Lust can take many forms such as a thirst for knowledge, sexual gratification or even power and revenge. Lust can be expressed in mundane forms such as a distinct need for a hamburger but it is often an extremely powerful psychological force producing an intense wanting for an object or a circumstance to fulfill an emotional need.

Some examples of Lust are: Avarice, Envy, Lust, Affection, Empathy, Friendliness, and Protectiveness

Pride is an emotion related to one's perception of one's personal status and accomplishments. Pride can be negative, referring to an inflated sense of one's status (hubris). In a positive light, Pride refers to the sense of satisfaction from your own or another's actions usually towards someone or a group of people.

Some examples of Pride are: Courage, Hope, Trust, Satisfaction, Duty, and Loyalty.

These six emotions are referenced in play by an operator's **Baggage, Discipline** and **Stress**.

Baggage represents the emotional past of an individual's experiences and memories of a particular skill. When your operator thinks about the memories and experiences of a skill, the emotion that most often comes to mind is the Baggage. Baggage does not need to be traumatic or even negative. Positive emotions are just as engaging during play. Each of an operator's 3 skills will have one of the six emotions assigned to it during operator creation as the skills Baggage (see Chapter XX).

Discipline represents an operator's present state of mind and measures his ability to control each of his emotions and not let the Baggage of a skill from overwhelming his decision making and influencing his actions. During operator creation a Discipline value will be assigned for each of the six emotional types. Disciplines range from -3 (little to no control) to +3 (absolute control) and are assigned during operator creation (see Chapter XX).

Stress represents an immediate and dangerous accumulation of raw emotions within the Headspace. Stress is tracked for each emotional type in six pools which are shared by the entire group. Stress is managed by the GM during play (see Chapter XX Running the Game).

Making Moves

The most basic action a Player can take while playing this game is a Move. A Move represents an operator doing something within the fiction under duress, be it hacking a security system or shooting a gun. If an operator is not under emotional stress then the dice will rarely be rolled. Each Player can make 4 different types of Moves: **Professional, Headspace, Improvised and Connection.**

A **Professional Move** defines one of three Skills the operator has mastered and represents the operator employing that Skill to complete an action in spectacular form. Professional Moves are directly affected by the operator's Discipline.

A **Headspace Move** is when an operator doesn't have the required Skill but another member of the teams does. The operator uses the Headspace to access another operators mind and uses one of their Skills (Depending on group between 6 and 12 additional skills). Each Headspace Move is directly affected by the operator's Discipline.

An **Improvised Move** is when neither the operator nor any other team member has the required Skill but must accomplish an important task within the fiction. While success is still possible, failure will be swift and unforgiving.

A **Connection Move** is when the operator doesn't use a specific emotion based skill but instead defines a connection they have with a non-player character in the game setting. While Connection Moves are not emotionally charged, they are dangerous as they can easily attract unwanted corporate attention.

Moves and Dice

For Professional and Headspace Moves an operator always Rolls 2D6 + Discipline of the Skills Baggage. For Improvised and Connection Moves Roll 2D6.

Variations on Moves

Describe Failure on your own terms

At any time during a **Professional or Headspace Move** a Player may elect to choose failure instead of what the roll result would normally require. If the Player chooses to fail, they can describe the Baggage overtaking their decisions or they can choose to describe their operator maintaining control of the Baggage but not succeeding in the desired outcome.

Example using Baggage in failure

Example avoiding the Baggage in failure

Hard Choices

When you make a Headspace move, you may be forced to make 1 or more Hard Choices in order to succeed. These choices will have to be integrated into your original declaration.

Ongoing Modifiers

Sometimes you take an ongoing effect (-1 ongoing, +1 ongoing). These affect every Move roll you make and are cumulative.

Regret and Drive

Each operator in Headspace is defined by an action they deeply regret from their past, known as their Regret. Your Regret is a short statement that defines something your operator wishes had never occurred in their lives that is directly tied to a Corporate Secret from the chosen Setting (see Chapter XX). No one wants to share their deepest, darkest shames and misgivings, so these only surface in play during moments of great emotional stress.

When your characters rolls a 6- on a Headspace Move they are given the option to share their Regret to the group, while emotionally difficult the action allows a level of greater understanding between the operators and the stresses that they face as a group in the Headspace; this will also expand the Teamwork Buffer by one point. (See Managing Stress Page XX).

Revealing your Regret

Flashback Scene with the group (See Page XX), the entire team will benefit from a greater understanding of your operator and

Drives

Each operator will have to define a single grand goal of dealing with their own Regret, known as their Drive. A Drive can be focussed on Vengeance or Redemption. A Vengeance Drive is focused on acts of revenge against those viewed as being responsible for your Regret, whereas Redemption Drive is about working towards atonement for your Regret.

During play, anytime an operator makes a personal sacrifice working towards another operators Drive the group can refill the Teamwork Buffer (See Managing Stress Page XX).

Harm & Healing

Health

Your operator has 5 Health levels.

For each point of Harm you suffer, you take an ongoing -1 to all Moves until they recover from the damage or are **Taken Out** of play. Because success is rarely in question when you make a Professional or Headspace Moves injuries will make it progressively more likely that Stress will accumulate from Professional Moves and you will be confronted with more Hard Choices in order to succeed.

Armour and Harm

Armour is directly subtracted from Harm before any final damage is dealt to the operator.

Healing

You recover one level of health for each full day of rest. Healing can be accelerated with a White Coat using Treat or at a Clinic/Hospital (+1 Health Recovery) and with Drugs (+1 Health Recovery). Proper treatment and Drugs will heal 3 health levels a day.

White Coats can also administer field treatment to provide immediate benefit during a scene healing 1 health level or 2 levels at a cost (provided by the GM).

Being Taken Out

When you take your sixth point of Harm you are **Taken Out** from play. Depending on your preference, this will either take your operator out of the scene (i.e. unconscious, in shock, etc.) or result in Operator Death.

Note: While you are taken out no other operator may access your Headspace Skills and you may not be inflicted with Feedback.

Operator Death

If the player chooses to be permanently taken out, they no longer suffer any penalties from Harm until the end of the scene. At the end of this scene, the player narrates how their PC is taken out. They become a **Ghost Operator** within the Headspace and that Player then makes a new operator.

Ghost Operator s

Once connected to the Headspace, death itself doesn't erase a consciousness completely. It leaves a mark known as a ghost. The Ghost of an operator leaves a single skill of the dying player's choice forever left in the Headspace of the group. The Player creates a Skill Story (see Operator Creation page XX) related to the death scene and a Baggage best representing the state of mind of the Operator just before death (often these scenes will evoke Grief, Rage and Fear). In future scenes this skill is available to any member of the Headspace. The GM is encouraged to bring elements of the Ghost Operators personality into dreams as whispers from their forgotten minds.

Chapter 3 – Moves in Detail

Professional Moves

When you use one of your own Skills say what you do and roll + Discipline for the Skill's Baggage.

* On a 10+, Succeed without Stress.

* On a 7-9, Succeed and add 1 Stress of the Skills Baggage.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Succeed and add 3 Stress of the Skills Baggage.

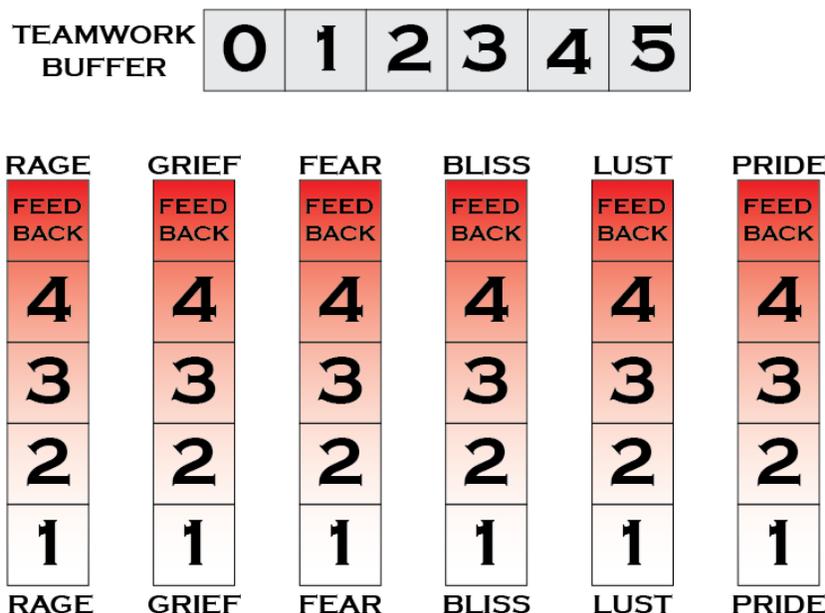
Or Describe failure on your own terms.

A **Professional Move** defines one of three Skills your operator has mastered and represents the operator employing that Skill to complete an action in spectacular form.

When an operator makes a Professional Move success is never in question, however the Baggage of your skill can bleed out from your mind and feed into the Headspace. This effect is referred to as **Stress**.

Stress Tracks

Stress builds up in six distinct tracks (one for each type of Baggage) that are shared by the entire group. Stress will build throughout each scene and continues to exist between each scene. Stress can be potentially added by both Professional Moves and by a GM using the **Inflict Stress Move** (See Running the Game Chapter XX). The GM is tasked with managing the groups stress tracks and can spend points from these pools during play to cause **Neural Shifts** and **Neural Backlashes** (See Running the Game Chapter XX). Stress Tracks are always in view of all the players. At the beginning of play, the GM sets the initial Stress at 1 for each track and until the players reveal their Regret's they cannot use the Teamwork Buffer to reduce.



No Stress? No Problem

If there is ever no stress in any individual track an operator who makes a Headspace Move using that baggage may opt to make a Professional Move instead.

Too much Stress? Could be a Problem

If any individual Stress pool hits 5 points then that emotion will **Feedback** on the entire group. Afterward's the Stress pool resets to 0 points. The only way to prevent a Feedback is to place additional stress in the **Teamwork Buffer** if it is available.

Feedback causes one operator to be consumed completely by the Baggage that caused the feedback. While consumed by the Baggage your next action will be narrated to you by the GM as you temporarily lose agency over your operator and they succumb to the emotional stress. At the end of the action you gain 1 experience.

Insert Feedback example

Note: The GM will also make a **Corporate Threat** in addition to the Feedback (see Running the Game Chapter XX). Corporate Threats represent the negative actions a Corporation makes against the group. Any operator in the group can choose to volunteer and take the Feedback; if no one volunteers then the GM will assign it.

Teamwork Buffer

For each operator that has revealed their Regret a point of Armour is permanently added to the Teamwork Buffer. Teamwork Buffer can be used to reduce the amount of stress added to the Stress Track. Teamwork Buffer has as many potential points as there are players in the game (3-5 points depending on the number of players).

When a player takes Stress they may elect to use the Teamwork Buffer to reduce the amount of stress by a number of points equal to the current Teamwork Buffer. The Teamwork Buffer is temporarily reduced by one point for each point of Stress it absorbs.

The Teamwork Buffer is refilled when players make Drive Sacrifices.

Insert Buffer Example

Drive Sacrifices

Any time an operator makes a personal sacrifice on behalf of another operators Drive any accumulated Stress in the Teamwork Buffer is reduced to zero.

Stress Reduction

Stress only goes down when Players make Headspace Moves (can reduce between 1-2 points), the GM spends points to inflict Neural Shifts/Backlashes (1-2 points) or the players sleep (each player reduces 1 stress track by 1 point after a night of uninterrupted rest).

In a 3 player game after a night of rest each player can lower a single point of stress.

Voluntarily Make a Headspace Move

You may voluntarily make a Headspace Move instead of a Professional Move with one of your own skills. While this action would potentially force you to deal with a series of Hard Choices it will not add additional Stress Points.

I notice that we have accumulated 4 points of Stress in Grief and my next Professional Move could potentially put us over the edge and cause Feedback. Given the high tension of the scene and no one wants to lose control, I opt to make a Headspace Move instead.

When you make a Headspace Move with your own skill you cannot reveal your Regret.

Headspace Moves

A Headspace Move requires an operator to borrow the required skill from another member of the team within the Headspace. While operators are used to dealing with their own Baggage they are not used to the unfamiliar Baggage of another operators skills.

Headspace Moves require the Player to deal with the associated Baggage within the fiction, represented by being faced with Hard Choices that must be incorporated into their actions in order to succeed. The only way a Player may be able to avoid making Hard Choices is to **Fail on their own terms**.

There are six Headspace Moves, one for each type of Baggage an operators skill has: **Rage, Grief, Fear, Bliss, Lust and Pride**. When you use another operator's skill you use the Headspace Move of the corresponding Baggage type.

Act with Rage

When you use a Skill from another operator which has Rage Baggage say what you want to do and roll + Rage Discipline.

* On a 10+, Succeed without emotional interference.

* On a 7-9, Make 1 Hard Choice from the list below and reduce the Rage Stress track by 1.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Make 2 Hard Choices from the list below and reduce the Rage Stress track by 2.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

Option: You may reveal your Regret and succeed without making 2 Hard Choices if you have not done so already.

Gain 1 experience.

- Ignore something obvious.
- Threaten or assign blame on someone.
- Provoke a conflict.
- Inflict collateral damage.

Act with Grief

When you use a Skill from another operator which has a Baggage of Grief say what you want to do and roll + Grief Discipline.

* On a 10+, Succeed without emotional interference.

* On a 7-9, Make 1 Hard Choice from the list below and reduce the Grief Stress track by 1.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Make 2 Hard Choices from the list below and reduce the Grief Stress track by 2.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

Option: You may reveal your Regret and succeed without making 2 Hard Choices if you have not done so already.

- Hurt yourself.
- Hurt someone else you care for.
- Neglect your responsibilities.
- Share your pain and misery.

Insert Example Text Here

Act with Fear

When you use a Skill from another operator which Fear Baggage say what you want to do and roll + Fear Discipline.

* On a 10+, Succeed without emotional interference.

* On a 7-9, Make 1 Hard Choice from the list below and reduce the Fear Stress track by 1.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Make 2 Hard Choices from the list below and reduce the Fear Stress track by 2.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

Option: You may reveal your Regret and succeed without making 2 Hard Choices if you have not done so already.

- Question your competence.
- Avoid a confrontation at any cost.
- Overestimate the danger.
- Leave something or someone behind

Insert Example Text Here

Act with Bliss

When you use a Skill from another operator which has Bliss Baggage say what you want to do and roll + Bliss Discipline.

* On a 10+, Succeed without emotional interference.

* On a 7-9, Make 1 Hard Choice from the list below and reduce the Bliss Stress track by 1.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Make 2 Hard Choices from the list below and reduce the Bliss Stress track by 2.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

Option: You may reveal your Regret and succeed without making 2 Hard Choices if you have not done so already.

- Do something wildly inappropriate.
 - Give up more than you should.
 - Ignore the risks.
 - Focus on your pleasures.
-

Insert Example Text Here

Act with Lust

When you use a Skill from another operator which has Lust Baggage say what you want to do and roll + Lust Discipline.

* On a 10+, Succeed without emotional interference.

* On a 7-9, Make 1 Hard Choice from the list below and reduce the Lust Stress track by 1.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Make 2 Hard Choices from the list below and reduce the Lust Stress track by 2.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

Option: You may reveal your Regret and succeed without making 2 Hard Choices if you have not done so already.

- Place your personal needs above the team.
 - Obsess over the forbidden.
 - Seize by force.
 - Protect and conceal an asset.
-

Insert Example Text Here

Act with Pride

When you use a Skill from another operator which has Pride Baggage say what you want to do and roll + Pride Discipline.

* On a 10+, Succeed without emotional interference.

* On a 7-9, Make 1 Hard Choice from the list below and reduce the Pride Stress track by 1.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Make 2 Hard Choices from the list below and reduce the Pride Stress track by 2.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

Option: You may reveal your Regret and succeed without making 2 Hard Choices if you have not done so already.

- Believe them without reservation.
 - Ignore the risks.
 - Make an unnecessary sacrifice.
 - Establish expectations in another.
-

Insert Example Text Here

Improvised Move

When you are confronted with a challenge that neither you nor any other operator has a Skill for, say what you want to try do and roll.

* On a 10+, Succeed and describe your actions in the fiction without emotional interference.

* On a 7-9, The GM will offer you a tough bargain or a heavy cost which you must accept to succeed.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, The GM makes a **Hard Move** and tells you what happens.

Insert Example Text Here

Connection Move

When you wish to know someone through your operator's history that could help you, declare who/what you are looking for and roll. Depending on the outcome and current pacing of play, the GM may opt to create a new scene where the connection is made.

* On a 10+, Succeed, you find someone that owes you a favour.

* On a 7-9, Pick 1 from the list below.

Or Describe failure on your own terms.

* On a 6 or less, Pick 1 from the list below and the GM will make a Hard Move.

- The contact is untrustworthy.
 - The contact asks for a big favour.
 - The contact hates you.
 - The contact is under threat.
-

Insert Example Text Here

Given that the operator is often involved in clandestine activities playing out the scene is likely required and bringing some backup isn't a bad idea either.

Chapter 4 – Accelerated Operator Creation

The chapter provides all the steps required quickly creating operators and beginning play using a pre-generated setting from **Chapter XX Pre-Generated Worlds** or from www.greenhatdesigns.com, each setting provides a ready to play world and/or city, pre-built corporations and the current jobs the operators are involved with. An experienced group should be able to create operators and begin play within 30-45 minutes (depending on the number of Players).

If the group wishes to build their own setting collaboratively and from scratch skip this chapter and go to **Chapter XX Immersive World Creation**. This process provides a fulfilling world creation process and is ideal for long term or campaign play where all the Players and GM want to have a direct hand in the games setting. Custom creation takes the first session of play (typically 3-4 hours depending on the number of Players).

Upon completing all the operators see **Chapter XX First Session**.

Most of everything you will need to play the game can be found on each operator sheets, the following steps will guide you through completing them.

1. AS A GROUP CHOOSE A SETTING

As a group look over the pre-generated settings in Chapter XX and discuss what kind of game you want to play. If there is disagreement, act like adults and compromise.

I sit down to play a game with Phil and Julie run by David. We look through the various settings and all like the idea of playing a group of professionals coping with a city on the edge of catastrophe and pick Vancouver Aftermath.

2. CHOOSE AN OPERATOR

Look over the XX professions in Chapter XX and choose one that interests you. The XX professions represent a large breadth of operator archetypes allowing the group to be sneaky, packing heat or some mix of the two. Everyone must pick a different profession; there are no two Ronin on the same team. If two people want the same profession, discuss as a group and compromise.

I look through the various professions and like the idea of an urban operator with skills like parkour so I pick the Runner.

3. DEFINE GHOST OPERATORS (GROUPS OF 3-4 ONLY)

If the player group is composed of between 3 and 4 players the group may decide to have an additional 1 or 2 Ghost Operators to fill out the Headspace skill pool. Ghost Operators are operators who previously worked with this Cell and died during a previous adventure leaving part of themselves within the Headspace.

For each Ghost Operator the group should pick one Operator that has not been selected by any player and a Skill they possess to be shared in the Headspace. The GM will then assign a Baggage to this skill (likely using a discipline under represented by the group).

The GM is encouraged to develop the history of the Ghost Operator and can optionally reveal a Regret/Drive for them, often an act of revenge on those that killed them.

4. NAME YOUR OPERATOR

Take a moment and decide on a name for your operator, you may wish to have a real name and/or a code name depending on your personality.

Marshall sounds good to me, but my friends call me Converse since I'm always wearing an old retro pair.

5. CHOOSE A STYLE

Your Style represents how your operator looks, and might indicate the types of people they stay with. There are 5 distinct styles (pick one): **Neons, Trans-humans, Net-head, Corporates and Drifters.**

As a **Neon** you demand the attention of others and rarely stay quiet and in the shadows of a crowd. Neons pride themselves on standing out from the masses of corporate society and most importantly not conforming to the needs of corporate society. Neons generally wear bright colourful clothing full of life, and avoid name brands at all costs. Neons embrace augmentation technology as long as it allows them to stand out from the sheep.

As a **Trans-human** you have embraced cybernetics and body augmentation. Likely believing this is the next step in human evolution. Whereas some replace because of injury you do so to be better or to just fit in with the rest of society.

As an **Net-head** you spend more time online in virtual worlds than in the real. Even when you aren't on the net you are always sporting the latest gadgets. Your flesh appearance is probably in decline but what you really care about is how many net followers you have.

As a **Corporate** you like to follow the rules and avoid rocking the boat of society. You keep your clothing and grooming clean and orderly and prefer the record that comes from reliable consumer brands over the drivel of Drifters and Neons. Whether you're a business savvy merchant or a Middle class staffer at the latest hi-tech outfit, you are always welcome in the ranks of corporate style.

If you're a **Drifter** you may be off the grid and lie on the fringes of society. You like it that way, not being the center of attention and living life by your own rules. Not a fan of big brother you tend to keep a low profile and keep moving.

I like the idea of a Runner who is discrete and has expensive tastes so I go with Corporate as my style.

6. CHOOSE A LOOK

Your Style gives you a pick list of how your operator looks to rest of the world both in the flesh and online, pick one from each of the following lists: **Eyes, Hair, Body, Clothes, and Avatar.**

Neons Look Like

Eyes: Colour Iris with no White, Orange, Purple, Red, Neon Green
Hair: Bright Dyes, UV Glow, Light Emitting
Body: Digital Tattoos, Skin TV, Chem Skin Colours

Clothes: Woven Hard Plastics, Vinyl, Light Paneled
Avatar: (hard to miss, describe yourself)

Trans-humans Look Like

Eyes: Cyclops Visor Implant, Cat Eyes, a Third Eye, Just plain Cyber Eyes
Hair: Chrome Dome, Dragonball Plastic, Animal Ears,
Body: More Metal than Flesh, Steampunk, Furry (tail optional)
Clothes: Hulked (One size too small), Missing where replacements are, Minimalist
Avatar: (not like a person at all, describe yourself)

Net-heads Look Like

Eyes: Glazed over, Drifting, Focused
Hair: Bald w/Retro Net Ports, Shoulder Length, Grunge,
Body: Lanky, Chunky, Young,
Clothes: Second Hand, Sweat Stained, Loose Fitting
Avatar: (very unique, probably NSFW, describe yourself)

Corporates Look Like

Eyes: Paranoid, Intense, Tired,
Hair: Trimmed/Groomed, Always Perfect,
Body: Athletic, Unassuming, Out of Shape
Clothes: Overtly Expensive, Uniformed, Business Casual
Avatar: (business appropriate and uniform looking, describe yourself)

Drifters Look Like

Eyes: Thousand yard stare, Eye Patch, Hopeful
Hair: Bandana, Long and unkempt, Spikey,
Body: Pierced, Ripped, Skinny
Clothes: Biker Leathers, Revolutionary Student, Casual
Avatar: (pre-selected iconography, describe yourself)

[Example text here]

7. CHOOSE DISCIPLINES

Assign the following scores to your six Disciplines: +2, +1, +0, +0, -1, -2. Your Discipline will tell you which emotions your operator is good at dealing with and which you are not. Put your highest score in which ever emotion you want to have confidence in controlling and your lowest score in the emotion that gets the better of you.

I start thinking about what kind of person Marshall is and decide that he has a strong sense of self-confidence and doesn't waver when supporting those he trusts others so I put my +2 in Pride. I put a +1 in Fear since I don't tend to panic. I also put +0 in Lust and +0 in Bliss, I figure I'm neutral in managing the things that give me joy. I put a -1 in Grief, I figure don't do well with loss. And finally I decide my operator has some serious anger management problems and assign the -2 to Rage.

8. DEFINE 3 SKILL STORIES

In Headspace each of your three operator skills (see Page XX) define not only what you are extremely good at doing, but tell you what kind of a person you are and what kind of emotional past you have had. Every Skill has a story to tell about whom you are and what you have done in your life.

First you are going to write your first **Skill Story** (a short 2-3 sentence summary of your experiences with this skill and how it relates to the setting). To do this pick one of your skills and one of the Events or Issues from the setting your group chooses in Step 1. Then combine these two into a short story. Don't be afraid to add to the existing fiction, if you wanted to have a direct role in a major event, this is your opportunity!

Events represent major changes to the world.

Issues are the long term and ongoing consequences.

*I want to define my **Parkour** skill first since that interests me the most. Reviewing the lists for Vancouver Aftermath I'm intrigued by the Issue "Flu Quarantine Zones". I write down my Skill Story for Parkour as "Learned Parkour to navigate the streets of Vancouver and smuggle supplies into and out of the Flu Quarantine Zones."*

You do this two more times for your other 2 Operator skills.

Insert Example

*My third skill is **Area Knowledge** and I decide this would pair perfectly with the Event "Food Riots". I write down my Skill Story for Area Knowledge as "Learned the streets and back alleys of Vancouver in order to get critical supplies to my family during the food riots of 2055".*

9. CHOOSE BAGGAGE

With three skill stories completed you should start to have a sense of your operator's attitudes and hopefully some of their background. Now we need to determine which Baggage is tied to which skill.

Think about your skill stories and the list of 6 emotional Baggage's: Rage, Grief, Fear, Bliss, Lust and Pride (see Page XX). Decide which Baggage relates to each skill and write it down, they don't have to be different.

*Thinking about my Skill Stories I decide to tie **Fear to Parkour** since I was terrified of getting the plague. I choose **Rage for my Pilot** as I needed to keep my cool in customs and had problems with my temper and patience on more than a few occasions. Lastly, I pick **Lust for Area Knowledge** as I was always hungry during the great famine.*

10. DEFINE REGRET AND DRIVE

At the beginning of play your operator has a single **Regret**, a dark regret from their past dealings with one of the Corporations and is directly tied to a single Corporate Secret from Setting chosen by the group in Step 1.

Corporate Secrets represent an action one of the Corporations made that directly contributed to one or more of the Events and Issues of the setting. Corporate Secrets are not known by those that are not involved and the Corporations don't like loose ends.

Each Setting (see Page XX) has a list of five Corporate Secrets (one for each Corporation in play), pick one and work with your GM define your Regret. You and the GM should work to fill out and define the fiction of the Corporate Secret based on your operator's participation in those events. If multiple players want to be involved in the same Corporate Secret the GM should take care to make the fiction consistent between the various Players.

Your operators Regret could be based on an action they made at the behest of the Corporation:

I was ordered/paid to shoot the rioters in the streets by Pacific Security Solutions.

Your Regret's can also be passive, you could have stood by while something terrible happened that you either did or were powerless to stop:

I stood by and watched/was paid off to look the other way as those begging for food were shot down by Pacific Security Solutions.

Strong Regret's place the guilt on your operator's shoulders but leaves the Corporation strongly involved in your actions.

Your Regret isn't something you initially want to share with anyone, let alone the other operators. Without the Headspace your operator would be happy to take their Regret to their grave.

However, once you reveal your Regret to the group it will make it easier for you to work together as a team (See Teamwork Buffer).

Each operator will also have **Drive**, a grand goal of dealing with your Regret. Your Drive is a possibly achievable goal to right the wrongs of your past and should directly involve the Corporation responsible.

Your Drive is generally defined as being either based on Vengeance or Redemption. A Vengeance Drive is focused on an act of retribution against the corporation to make up for your operators Regret. A Redemption Drive is more about personal atonement for your Regret.

[Example text here]

11. CHOOSE EDGES

Each operator has choices to make for a variety of Edges. Edges define specific character elements that are unique to your Professional and give you an edge over the competition. Edges are broken down into five categories: gear, contacts, assets, lessons learned, and At Ease bonuses.

Gear represents high quality weapons, armour, vehicles and cybernetics. Gear from an edge is customized to your character and not available to the other operators.

Contacts represent

Assets represent a person or a group/entity that supports you and is willing to directly act in support of your goals. They will require maintenance within the fiction to be maintained.

Lessons Learned represents a discipline your operator has greater control over due to your years of experience dealing with a specific emotion.

At Ease Bonus represents a specific area that your operator is more likely to stay emotionally stable and calm with; any Move you make in this situation will be at +1.

[Example text here]

12. CHOOSE AN UPGRADE

Each operator begins the game with one upgrade, a piece of advanced cybernetic technology that will provide a specific benefit during play. In the future additional upgrades may be purchased by spending XX experience points.

[Example text here]

13. INTRODUCE YOUR OPERATOR

Based on your defined look and skills introduce yourself to the team.

[Example text here]

Chapter 5 – The Operators

THE HANDLER

- Strategic thinker and manager of people.
- Often the public face of a team of operatives or the one behind the scenes in days of old managing field assets from afar.
- Likely employed as a manager of Corporate or Military assets/
- Negotiator.
- The person with the plan.
- When the plan falls apart you always have a contingency.
- Surveillance/Observation techniques
- Media: Michael Clayton (lead character), A-Team “Murdock”,

Skills

Coax

- You’re not just great at working with people; you’re the best at getting them to work for you. Used to convince someone of anything with any tools at your disposal from sex to money to calculated threats.

Contingency (S)

- Used when something goes awry. Can be used actively to assess a strategy or method or plans effectiveness.
- What would they do? Determine where the Guards etc.. would be
- Can be used when everything goes to shit to pull a solution or needed piece of gear out of your hat. “I planned for this contingency”

Observation

- Spot/awareness/notice / something is amiss etc..
- Surveillance/Counter-surveillance techniques and methods is the primary and advanced use.

Choose Edges

Where do you have embedded agents (pick one)? (Contacts)

- The Government
- A Corporation (pick from setting list)
- High Society

Who can you call for help/muscle (pick one)? (Assets)

- Street Toughs (name a gang)
- Corporate Operators (pick from Corporation setting list)
- The People (name a civilian group)

What lessons have you learned (pick one)? (Lessons Learned)

- Pride +1
- Fear +1
- Rage +1

Available Upgrades

Begin play with one Upgrade from the list below, you can add an additional upgrade every XX experience.

- **Rabbit Ears:** Audio enhancement suite, Level dampener, Enhanced hearing range (sub/supersonic), radio/cell link, music system.
- **Skin Weave:** Nano-woven skin armour (1-armour, +implant, +concealed)
- **Sensation Processor:** Enhanced sensory system, smell, touch and taste. Identify chemical compounds.

THE RONIN

- You used to be the best of the old age of veteran warriors before you turned on your corporate masters.
- Likely started in private overseas armies like Blackwater style and have grown “uninspired” with the paycheck as the bottom line.
- Insert street samurai/master less warrior code/philosophy.
- Media: Ronin (Movie, samurai code), Ghost Dog, Bourne, The American (Clooney flick). I tend to think of a lot of Vietnam stories ie: Warriors who are out of place.

Skills

Explosives

- If it goes boom, you’ve worked with it. Disarming/Making. Professional to IED.
- Creative uses and crazy technologies.

Tactics (S)

- Small unit tactical management. Sight lines, entry plans, teamwork in tight places. More about situational awareness than say Contingency.

Military Arms

- Derringer one shots to Anti-Material Rifles. Think the Sniper who got a kill from 2 KM a few years back level of skill.

Choose Edges

What is your armour (pick one)? (Gear)

- Ballistic Battle Armour (2-armour +obvious)
- Thermo-optic Cloak (1-armour, +camouflage)
- Subdermal Armour (1-armour, +implant)

Which weapon has seen you through the thick and thin (pick one)? (Gear)

- The Smart-Linked Silenced Sniper Rifle (3-harm, close/far, +AP +smart)
- The BAC9 40mm Anti-Material Rifle (6-harm, close/far, reload, HEAT)
- The Reaper 6mm Squad Assault Machine Gun (4-harm, close/far, suppressive, messy)

What lessons have you learned (pick one)? (Lessons Learned)

- Fear +1
- Grief +1
- Pride +1

Available Upgrades

Begin play with one Upgrade from the list below, you can add an additional upgrade every XX experience.

- **Wired Reflexes:** Once per scene you can ignore the Reload constraint on a weapon.
- **Nano-surgeon Delivery System:** Once per day you can instantly repair 1 point of Harm.
- **Juicer:** Adrenal stimulant system, once per day enhances your strength and ignores pain. +1-harm to Hand to Hand or Melee attacks + 1 Health Level until the end of scene and ignore all wound penalties, which may lead you to being taken out at the end of scene when you lose the temporary Health level.

THE RUNNER

- The Runner is the ultimate urban operator; you're always at home in the modern crowded metropolis and arcologies. Whether on foot, car or something more advanced you know every corner and sewer for getting yourself and your team mates into or out of trouble. You could be a professional courier, driver or...
- Urban explorer, Drivers.
- Media: Steve McQueen in Bullit, Fast and Furious saga, Akira, Blade Runner.

Skills

Pilot

- Everything the moves from bikes to boats to planes and aerodyne sky cars. Trick driving is your standard and getting the most out of the technology.

Parkour

- The City is your plaything ie Jackie Chan.
- You don't look at traditional urban barriers the same way as most others, you are always plotting your next hop/jump/bounce to safety.
- Could be used creatively in/for combat.

Urban Jungle (S)

- Intimate knowledge of the city, more than a GPS this represents cultural knowledge, who is who/where things are that I(we) need. How to avoid threats or use the city to your advantage.

Choose Edges

What is your ride (pick one)?

- Kaneda Cyberbike (1-armour, +Speed)
 - 1 Driver, recumbent design, max speed 130 mph.
- Torque all-wheel drive transport truck (2-armour, +Load +Tow)
 - Crew: 2, Storage area, max speed 70 mph.
- ArcLight "Sliver" Spinner aerodyne (1-armour, +Flight)
 - 1 Drive, 4 passengers, max speed 200 mph.

What is your escape route (at ease bonus) (pick one)?

- The Rooftops +1
- The Underground +1
- The Alleyways +1

What lessons have you learned (pick one)?

- Bliss +1
- Grief +1
- Rage +1

Available Upgrades

Begin play with one Upgrade from the list below, you can add an additional upgrade every XX experience.

- **Vehicle Headspace Link:** Connect your ride to the Headspace and drive remotely.
- **Muscle and Bone Stabilizers:** Ignore up to 3 Harm from the first fall or crash per scene.
- **Locomotive Cyberlegs:** Once every 8 hours move up to 60mph for a scene.

THE TECH

- The operator equivalent to the technical wizard.
- We have the technology and I am the tool to get it done, build and design for a specific plan or operation.
- Pilot Drones for tactical advantage or extra firepower.
- Hack computers/security systems, hacking also tends to lead to social outsiders.
- Media: William Gibson (just about anything), Tech supporters in Mission Impossible who are also field operatives. I prefer the Hacker coming off more like something out of Dragon Tattoo then 90's era Hackers, more mature.

Skills

Engineering (S)

- Build/Modify/Create/Upgrade. You understand the era's tech and are most at home in it's guts.

Drones

- Piloting unmanned aerial drones, most often through Wireless networks, possibly directly from the headspace.
- Utility, to Predator Military drones to Assassination robots.

Hacking

- Computers and the art of using the advanced cyberspace systems. Speed of thought interaction not keyboards.

Choose Edges

What is your drone (pick one)?

- Surveillance Drone (+flight, +silent, +A/V suite, +IR/UV/Thermo Camera)
- Worker Drone (+flight, +load, +tools)
- Attack Drone (+flight, Mini-Missile Pack: 3-harm, close/far, Reload, Loud)

Where do you work and occasional live (pick one)?

- A chop shop garage in a rough neighbourhood (name the neighbourhood)
- A beat-up panel van with the contents of a small radio shack.
- A protected corporate garage (pick the Corporation from the setting list).

What technology puts you at ease (at ease bonus) (pick one)?

- Weapons +1
- Computers +1
- Vehicles +1

Available Upgrades

Begin play with one Upgrade from the list below, you can add an additional upgrade every XX experience.

- **Toolbox Cyber limb:** Most every tool in your finger tips or in a thigh.
- **E/M Shielding:** Stun resistant armour (2-S-armour, +Implant)
- **Detachable Eyeball:** Video feed, just don't lose it.

THE WHITECOAT

- Whitecoat is spy jargon for the doctor but I'm applying the operator to a Sherlock meets Watson motif. While not THE planner, they are certainly a great thinker and problem solver.
- Field medic, ripperdoc, Coroner to a support troop in the army. Lots of interpretations.
- Media: BBC Sherlock.

Skills

Investigation

- From the small things to deductive reasoning of grander schemes

Psychology (S)

- Potentially quite useful in this game for assessing the states of your fellow headspacers and understanding the broader issues.
- Lie detection.
- Human empathy skills

Treat

- Medicine and Cyberware
- Perform a heart surgery and pull a bullet from someone's ass with Pliers and blowtorch.

Choose Edges

What is your medical at ease bonus (pick one)?

- Drugs +1
- Gun shots +1
- Neurology +1

Where do you work (pick one)?

- A sterile, professional and bureaucratic hospital. (name the hospital)
- The cramped, impoverished and essential clinic you run on the streets. (What neighbourhood?)
- Your illicit underground clinic and cybernetic chop-shop.(who do you pay off to keep it safe?)

What lessons have you learned (pick one)?

- Bliss +1
- Rage +1

- Lust +1

Available Upgrades

Begin play with one Upgrade from the list below, you can add an additional upgrade every XX experience.

- **Medical Suite:** Air hypo with drug storage, vital monitor, surgeons kit stored in arms and or legs. Using Treat can heal up to 2 Health without cost or 3 Health with cost.
- **Lung Mods:** Filters out most airborne toxins, can hold breath for 20 minutes.
- **Defibrillator Cyber Hands:** Electro shock hands for saving the dying (can revive a taken out operator) and can be used as in improvised stun attack (3-S-harm, intimate, reload, loud)

Chapter 6 – Gear and Technology

Gears' Descriptive Tags

Weapons, Gear, Armour and Cybernetics are all described using descriptive tags. Tags fall into three different categories. *Mechanical* describe a specific effect on what's going on in the fiction; *limits*, describe a limit on when you can use them and *style*, recommend you say something about them when used.

In the listings that follow, **+*[tag]***, like **+x** or **+y**, means to add that tag to the item's description. **-*[tag]***, like **-x** or **-y**, means to remove it. **+nharm**, like **+1harm** or **+2harm**, means to add n to the items existing harm. For instance, if you create a custom weapon whose base has a 1-harm and give it an option with +1harm, list 2-harm in its final description.

n-armour (1-armour, 2-armour etc.) (mechanical): reduces incoming harm by **n**.

n-V-armour (1-V-armour, 2-V-armour etc.) (mechanical): reduces incoming harm by **n** to a vehicle, reinforced structure.

n-ice (1-ice, 2-ice) (mechanical): reduces the amount of *E-harm* by **n**.

n-harm (1-harm, 2-harm etc.) (mechanical): inflicts **n** harm.

n-E-harm (1-E-harm, 2-E-harm): inflicts **n** harm to electronic systems or to users mind if they are in a Network battle.

n-S-Harm (style): it disables (stuns) its target for a number of actions equal to **S** without causing any harm. If used on a player any action they take is treated as an *Improvised Move*.

+nharm (+1harm, +2harm) (mechanical): adds **n** to the harm it inflicts.

+bonus (example) (mechanical): adds to a particular discipline or a particular move's roll, under the specified conditions.

+special (+night vision, +hold breath 10minutes) (mechanical): adds a special ability, most often related to drugs or cybernetics.

AI (artificial intelligence) (mechanical): it is not under anyone's direct control; it can think for itself and act within the limits of its programing.

AP (armour piercing) (mechanical): it ignores its target's personal armour, inflicting its full harm. Vehicular armour is not affected.

Applied (constraint): it requires Intimate contact and no interruptions for it to be used. The target is either cooperating or restrained. Contrast *Touch*.

Bulky (style) the item takes up a lot of space and/or is heavy as hell. This constraint will affect how and where the item can be effectively used within the fiction.

Area (mechanical, limit): its target is an area, not a person it fully affects everyone and everything there. An area weapon used in a crowded space will inflict its full harm to everyone.

Disposable (constraint): it has one use and then must be discarded or reloaded with difficulty.

Implant (constraint): it must be implanted in its user's body in order to be used.

HEAT (high explosive anti-tank) (mechanical): it's *Loud* and *Messy*. Furthermore it ignores armour even on vehicles. HEAT weapons will go through reinforced walls and generally just makes a mess out of anything that gets in its way.

Loud (style): everyone nearby hears it and can potentially pinpoint where it came from. It wakes up sleeping people and is generally distinct and difficult to ignore.

Messy (style): it's *Loud*. Furthermore it tends to be unreliable, both hitting everyone in the area or nothing at all and it always leaves a mess behind – property damage, bloody dismemberment and gore abound.

Ranges (constraint): tells you when and whether you can use a weapon or gear against a target or subject. The ranges from nearest to farthest are **Intimate, Hand, Close, Close/Far, and Far**.

Intimate (limit, a range): you can use it only when you are extremely close to your target, close enough to hold, kiss or garrotte. Arms reach is just out of range.

Hand (limit, a range): you can use it only when you're within arms' reach of your target.

Close (limit, a range): you can use it only when you're fairly close to your target, if you could play a game of catch with a baseball you'd still be in range (out to about 50 meters)

Close/Far (limit, a range): you can use it when you're either at Close or Far from your target.

Far (limit, a range): you can only use it when you're pretty far from your target. If you can see the whites of their eyes you're too close.

Reload (constraint): using it means you have to take a specific action to reload or reset it before using it again.

Remote (constraint): it can be used remotely at a distance or semi-autonomously.

Smart (style): the item is equipped with some kind of advanced targeting, this mostly affects the fiction but something that follows a target or goes around a corner isn't out of the question.

Suppression (mechanical, limit): at the operator's option, the weapon makes an *Area* attack, but must immediately *Reload*.

Soak (mechanical): can be used to ignore 1 point of harm, but this disables any related technology/item until fixed.

Touch (constraint): it requires only brief contact, passing touch to be used. Contrast *Applied*.

Worn (constraint): to use it you must wear it.

Weapons

Martial Arts Skill based:

Hand to Hand (1-harm, hand)
Monofilament Garrote (2-harm, intimate, AP)
Big Knife (2-harm, hand)
Bats, Crowbars (2-harm, hand, messy)
Katana/Machete (3-harm, hand, messy)
Mono Katana (3-harm, hand, AP, messy)

Light Arms:

Stun Gun (1-S-Harm, close, disposable)
Holdout/Derringer (2-harm, close, disposable, loud)
Revolvers (2-harm, close, reload, loud)
Automatic Pistol (2-harm, close, loud)
Heavy Revolver (3-harm, close, reload, loud)

Medium Arms:

Sub-machine Gun (2-harm, close, suppressive, loud)
Bolt Action Rifle (2-harm, far, loud)
Sawed Off Shotgun (3-harm, close, reload, messy)
Shotgun (3-harm, close, messy)

Heavy Arms:

Assault Rifle (3-harm, close/far, suppressive, loud)
Automatic Shotgun (3-harm, close, suppressive, messy)
Sniper Rifle (4-harm, close/far, loud)
Machine Gun (4-harm, close/far, suppressive, messy)
Grenade Launcher (4-harm, close/far, messy)
Missile Tube (6-harm, far, HEAT, disposable)
Rocket Pack (6-harm, far, HEAT, reload)

Explosives:

Flash bang (2-S-Harm, close, disposable, loud)
Fragmentation (4-Harm, close, suppressive, disposable, loud)
Claymore (5-Harm, close, suppressive, disposable, loud)

Ammunition:

Armour Piercing (add AP to weapons harm effects)

Modifications/Options:

Silencer (-loud)

Armour

Light and Concealable (1-armour)

- These represent everything from armoured clothing to light weight bullet proof vests. It's not obvious to the untrained eye that you are wearing armour, but it doesn't offer a lot of protection.

Combat (2-armour, +Bulky)

- Combat armour represents flak jackets and SWAT uniforms offering a balance of protection and mobility. Everyone knows you're wearing and looking for trouble. The Bulky is likely to slow you down while running and might make it hard to squeeze through a tight spot but it does have plenty of pockets.

Advanced (3-armour, -1 Ongoing due to mobility)

- Advanced armour usually represents the realm of bomb disposal suits, offers protection to all but the most damaging weapons and explosives.

Full Cyborg (3-armour, +Implant, +1 Health Level, +Heavy as Hell)

- Full limb and armoured body replacement offers great protection at great financial cost and psychological toll as your brain is now sitting in a metal jar for the rest of your life. Full military cyborgs are very heavy and not always welcome in public places. Most full cyborg bodies are considered property of a Corporation and upon retirement they expect the combat model back, see brain in a jar.

Cybernetics

Man machine technology is commonplace.

Wi-fi is the normal, while "jacking in" is still used as the common slang cable connections are pretty uncommon.

Headspace Technology

The Headspace mostly provides the basis for the group to share skills, memories and emotions however for all practical purposes it is essentially a secured wireless network with near unlimited storage capacity. This means that the operators can connect and manage other devices directly through the Headspace.

However, if an operator is connected to another device via the Headspace (ie drone, internet) and is attacked electronically the attack can cause damage to other operators within the Headspace. The Headspace has an electronic armour of 2 but any damage done to it will affect all other connected operators.

CHAPTER 7 – Running the Game

There are many different science fiction genres, each with their own style or advice for GMing. Headspace is a dystopic near future of ruthless ambition, corporations praying upon the weak and the highly trained operatives with troubled pasts who work against them with emotional consequences. The rules in this chapter will help you run a game in that style.

The characters have rules to follow when they roll dice and take actions. The GM has rules to follow, too. You'll be refereeing, adjudicating, and describing the world as you go - Headspace provides a framework to guide you in doing so.

This chapter isn't about advice for the GM or optional tips and tricks on how best to play Headspace. It's a chapter with procedures and rules for whoever takes on the role of GM.

- Let the moves ride throughout a scene

GMing Headspace: A Framework

Running a game of Headspace is built on these: the GM's **Agenda**, **Principles** and **Moves**. The **Agenda** is what you set out to do when you sit down at the table. The **Principles** are the guides that keep you focused on that agenda. The GM's **Moves** are the concrete, moment-to-moment things you do to move the game forward. You'll make moves when players miss their rolls, when players fail on their own terms, when the rules call for it, and whenever the players look to you to see what happens. Your moves keep the fiction consistent and the game's action moving forward.

The GM's agenda, principles, and moves are rules just like Baggage or Disciplines or Health. You should take the same care in altering them or ignoring them that you would with any other rule.

How to GM

When you sit down at the table as a GM you do these things:

Describe the situation

Follow the rules

Make Moves

Exploit your prep

The players have it easy—they just say what their characters say, think, and do. You have it a bit harder. You have to say everything else. What does that entail?

Part of following the rules is **making Moves**. Your Moves are different than player Moves and we'll describe them in detail in a bit. Your Moves are specific things you can do to change the flow of the game.

Agenda

1. Make the operatives feel like hyper competent badassess in their specialities.
2. Present a world of ruthless ambition and emotional consequences.
3. Break the world in such a way that only the Team can fix it.

Principles

- Say what the Principles demand.
- Say what honesty demands.
- Say what the dystopia demands.
- Say what their troubled hearts demand.
- Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.
- Address yourself to the Operatives, not the Players.
- Name the citizens and describe their relationships.
- Consider each corporate agent's ulterior motive
- Map the relationships.
- Direct Corporate assets in the shadows.
- Assess the price of every life.
- Consider which Corporates benefit.
- Focus on what divides the characters.
- Ask the Operatives to explain their expertise
- Be a fan of the players' characters.
- Make a Threat Move that follows.
- Think of consequences, intended and otherwise.
- Begin and end with the fiction.
- Play to see what happens.

GM Moves

As the GM it is your job to put the operators in dire situations and it is their job to figure their own way out of them. During play you will do this by making an action called a **Move**. There is a common list of Moves that can be applied one of two ways; **Threat Moves** and as **Hard Moves**.

Threat Moves represent a soft threat, something that prompts the operators to react but only directly imperils them if they don't respond well to it. **Hard Moves** hit hard, beat up the operators and leave them gasping for air.

Threat Move Principles:

Threat Moves must follow logically from the fiction.

Threat Moves must give the operators an opportunity to react.

Threat Moves must set the stage for a future Hard Move.

Following from these principles, as the GM pick a Move and say what happens to the operators but stop before the final effect and ask "What do you do?"

- He swings the chainsaw right at your head. What do you do?

- You sneak into the garage but there's Plover right there, about to notice you any second now. What do you do?

- She stares at you coldly. 'Leave me alone,' she says. What do you do?

Hard Move Principles:

Hard Moves must follow logically from the fiction (and likely an earlier Threat Move).

Hard Moves are irrevocable by the Players.

Following from these principles, as the GM pick a threat and when you say happens to the operators include the effect and then ask “What do you do?”

- The chainsaw bites into your face, spraying chunks of bloody flesh all over the room. 3-harm and make the harm move!

- Plover sees you and starts yelling like mad. Intruder!

- 'Don't come back here again.' She slams the door in your face and you hear the locks click home.

The Threat Move sets up the more dangerous Hard Move. The Hard Move follows through with what was established by the Threat Move.

When it's time for a Hard Move, look back at the setup Threats(s) you have already made. What was threatened? What was about to happen, before the operator took action? Follow through on that, bring the heat to bear directly on the operators and fulfill with the promised consequences.

A Hard Move doesn't automatically equate to severe consequences. The severity of the threat is a separate issue, depending entirely on the fiction as already described. The Hard Move only means the consequences, big or small, take full effect immediately.

Making Hard level Moves are not about being mean, or punishing a Player for a bad roll. They also aren't about inventing new trouble. It's about fulfilling the promise made by the fiction.

As a GM you must threaten the Players, allow them to follow-through, and provide the final consequences within the fiction.

Improvised Moves that lead to Corporate Threats

Choosing a Move:

As a GM there is a standard list of Threats available to you as well as a specialized subset that are directly tied to individual Corporations referred to as Using a Corporate Asset.

- Use a Corporate Asset.
- Suggest future calamity
- Seed Suspicion (see Separate the party)
- Offer an Opportunity, with or without cost
- Inflict Harm
- Turn their Move back on them
- Advance a Secret
- Use up their resources
- Put someone in a spot
- Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask
- Give them an opportunity that fits an Operators abilities
- Put them under pressure

Using a Corporate Asset

A corporate asset is a specialized NPC the GM can use to represent a particular Corporation within the fiction. Each Setting Corporation has access to a unique Threat within the fiction. When a Corporation makes a Threat it must be carried out by its own Asset in the fiction.

Corporations in Headspace

In the near future dystopia of Headspace, most of human civilization is manipulated by a few massive multi-national corporations. While it may be easy to portray a world of powerful, faceless corporations all focused on profit at all cost, it is a simplistic and two-dimensional worldview. Each setting provides at least 5 Corporation each with depth and realism.

Public Mandate:

The Public Mandate expresses the perceived public purpose and identity of the Corporation. Begin by asking yourself why the Corporation is needed by society and what role it provides. These are not necessarily morally good (*providing arms*) but are necessary to meet the needs of society (*providing security with said arms*), and because of this the public empowers the Corporation to pursue this Public Mandate.

Shadow Mandate:

Whereas the Public Mandate defines how the Corporation works in the public interest, the Shadow Mandate represents what the Company is doing to further its own ends without any interest in the public well-being. A Shadow Mandate may even be in direct opposition to the Public Mandate of the Corporation.

A Shadow Mandate should provide a sense for how the Corporation is portrayed by the GM when she works behind the scenes manipulating events by the Corporation. Corporations that are caught doing things they shouldn't be are ripe for interesting and lasting problems.

Corporate Assets:

Each Company is represented by at least one potent NPC called an Asset. Corporate Assets are not the public faces of the Corporation; Assets represent the top tier operatives, spies, business managers and diplomats. Most often, a Corporate Asset is charged with goals working towards the Shadow Mandate while not betraying the Public Mandate. The PCs will have active and in many cases complicated relationships with various Corporate Assets.

Managing Stress Pools

TEAMWORK BUFFER	0	1	2	3	4	5
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RAGE	GRIEF	FEAR	BLISS	LUST	PRIDE
FEED BACK	FEED BACK	FEED BACK	FEED BACK	FEED BACK	FEED BACK
4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	1
RAGE	GRIEF	FEAR	BLISS	LUST	PRIDE

Refer to the Stress Pool tracking sheet. Use poker chips or other counters to track the various pools. Remember that at the beginning of play each **Stress starts at 1**.

Stress builds up in six distinct pools (one for each type of Baggage) that are shared by the entire group. Stress will build throughout each scene and continues between each scene. The GM is charged with managing the groups stress pools and can spend points from these pools during play to cause **Neural Shift** and **Neural Backlash**.

If any individual Stress pool hits 5 points then that emotion will **Feedback** on the entire group. Afterward's the Stress pool resets to 0 points.

Feedback causes one operator to be consumed completely by the Baggage in question. While consumed by the Baggage, the operator's next action will be narrated by the GM as they temporarily lose agency and they succumb to the emotional baggage. Any operator in the group can choose to volunteer and take the Feedback; if no one volunteers then the GM will assign it.

Teamwork Buffer

Anytime stress is placed on an emotional track it can instead be absorbed equal to the number of points available in the Teamwork Buffer (if space is free).

Neural Shift

You may spend 1 point from a Stress pool to change a Player's normal Professional Move into a Headspace move. The Player's Professional Move must be the same Baggage type as the Stress Pool you spend from.

This action causes the Player to face unanticipated Hard Choices during their action but will not build Stress into the pools. This Headspace Move can't cause the operator to gain any memories and they are their own.

Neural Backlash

You may spend 1 point from a Stress pool to compel a Headspace move into a scene. The Players cannot currently be making a Move. A Neural Backlash is an event where the pool you spend the points from bubbles to the surface and directly affects the Players decisions and actions, likely during fairly mundane activities.

Julie's operator is interacting with a Police Officer at a road block. She is just having simple conversation with the Officer when the GM spend 2 points from the Rage pool to cause Erica to Backlash with Rage. Erica makes a Headspace Move and rolls an 5 causing her to make 2 Hard Choices and integrate them into the conversation with the Police Officer.

GM ADVICE based on play:

If the party is together they tend to rely on each other to make professional moves, Headspace occurs more frequently when they are separated from each other or in combat. Interestingly separating the party isn't a horrible taboo in this game as the PC's can always talk to each other and coordinate by headspace.

Chapter 8 – The First Session

The first session begins in Media Res, the first job has already happened and it didn't go well. In fact you are all still directly dealing with the consequences. The following leading questions are asked of the GM with the players answers filling out the voids of what happened, what went so terribly wrong and what everyone is trying to do right now. After the Players have answered all the questions the GM will use them to formulate the opening scene and the adventure begins. From then on the GM will be using their tools to narrate the fiction (see Running the Game Chapter XX).

The GM begins by asking each player:

What do you each need from working with this group?

The GM then asks each player:

Which Corporation is the run against?

Who hired you and how are they “paying” you? (Includes working for yourselves).

What three things were you hired to accomplish in the job?

Some things just didn't go as planned...

As the group, pick the one thing you actually accomplished.

The GM then asks each player:

What did you take away?

What did you leave behind?

Hit the ground running.

Chapter 9 - Pre-Generated Settings

Vancouver Aftermath

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Date: Year 2074, January

Background:

8 months ago a tsunami washes away most of the major coastal communities from Vancouver down through Washington state, millions died and more from the mishandling (Katrina style) of the Corporations and Governments trying to help and or make a buck in the process.

Much of the prime scenic corporate waterfront in one of Canada's largest cities was destroyed. As corporations move inland, the poor take temporary shelter in the ruined core. As the city tries to right itself the competing pressures for survival bubble over into the streets and homes of one of the biggest pacific cities of North America.

Events, Issues and Secrets:

Events	Issues	Corporate Secrets
Massive Tsunami decimates Pacific Coast (BC to Washington)	Canadian reliance on U.S. aid	Red Cross secures widespread access to secret documents with a “rescue crew”.
Pacific Coast famine	Food Riots	PSS exacerbated the riots to ensure they were needed for security contracts.
Flu Pandemic	Flu Quarantine Zones Established	Applied Optimism advertises a cure it owns, that doesn't even work.
Toxins in pacific waters from ruptured pipelines	Sterility & stillbirths become common	SinOPEC wasn't just pumping oil through those pipelines...
Vancouver Island Meltdown (Reactor 1 in Victoria)	Rampant human and animal mutations	3H may have had a direct hand in the Tsunami through unstable geothermal power experimentations

The Corporations:

The Red Cross

“Saving Lives”

Public Mandate:

The Red Cross provides emergency disaster relief.

Shadow Mandate:

Provide access to partners in disaster zones, for a price.

Corporate Threat:

Change Public Opinion

Corporate Asset:

Veronica Dupius, *The Face*

- Compassionate, Networked

3^H Energy

“Providing renewable energy for a new generation”

Public Mandate:

Provide the next generation of renewable energies.

Shadow Mandate:

Annex the poor regions for power.

Corporate Threat:

Legal Action (Red Tape)

Corporate Asset:

Peter Nemo, *The Handler*

- Friendly, Ruthless

Any Person Inc.

“Enlightening humanity, one mind at a time”

Public Mandate:

Supplying brilliant minds to solve your corporate problems.

Shadow Mandate:

Developing artificial technologies to replace the people.

Corporate Threat:

Activate Sleeper Agent

Corporate Asset:

Mike “Silk” Pasquale, *The Ronin*

- Womanizer, Brash

Pacific Security Solutions (PSS)

“Private Security, Public Service”

Public Mandate:

Provide the best private security money can buy.

Shadow Mandate:

Secure an independent Pacific state.

Corporate Threat:

Reinforce an Ally.

Corporate Asset:

Major Alice Grant, *The Handler*

- Precise, Manipulative.

SinOPEC

“Securing the worlds energy for everyone”

Public Mandate:

China bought OPEC and is now the world’s largest supplies of energy resources.

Shadow Mandate:

Control world military might by controlling its fuel supply.

Corporate Threat:

Cut the Power

Corporate Asset:

Dr. Marshall Grey, *The Tech*

- Cold, Calculating.

Applied Optimism

“The Voice of the people”

Public Mandate:

The premier multimedia and news provider.

Shadow Mandate:

Use the media to control the people.

Corporate Threat:

This just in! (News propaganda)

Corporate Asset:

Tyler Morgan, *The White Coat*

- Analytical, Committed.

Ludography

Influences

Core ideas of shared consciousness flow from both Chrysalides by John Whindham and Cybergeneration by R. Talsorian games.

Moves, Harm and Gear Tags by D. Vincent Baker writer and designer of Apocalypse World . Also influenced by Dungeon World, Saga of the Ice Landers, Noir World and any game with a World in the title.

Being Taken Out in Harm the players retaining agency when taken out from Spark RPG by Jason Pitre

Memories and Skill Stories influenced by Penny for Your Thoughts.

Reference the website singling out soft vs. hard moves for “Street” and “Corporate” and hardcoding this into the game.

Connection Moves (ideas by R Donoghue and Dave Chalker)