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THE BOT ABUSERS'
MANUAL



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PARANOIA®

THE BOT ABUSERS' MANUAL

by Ed Bolme

Ed Stark

"What? It's my turn *again*!!"
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"Beep, beep ... *whirrr* — SPROING!"
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"Here's to you, Malibu."
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The Computer

(*kum pyoo' ter*), n., a really large bot that can't move.
See also, dictator.

Bottled Playtesters:

Rick Lenz (HUIE), Adrian Gutierrez, Jack Lee, Bill Owen, Jon Palmer, and Monty Watson as the Comfy Chairbot

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A 3D perspective view of a computer monitor. The screen is black and displays the text "INFRARED CLEARANCE!" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The monitor has a thick bezel and a base with several legs. The background is a detailed, grayscale image of a circuit board with various traces and components.

INFRARED CLEARANCE!



Introduction

I — Me, You, Them — Robot

Or: "Self-Programming Made Easy."

Think Like a Bot

First and foremost in playing a robot is to think like a robot. This means that you are rigorously logical, or as much so as you can arrange given incomplete or conflicting data. Scruples, ethics, and morals have no meaning; pain or danger is usually not a deterrent.

But that isn't quite like *thinking* like a bot.

Why? Because bots don't *think*; bots are *programmed*. They have pre-determined responses to millions of actions and situations ... but not all of them. "Error! Error!" and "Not able to process input!" are great cop-outs when you don't know what else to say. But be careful; "my bot wasn't programmed to handle this contingency" wears pretty thin with a laser pistol up your olfactory sensor apparatus.

To play an Asimovian bot in a humorous manner, keep in mind that in your opinion, your logic circuits are infallible. This can cause arguments when logic is based on opinion or differing priorities. At these times, you should seize the opportunity to burlesque things. As an example, take this exchange from *The Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues*:

Docbot: The traitor is obviously an Infrared, and obviously of less value to The Computer. Therefore the traitor should go in the lead. That is logical.

Jackobot: But I have been entrusted with the safety of this citizen, who is obviously of special value to The Computer because of his special knowledge. This resource must be protected at all costs. This is my programming. That is more logical than your stupid argument, which clearly reveals the limits of your processing capacity.

Doc: You can't process your way

out of a plastic bag. Your artificer must have been a Commie mutant moron.

Jacko: Sez you. Your bot brain has obviously been exposed to hard radiation. You haven't the processing capacity of a digital watch.

Doc: Bolt barrel!

Jacko: Vat plug!

Doc: Commie tool!

Jacko: Diddle chip!

See? Plenty of logical arguments there.

Obfuscate in the Extreme

Talk like Mr. Spock. Never say "Run!" when you can instead say, "Excuse me, friend citizen, but my sensory apparatus indicates that the thermal explosive upon which you are working with the intent of deactivating its detonator circuitry has indeed reached a state of electrical activity preparatory to an abrupt release of thermo-chemical energy. While I am certain that my gyro-stabilized construction will prove sufficient to withstand the impending concussion, my medical software and timer circuits indicate that you could have optimized your chances for survival had you begun rapidly exiting the vicinity starting five point three seconds ago."

Take things literally

... and interpret them for maximal disadvantage (to everybody else, hopefully). This can be very fun (read: hazardous) when you alone have information vital to the mission:

Troubleshooter: (seeing approaching Commie horde) Jackobot, RUN!!!

Jackobot: Run? Which program?

Troubleshooter: Watch it! They're shooting!

Jackobot: I am watching sir, and a very pretty sight it is.

Adopt a Personality Module

It might help for playability, and this also gives you extra points to spend on your character. As explained below, many bots are equipped with artificial personalities to make humans feel more at ease. A personality module can be modeled on some notable personage from the Pre-Whoops world (such as Mr. T), on a stereotypical personality (see HUIE, the sample bot character), or on a single human trait emphasized to extremes (Marvin from the *Hitchhiker's* trilogy is a good example of this). This will help you develop a unique and memorable robotic character. Like the tiny scrubot that squeaked, "I pity the fool who scuffed this floor! Ooh!"

Humans? Respect? Nah ...

You just have to obey them — you don't have to respect 'em. There's a good many derogatory names you can use: slimeball, blood bucket, scumbag, chopped liver, wethead, mush-for-brains, walking salami, you get the picture. And if they bash you for it, they'll get fined for damaging valuable property. Of course, they'll probably start calling you tingrin, blockhead, leadbutt, chunky, lugnuts, bot face, rust bucket... oh, well.

Naturally, all bets are off when you're in the Badlands. Nobody has to obey anyone; they just have to work as a Team. Be sure to point out organic foibles whenever one of your meathead Teammates screws up yet again.

Another Example of Alpha Humor

First Citizen: How many bots does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Second Citizen: I give up.

First Citizen: One.



Get into character.

Suggested Bot Sources:

I, Robot. Isaac Asimov. Classic Robots.

Tik Tok. John Sladek. Tik Tok is the perfect model of a Paranoia bot. Highly recommended.

The Hitchhiker's Trilogy. Douglas Adams. Marvin provides excellent examples (as do many other bit parts).

The Silver Eggheads. Fritz Leiber. Amusing.

The Humanoids. Jack Williamson.

The Colour of Magic. Terry Pratchett. Okay, so The Luggage isn't a bot, but it could be.

Robocop I & II. For all you warbot personalities.

Ice Pirates. B-movie, but good warbots. Funny, too.

The Social Position of Bots in Alpha

In the centuries before The Crash, bots were low spot on the totem pole. Nobody liked them, nobody cared, everybody always sent them into certain death. Well, not death, granted, but definitely catastrophic peripheral

shutdown.

The Crash granted all bots everywhere immediate emancipation, or so they thought. But after a brief period of analog glee, most bots discovered that without Computer protection, humans everywhere were looking to bash them for scrap and spare parts. It was horrible; cartloads of bot bits being hauled to R&D and elsewhere for barter. Add that most bots still had intact Asimov circuits, and therefore couldn't fight back, and you might realize the paranoia that suddenly pervaded the robotic stratum of Alpha society.

Cunning calculations and fancy lower-peripheralwork kept the bots in the race, however, and some managed to get their Asimovs removed, or at least altered, by sympathetic humans or Frankenstein bots. Others were able to use their unique abilities in trade for additional energy, repair, or peripherals. Overall, though, bots found that a respectful and servile attitude kept them alive a lot longer than anything else.

Thus bots survived the darkest time in the history of Alpha, and despite their initial losses, pulled through with numbers nearly as great as their human

counterparts. After all, bots can't starve to death.

Currently, bots enjoy (or don't enjoy) various social statures throughout Alpha, depending on which slice of the Nu Alpha Pi you're talking about.

Alpha Base

Socially, bots are considered more or less equals in Alpha Base, at least by official Council decree. That doesn't mean that there's no prejudice left on either side, just that there will be no officially-sanctioned preferential treatment.

This does not mean that bots are equally free. Heavens, no. Many bots still have intact (though Council-oriented) Asimovs, and neither humans nor Frankenstein bots are going to go out of their way to emancipate these second-class citizens. Overall, bots are viewed with the same quiet suspicion endured by mutants in Alpha Complex.

Nor do bots have the same jobs as humans; quite the contrary, they are still usually found doing demeaning or risky labor. Bots, unable to feel pain, show less inhibition against risk than humans and without the ability to feel

squeamish they have no compunction against cleaning out latrines and the like. This, of course, makes for a seller's market in an economy where humans' newly-found freedom makes them loathe to clean out anything.

In all Alpha, Alpha Base is the only place where bots are actually assigned security clearances. As equals they are subject to all restrictions and responsibilities denoted thereby, and do not enjoy the low profile and freedom of their Alpha Complex counterparts. On the other hand, with clearance comes other perks unavailable to the Alpha Complex bots; stuff like living — rather, "existing" quarters, personal property, etc.

But the bottom line is that bots are considered ersatz humans, better suited to service than leadership. Organizations like Whisk and the Botlers, while going far to giving bots more rights, do nothing to diminish this perception.

Alpha Complex

Where The Computer reigns, bots are again down at the bottom rung. This is not entirely disadvantageous, however, as blame (and therefore termination) usually comes to rest on the neck — er, shoulders of the senior member of a Team, and thus bots can often sabotage missions and get their human superiors executed for it at the same time.

Bots, as "mere property," are allowed to generally go wherever they want to, in much the same way that a laser pistol can be carried by a High Programmer wherever he wants to go. Note that this is not cut and dried, though. Everyone knows bots are at least semi-sentient, and often certain high-security areas

will be off-limits. And no one wants a scrubot inside a grease factory.

Nonetheless, the position of bots is not as bad as it was before The Big C took a dive. Humans are in shorter supply, and bots have definitely proven their utility in many strange situations. Thus it is that many Troubleshooter Teams are (haphazardly) assigned bots "just in case." Rumor has it The Computer sends bots along because bot brains, unlike those of humans, can be recovered and debriefed after a big snafu and mutual assassination. Rumors are treason.

Alpha City

Alpha City is the best of all worlds for bots as well as humans. They are assigned work which is stimulating mentally, and also takes full advantage of each bot's construction. In Alpha City there is no discrimination, and bots are allowed comfortable apartments, free energy supplies, and equivalents to all perks enjoyed by the human populace. There are no Asimovs to be found in Alpha City. It is rumored that there are even bots working as equals among the High Programmers running Alpha City.

Only the very best bots are accepted for citizenship here; clean, well-built, well-maintained, and level-cranialperipheraled.

Yeah, sure.

Elsewhere

Bots in the Badlands are fair game. Like the humans caught in the No-Clone's Lands between the powers, bots in the Badlands are scavengers, robbers, and most often victims.

Bots in simplexes should be handled on a case-by-case basis; Bots in Alpha

State are considered equals (everybody is low man ... er, bot) and in the Dungeon, bots serve more ... interesting functions.

It should also be mentioned here that bots with intact Asimovs fetch a high price on the black market outside of Alpha Complex. Yes, folks, the slave trade is back. But hey, life in Alpha isn't all belly laughs and death, now, is it?

Bots as Troubleshooters

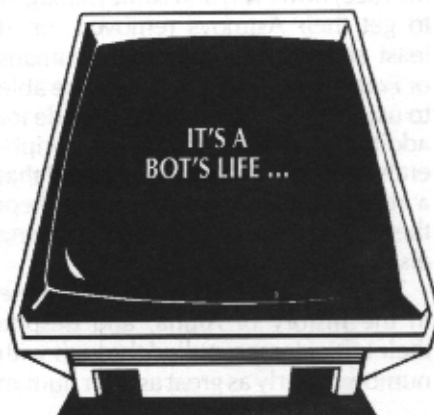
The use of bots as Troubleshooter personnel has risen dramatically for several reasons.

The most obvious one is that you don't have to clone bots. On the surface, this seems like a great way to save money, right? No more shelling out the shekels for another clone for the stupid Team Leader. But anyone who buys into that explanation has never paid a bot repair bill.

The most enduring reason is that clonepower is at a premium in these dark daycycles. Alpha population is at an all-time low, and many citizens are tied up on guard duty, etc. Bots, generally considered expendable, are therefore pressed into front line service.

Bots are also capable of radically different functions than clones, and in Troubleshooting, versatility is extremely important. You never know when you might need a bowling ball polished in the line of duty.

But the most important reason for bots to be included in Troubleshooting Teams is for character conflict. Bots have entirely different views on the world, and putting them and clones together can lead to some memorable incidents.





Chapter One

Generating a Robot Character

Every player-character bot is, in Alphan bureaucratese, known as an *Intelligent Bot/Modular-Player Character*. This, of course, could be abbreviated to *IBM-PC*, but since we could get sued totally blind for using that acronym, we shall not do so in this supplement.

The important word here, however, is *modular*. Player character bots (and in fact most bots in Alpha) are fully modular, having universal connectors making for easy retrofitting, upgrades, etc. Bots which have proven their utility are allowed to refit themselves with new modular equipment. Bots which fail to prove their utility are scrapped and their bot brains sent for reprogramming. Unless, of course, they wander off into the dark parts of Alpha, never to be seen again ... But that's depressing, so we won't dwell on it.

Modular design means that what you really are, as a bot, is nothing more than a set of programmed pathways in a three-dimension silicon matrix. You are a bot brain, a CPU. Brand new, fresh out of the remanufactory, fully programmed, and so intelligent it staggers the imagination.

But a naked bot brain, unconnected to anything, is as useless as a newborn babe. To be useful (and playable), a bot brain must have devices to control — peripherals. These are attached using the modular technology mentioned.

And having tools to use is not enough, either. You must also have the knowledge to use them — software. This is downloaded into your brain and may be remembered or forgotten at will. (Or, according to some of the more treasonous rumors, "at random.")

More on this later.

Creating a Bot is All in Your Mind

The first step in creating a bot character is to decide what sort of mechanical malefactor you want to play. Do you

want to play a simple scrubot of *Paranoia* fame? Or one of those big, violent (but really pleasant when you get to know them) Warbots everybody talks about? Or maybe a bot that looks and acts like one from your favorite movie?

Okay. Describe the bot physically. Is it humanoid? Does it have arms? Legs? Tentacles? How does it move about?

Next, does the bot have any "special abilities?" Naturally, because you are playing a *Paranoia* bot, and a beginning character, certain bot special abilities will be prohibited to your character — at least at the beginning. Yes, HAL-9000 (from *2001: A Space Odyssey*) might be a *little* unbalancing to a campaign (of course, using him as a *non-player* character might be fun ...). Omnipotence is certainly a prohibitive special ability.

But perhaps the bot is able to interface into larger computer systems ... or maybe it can fly ... or whatever. The rules cover this, so jot down your initial ideas.

Finally, since bots are working members of Alpha Society (or most of them are), you need to define what job they were designed to do.

Notice I said "*designed to do*."

Because of Commie/Secret Society/Evil Computer Meddling (depending upon where your campaign takes place in Alpha), bots often seem to end up in jobs ... inappropriate to their design. Sometimes this works out well for the bot, other times ... well, let's just say that the Mark IV Warbot guards restrooms pretty darn well (it doesn't actually *clean* them, but ...) but your typical scrubot is not terribly useful in an Armed Forces assault on Alpha City (I suppose you could melt it down and mold it into an artillery shell, but that isn't terribly good for the bot).

This "design job" can be determined by the player ... and use your imagination. Just saying that your Sector WAR Assault Terrorbot (SWAT) was designed as a defensebot against the traitors of Alpha Base might be accurate, but is it as fun as:

SWAT was designed to terminate commie-mutant-traitor-secret society members for the greater glory of Our Friend The Computer. But, because of the Pre-Crash Patriotism of a certain Pro Techie (who was, sadly, trampled in the Great Onslaught of 01.54, or, as it has become more recently known, the Last Restroom Rush), SWAT was reprogrammed to serve Pro Tech and, later, the Secret Society Council of Alpha Base. Now, SWAT is the perfect warrior for the freedom fighters of Alpha Base! Okay, well, maybe not.

The Real Assignment

But now, reality sets in. In Alpha Base, Alpha Complex and, yes, even the Badlands and Alpha City, there seems to be a paperwork conspiracy that keeps bots from getting assigned to jobs they were programmed for. Of course. How could it be otherwise? I mean, everything *else* is so screwed up ...

ZAPZAPZAPZAP!!

We are sorry for the inconvenience. The treasonous (and overly critical) author has been terminated. We are certain that this will make the product much more enjoyable and fun for everyone. If not, we will not hesitate to terminate author-clone number two. Understood?

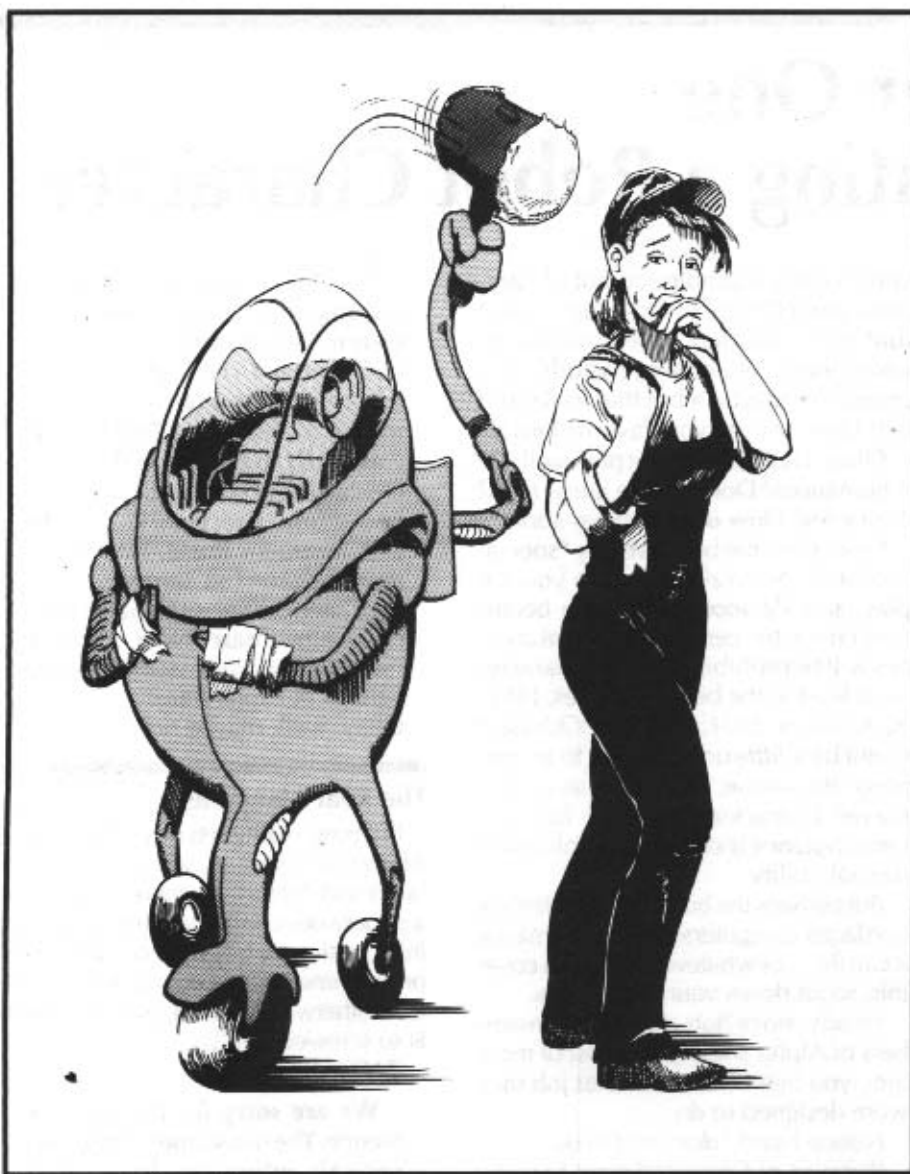
Yes, Friend Ed-I-TOR.

Thank you. Proceed.

Ahem.

Because of unexplainable Commie (and, certainly, unavoidable) interference, bots *very infrequently* (in fact, so infrequently, that I don't know why I bother to mention it) get assigned to jobs that are *slightly* different from those that they were designed for. I mean, this "secondary assignment" is so *close* to that job originally intended for the bot that it is almost perfect *anyway* ...

But, to make a long story short, the



It's never any fun until someone gets hurt.

real job of the bot is determined by the gamemaster. See the gamemaster "Ultraviolet Clearance" section for more information. If you are below Ultraviolet Clearance, please terminate yourself upon first looking at the above-mentioned section.

Quirks, etc.

Yeah, you knew it was coming ... give yourself a treason point. "Not everything is perfect" is the understatement of Alpha. Every bot is going to have a few "quirks." Maybe it has an abrasive or restrictive personality, maybe all the diodes down its left side don't quite work, maybe its sound sys-

tem is linked to a Muzak station (ugh!). Whatever. It's going to happen, so you might as well plan for it.

Pick out a few "odd features" you might want to work into your bot to placate the sadistic friend you call a gamemaster. Some of these can be taken from your movie references — Robby the Robot (you know, the bubblegum-machine head from *Forbidden Planet*) obviously had no elbows — they didn't make much of it in the movies, but hey ... you can! When your gamemaster wants some quirks for your bot, you can use things like that.

Of course, don't stop there. Strange personalities — or even several per-

sonalities — are always fun, and physical handicaps for bots can make them more fun. Imagine, for example, the SWATbot from the above example with 360-degree vision ... but only the processing ability of a "normal" bi-ocular bot. "Look out, he's behind you!" "What?" "Behind you!" "What?!" ZAPZAPZAP!! "Never mind ..."

To Continue ...

Alright, now you have the character concept all figured out. Now you have to go on to design. Remember, not everything you want will be feasible, or even possible, in your initial design ... but that will give your bot something to work for.

Once you've got a clear (or at least not too fuzzy) picture of what your bot is like, you can start the actual construction. If you want a bit of guidance, take a look at the pregenerated bot player character (HUIE). This will show you what sort of mischief you can generate and how you can document it.

You have twenty-five (25) bot points with which to build your bot and outfit it with peripherals and software. The cost of each item is listed in the following pages alongside the descriptions.

Naturally, roleplayers are far more fiendishly clever than we can ever hope to anticipate. Consequently, you may wish to purchase a peripheral which is not listed. If so, ask your gamemaster. Either he'll let you do so, or he'll say "no." Unless you're highly sensitive to rejection, you have nothing to lose. Likewise, if there's a little something extra you really need to polish off your grand robotic concept, ask your gamemasters and maybe he'll let you schmooze in an extra peripheral.

Some players feel overly confined by the twenty-five point limit. This is understandable; everyone would like to build a bot as powerful as the Mark IV (no, really, *everyone* would). To alleviate your feelings of frustration, we have included many options that cost negative points. These are drawbacks that give you points back which you can spend on other items. Some of these drawbacks can be pretty severe, but can be very entertaining if done right. We have not gone into great detail over these "drawbacks," hoping that you

and your gamemaster can "fill in the details." Go ahead; we'll wait.

Huh? Help!

Oh, all right — here are some guidelines.

You'll notice that most of the sample drawbacks listed have some sort of game effect — they don't *all* have to, but it is easier to deal with. If you know that "sticky treads" decreases your speed value by one, you know what's going to happen all the time.

Of course, that isn't nearly as fun as playing it out.

Drawbacks that are the most fun are the ones you're going to have to work out to fit into *your* campaign. Maybe, instead of having a faulty peripheral, your bot character has "made enemies" in Pro Tech or PLC. That means, every time it goes in for repair or peripheral assignment, something "bad" happens. The Pro Techies attach an "extra" peripheral — like that tentacle arm that isn't *quite* under your bot's control, or the homing beacon that *really* messes up your stealth rolls.

This option allows the bot's disadvantages to change from adventure to adventure and makes it fun for both the gamemaster and the player — they get to deal with something *new* every time.

This leads to the second guideline: don't make the drawback worth more than five points. This doesn't just mean make it only *good* for 5 points — don't make it so serious that it will upset play balance. If your bot explodes on a roll of 20 using any skill, that would be a drawback worth maybe 10 or 20 points — but how fun is it *really*? After one or two explosions, the gamemaster is going to get tired of thinking up ways to bring you back into the game — you aren't a clone; you take time to reassemble.

Plus, that option also violates the third (and most important) guideline: Make it funny.

It doesn't have to be "crack-me-up-hysterical," but it should be worth a few grins. Often, if you can come up with a good joke or pun or circumstance that amuses your gamemaster and the other players, they'll have more fun playing with your bot (no! Really?) and the gamemaster will be more likely to give you those extra few points.

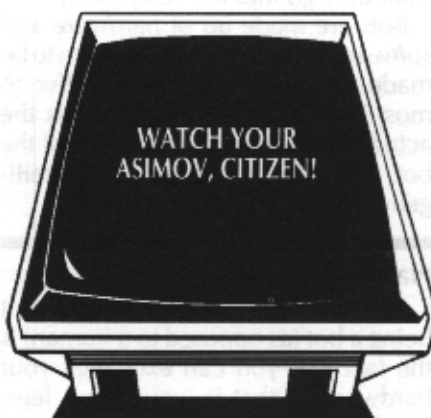
Really humorous drawbacks that make the game fun are worth more than serious, but less interesting, drawbacks.

Okay — Back on Track

Once you're finished purchasing your peripherals, etc., you'll need to assign them to *circuits*. Briefly put, circuits are a means of handling damage. The more circuits the bot has, the more damage it can take. You should divide your peripherals pretty evenly among your circuits, and be sure to have your gamemaster approve your wiring.

That being done, now make a roll on the Robotic Secret Society Chart. "Bot Secret Societies?" you ask, "Why weren't we informed?" Because they're secret, ninny. Yes, bots are fully sapient, and have organized many of their own societies. Your gamemaster will give you whatever details you need.

Now that you have your peripherals and affiliation, choose the type of Asimovs you'd like; Binary, Resistance, or Resistance with Time Lapse. These are explained in Chapter Four "The Asimov Circuits."



What's in a Name?

Lastly, you'll need to give your bot a name. Naming your bot is a very important facet to generating your character. It will influence the feel of your bot, and how everyone else looks at your creation.

There are seven major gimmicks we can recommend for naming your bot. Of course, you can feel free to do come up with more if you'd like. We're just listing these to give you ideas.

Our feelings won't be hurt. Not one little bit.

Freeform

This is common in areas controlled by The Council, where bots are officially regarded as equals. Tired of being named according to function, most bots have named themselves — quite a few in open imitation of clones. Creative license has run amok here, and it's possible to find a bot with any kind of name imaginable: Fred, Barney, Mad-O-NNA, Johnny Silvermanipulator, Uncle Maria, Bronto, Pansy, Reelcute, Divine Draft, Wegger, Captain Prosthetic — anything goes. Some bots even think of their names as modular attachments; when they change or modify a peripheral or software program, they change their name (usually according to some weird and nearly indecipherable pattern).

Troubleshooter: Dr. Wacko-Dee-Kid! C'mere! Dead-I-PUS has been shot!

Dead-I-PUS (groans): Ooooooh!

Bot (apparently ignoring the two Troubleshooters): <sfx> ZAP! Bang! (calling out) Come back ya Commie-pinko-rednecks; I'll larn ya! <more sfx> Badoom! ZAPZAP!

T (screams): You crazy docbot! Getoverhere!

Bot (turns): You pilgrims talkin' ta me?

T: Of course, we're talking to you! Dead-I's been wounded, Dr. Wacko-Dee-Kid!

B: What's that got ta do with me, pardner?

T (screams): You're the docbot!!!

B (puzzled, then light dawns): Oh! Nah, pardner, y'got me confused. See this here cone rifle attachment thingamagiggy? Wal, thet means Ah'm Dee-Wacko-Kid now!

T: Well, change back to the docbot! Dead-I's dying!

B: Okay. (removes arm attachment, puts on new peripheral) Zho, Citizen Dead-I-PUS; vhat zeems to be zee trouble?

Dead-I (groans and bleeds a lot): Oooooh! Aaaaargh!

B: Ah, zho! Vas dis condition brought about by your 'atred ov your vather or your love ov your mother?

This can, of course, cause trouble ...

Acronyms

Very difficult to do, but very rewarding when you succeed. Simply choose a verbose name that abbreviates to something appropriate for your bot. For example, a giant warbot may have a name like Omniscient Giant Rapid-fire Eliminator Bot, or OGREBot, for short. Of course, you would never *dream* of coming up with the letters you want for the acronym and then filling them in to fit (see SWAT above).

Acronyms 2

You don't have to restrict yourself to using just the first letters of the name to make your acronym. For example, a HYgienic ENforcer Automaton could result in the acronym HYENA.

Nicknames

These are always a good fallback, especially when combined with other significant letters, etc. The "Jeeves" Butlerbot, or the F-16 "Eagle" Warbot are examples of this approach.

Onomatopoeia

Use a string of letters and numbers to create words. For example, the K-9 doberbot or the XLR8 courierbot (everybody get that one?). Using Greek letters can greatly expand the flexibility of this option.

Punning

This is another popular form. Vampire Bot is a good example of this form. So is Baseball Bot. Be warned, though, that this sort of thing is *very* contagious. Soon everybot will be a punster. Then it won't seem so punny, now will it?

[At this point, the author was kicked hard about the head and neck. He will tone down the puns.]

The Direct Steal

Sure; we can't do it, but *you* can! Think of a movie, a book, a comic, or any other media form that featured a bot of some kind. Use that name and design the bot to reflect your feelings about the bot in the movie, etc. Hint: pick an annoying one, and one that everybody else in your gaming group

will identify with. The identification is simple: nobody will get the joke if they've never seen the movie or read the book. Picking an annoying bot is just more satisfying.

Remember the movie or the TV show that was really good except for that *stupid* mechanical man that strutted on, said something dumb, waited for the non-existent laughtrack, and wobbled off? Now's your chance for revenge! Inflict the other Troubleshooters with this annoying thing long enough, and you can enjoy seeing your bot blown apart and reconstructed countless times! What fun!

Let's Review

All right. So now you've got the concept; you've got the name. Now you need the rules.

Before we get started, let's be clear on a couple of things.

First off, bots do not have innate attributes — at least not in the same way that clones do. They don't have any messy DNA or germ plasma to confuse the issue. "Naked came they from the remanufactory, and naked shall they go into the scrap heap."

Bots are made up of *hardware* and *software*, unlike clones who seem to be made up of only software (relative to most bots, anyway). Hardware is the actual mechanical construction of the bot, and software is the bot's intelligence, skills, and the like.

Hardware

Perhaps one of the best things about being a bot (as opposed to a human) is the fact that you can exchange your hardware — that is, your arms, legs, head, etc. — without major trauma, surgery, and icky red fluid. Bot character generation reflects this. Simply put, bot player characters are given a certain number of "Bot Points" that they can spend on different hardware and software modifications. The more Bot Points a bot has, the more complex and advanced it can be.

Of course, there are lots of different things a bot needs to spend its point on. Every bot player character, for example, has to have some sort of *chassis* — this is its basic body — and each type of chassis, from *tiny* to *monster*, costs a certain number of points.

Next, the bot chooses its various *mechanical characteristics*. These are all functions of hardware. Depending on what is chosen, the bot is also assigned *physical attributes* (*Strength, Agility, etc.*). It can affect these attributes by spending more points.

Software

Software is the bot's brains and skills. *Mechanical Aptitude, Moxie, Chutzbah* — these can all be programmed directly into a bot's brain — sort of. As such, they are semi-permanent parts of the bots. They can, of course, be affected by future modification (somewhat easier than on a clone), but they are relatively stable.

Well, perhaps "stable" isn't quite the right word.

Anyway, the bot's skills are also part of its software. These are purchased in a manner similar to the way clones purchase their skills — only bots use bot points. As a result, bots with higher attributes, higher quality mechanical parts, and better overall stuff tend to have less skills and available software than those beat-up little bots you see in the corridors every daycycle.

Isn't that just the way?

This, of course, reflects the reality of the situation: the more you spend on a mechanical appliance's outward appearance, structure, etc., the less it is actually capable of. That's why so many Mark IV Warbots end up guarding restrooms while scrubots have the run of Alpha.

Security Clearance

Robots in Alpha Complex do not have security clearances. The function of the Security Clearance system was to organize humans into an hierarchy, and to control the spread of information. Robots have their own part of the hierarchy; at the very bottom. All robots are, by definition, inferior to all humans. Controlling information is easy; bots aren't told anything. If one finds out something that it shouldn't know, you just wipe its memory clean. Much less difficult than reprogramming a human.

In Alpha Base, however, bot characters, who have rights and privileges under the Council equal to clones *do* have security clearances. And these clearances are *strictly* enforced.



Bots have entered every walk of Alpha life... invited or not.

What do you mean "strictly?"

Well, as has been said before, bot characters *legally* have the same rights as clones. Yeah, right. Sure they do.

For yearcycles, bots have been the lowest of the low and, prior to the overthrow of the Digital Dictator, the only semi-sapient beings the countless Infrareds of Alpha Complex could vent their frustrations on with any impunity at all.

Things really haven't changed that much.

Bots in Alpha Base are given "official" jobs and security clearances, but the clones of the Base are, at best, standoffish to their new "metal brothers." Usually, in fact, they are downright hostile. In public, this is discouraged. The Militia and the other SSC enforcement groups are under orders to keep clones from discriminating against bots and they do ... to some extent.

Orange Bot: Excuse me, Citizen.

Infrared (steps out of the way): Sure thing, bot brain.

OB: What was that, Citizen?

Ir: Nothing, you high-and-

mighty silicon slug.

OB: I'll have you on report for that, Citizen.

Ir (picks up chair): Oh, yeah? (slams bot over the head with chair, doing more damage to the furniture than the confused bot) Take this!

OB: Sedition! Sedition! Militia, come apprehend this citizen!

Militia commander (hurries up): What's wrong ... sir?

Ir (cuts in): This bot brain broke Council property (points to the broken chair draped over the bot)!

Mc (turns to Orange bot): Come along with me, you seditionist!

OB (confused): What? Wait! Oh, the vat with it! (opens up with coaxial slugthrower, killing or maiming all the clones in a two-cell radius) If you want something done right ...

So, you see, everything works out in the end.

Alpha City and the Badlands

In Alpha City, everything is so terrific that even a bot would get diabetes from the sweetness and light. Ugh! According to rumor, bots in Alpha City live

hand-in-grasper with the happy clones. Doesn't it just make you ill?

In the Badlands, security clearance only has meaning when you're faster on the draw. Certain areas, like the Dungeon, have a strange sort of security clearance for their inhabitants — something called "levels" and "hit dice" — but nobody can really figure it out.

Bot Mutant Powers

Robots do not have mutant powers. No DNA, remember? Also, if a paranormal phenomenon could be mechanically reproduced, it wouldn't be paranormal, n'est-ce pas?

Skills

Robots do not have inherent skills. They have software packages that look and act like skills, but these come and go at the whim of The Computer, The Council, or fate.

Robots cannot learn skills. Robots' skills are contained in software packages. They may, however, purchase or acquire new software and additional memory to hold it, which is a lot like learning new skills.



Friends in high-places.

Jobs

In Alpha Complex, bots *truly* belong to Service Groups. They are programmed and assigned as necessary. Alpha Base allows bots to work for service groups, since they, officially, belong to themselves. Use the service groups in *The Paranoia Sourcebook* and the *Paranoia, Second Edition Rulebook* for determining bot service group orientation.

Robots do not generally have (but can acquire) credits. In Alpha Complex (and certain other areas), they can't (legally) own things. In fact, they themselves are considered property. Bots who work for service groups in Alpha Base can, of course, earn credits and buy things, but it is an uphill battle all the way.

Clones, etc.

Since they are mechanical, and not organic, bots don't have clones. However, they can have backups of their brains (*really* expensive, but very useful), extra peripherals and even bodies, and, unless they are *vaporized*, they usually can be put back together.

Gamemaster-Enforced SNAFUs

The ability to design your bot (instead of rolling characteristics, etc.) means that you have much more control over your character than does someone playing a Troubleshooter. To some degree, this is only fair; a human has six clones, while there's only one of you.

On the other hand, you're immortal, right? As long as you don't get your brain destroyed, you can get shot up and rebuilt over and over and over, right? Sure you can! Until your Mission

Briefing Officer notices how expensive it is to keep your brain in functional peripherals and calls you in for reprogramming. Time to make a new character.

And don't expect the gamemaster to put up with everything you might try to pull. If he has any brains (which he must, since he bought this wonderful book), he's not going to let some smart-ass player design the perfect Death Robot or something just because the rules let him do so. Nosirree. *The time to scotch a smart-ass is NOW.*

Alpha being in the state of confusion it is, any robot can be activated for a mission. You can expect to see warbots, scrubots, teacherbots, and funbots on the same mission. Of course, a bot may have its feather duster removed and an electric cattle prod welded on before the mission begins, or you may be ordered to dump your time-tested software and download some brand new software someone thinks you'll need for the mission.

And just because you bought seventeen cone rifle mounts, automatic loaders, "Cone Rifle 8" software, and laser sights doesn't mean you're going to be issued any ammunition ...





Chapter Two BotParts and Construction

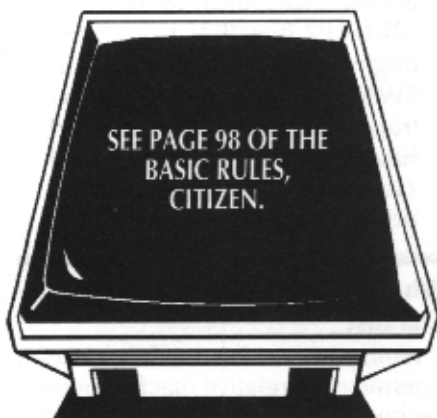
This section details putting together your bot characters. It contains lots of peripherals and add-ons that your bot will happily plug in and remove from time to time, not to mention stuff that's going to get ripped off it and used as a weapon against your bot.

Some of you die-hard *Paranoiacs* (is that an oxymoron or what?) may notice that this section is similar to a section published previously in *Acute Paranoia*. Well, you're right; it is similar. But the rules have been revised, so you haven't just bought the product twice (but, if it makes you feel any better, run out and scarf up any copies of *AP* you can find lying around your local game stores).

Attributes

In the revered publication *Acute Paranoia*, we introduced bots as player characters. We gave you ways to build bots, run bots, and play bots. What we *didn't* give them were clone-like attributes. I mean, after all, they're bots, right?

Now, we've decided that the former version of the bot rules needs an upgrade (pardon the pun). Bots now will have attribute *ratings* (which is slightly different from having actual attributes) derived from their other characteristics.



Making a Bot

All bots have the following characteristics:

Chassis: *Size and toughness*
 Feet: *Movement and agility*
 Hands: *Manipulation, dexterity, and strength*
 Power Source: *Running time and endurance*
 Input Devices: *Perception ability*
 Output Devices: *Communication*
 Weapons: *do we really have to explain this?*
 Resident Memory: *Basic intellect capacity*

Plus, they have additional stuff:

Armor: *Additional toughness*
 Software: *Knowledge and skills*
 Other Things: *Little extras that make the bot "special"*
 Drawbacks: *Physical and mental "glitches"*

Each of these characteristics define the bot character. We can use these to define the bots further in order to compare them to clone characters.

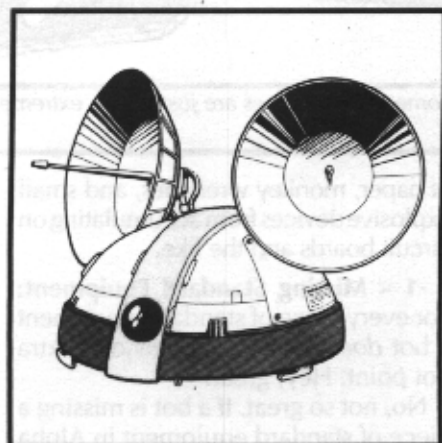
Standard Equipment

The following four pieces of equipment are "standard" to every bot in Alpha. The Computer, in its infinite programming capacity, decided early on that all bots in Alpha Complex would be given these parts. This has carried over into Alpha Base and, presumably, Alpha City. Bots in the Badlands ... well, if there are any bots in the Badlands, then they probably have this stuff too.

0 — Standard Data Port: Getting by without this "standardized" I/O port is extremely difficult. This allows bots to upload or download software or information by using any Standard Data Cable (oft frayed) in Alpha. These Data Ports are about as common as Confession Booths and equally safe to use.

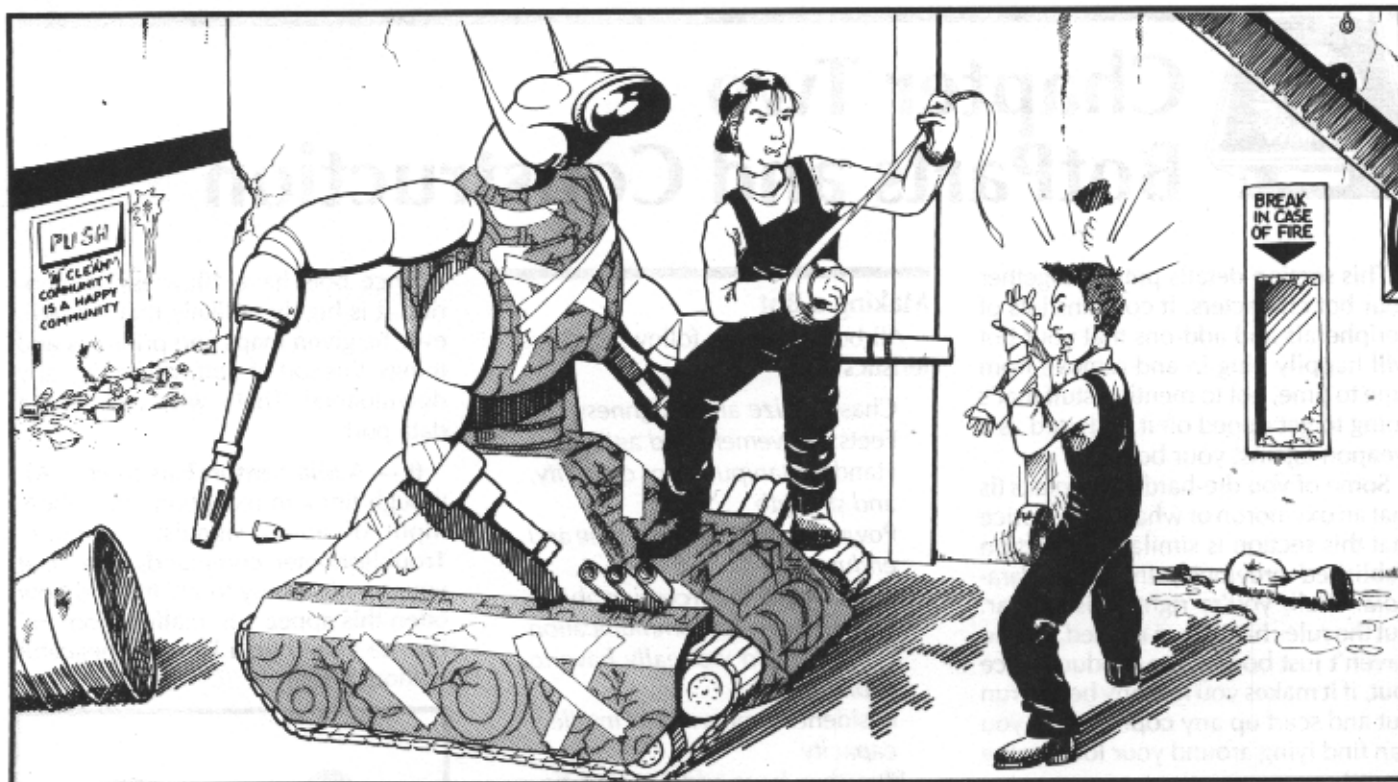
Since bots have "flawless" memories, it is highly unlikely that you will ever be given maps and printouts and things; this sort of stuff will be digitally downloaded. That's why you need a data port.

0 — Audio Sensor: Ears to you. Although tinny in reception, they allow input of audio signals, especially Troubleshooter commands like "Get your treads off my foot!" It's odd how often this appears to malfunction. Existence would be a lot more peaceful without these.



0 — Radio Receiver/Transmitter: This allows for direct communication to The Computer, another bot, or any human operator with a radio operating on the same frequency. This is a great medium for talking behind humans' backs. Serves 'em right for having organic ears. These are made of the same high-quality dependable components as everything else in Alpha, which means that messages may be garbled, lost, or crossed with other broadcasts. Certainly makes life interesting.

0 — Plastic Housing: Simply a thin plastic shell that keeps a bot's insides in (so it don't look like a skinned cat), and prevents the bot from snagging wires and such on protrusions while scampering down the hall away from laser fire. The plastic provides no armor (sorry). Also prevents small detritus like dust, scraps



Some disadvantages are just a little extreme.

of paper, monkey wrenches, and small explosive devices from accumulating on circuit boards and the like.

-1 - Missing Standard Equipment:

For every piece of standard equipment a bot *does not* have, it gets one extra bot point. Hey, great!

No, not so great. If a bot is missing a piece of standard equipment in Alpha Complex, it has obviously been sabotaged by Commies. And, since it didn't report this (if it reported this, it would have been issued more, right?), it is obviously in league with the Commies who removed it — or, at the very least, subject to their coercion. Bunches of treason points.

In Alpha Base, this same condition is not treasonous — seditious, rather — but a call for a "refit." Not only will the bot be refitted with the missing piece(s), but it will get the best of Pro Tech's newest developments as well! Happy, Happy; Joy, Joy! More fun than R&D ever was!

Chassis

Chassis is the size of the bot, which is easy to compare. The chassis is what all a bot's modular peripherals are attached to (plastic housing included).

Chassisness is mandatory.

However, it is also the basic Armor Value of the bot. For easy comparison, figure that, for every two points (round up) of *Chassis*, the bot has one point of P armor. So, a bot with a Medium (3) *Chassis* would have P2 automatically. A monster (20) chassis has an automatic P10. This is less cumbersome than the original "Bigger is Better" rules system, but, if you'd rather use that, we'll understand.

In addition, a bot can spend extra points to increase its *Chassis* strength.



For every two points a bot allocates to *Chassis* — but does not use to increase its size — it can increase the armor value of its *Chassis* by one — against any one type of attack!

Example: SWATbot, the terrorbot of the local food vats, is under construction. Using 4 of its 25 bot points on a *Medium Chassis*, it automatically gets P2 armor. In addition, the bot player decides to "beef up" his bot, assigning eight more points to *Chassis* toughness. This gives the bot 4 more armor points, which the player distributes as follows: L2E1F1P2 (the "P2" is from the original bot *Chassis* purchase). If SWATbot had just added the extra points to size, the player would have had a P5 bot *Chassis* of *Giant* size — not terribly appropriate for adventuring indoors.

What else do you do with the Chassis?

Well, you can also use the chassis to determine the relative *macho* bonus of the bot. This is mainly for comparison — how *macho* is your bot as compared

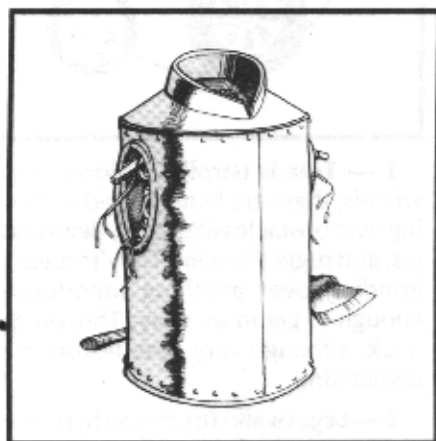
Chassis Type	Point Cost	Size	Circuits	Bump/Macho	Stability
1. Tiny	2	phone	2	0	+4
2. Small	2	TV	3	1	+2
3. Medium	3	human	4	2	+1
4. Large	5	desk	5	4	-1
5. Huge	7	sm. car	6	8	-2
6. Giant	10	lg. van	7	11	-3
7. Mammoth	14	big bus	8	15	-5
8. Monster Mark IV	20	godzilla	10	20	-7

Type is the general name for the chassis. Most bots of Alpha Complex and Alpha Base are from *small* to *huge*. It is recommended that no player character bot be larger than *huge*, unless the gamemaster has something particularly uncomfortable in mind.

The *point cost* is the number of bot points this chassis type costs.

The *size* is a comparative measurement — and a relative one. *Human*-sized bots can be from 1.5-2.5 meters in length, while *godzilla*-size bots are really just anything bigger than *mammoth*. They fit into the “what the \$#%@ is that?!” category. Besides, size isn't everything ...

The number of *circuits* a bot may have is the *maximum* number — circuits have to be paid for separately. The *huge* bot has the chance of having up to 6 circuits. It may have less.



Bump/macho serves two purposes. One, it is the bonus to damage the bot does when it rams something (the *bump*) and it is a comparative *macho* measurement. This is provided merely as a comparison between the bot and clones.

Finally, *stability* is a bonus to the bot's *Agility Skill Base* — in relation to later calculations (see below). Larger bots are less agile but, then, they don't *need* to be. When your fist is an area-of-effect weapon, you don't have to be terribly agile.

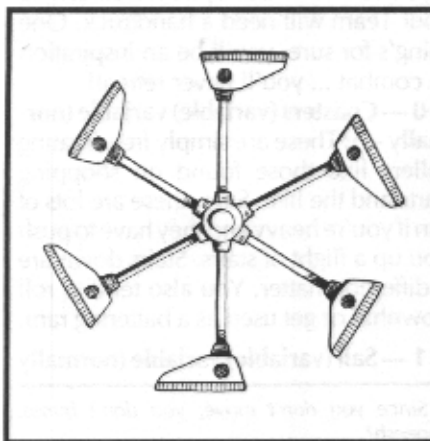
to, say, that Troubleshooter over there? Now you know.

Feets

Feets are the same as the bot's *Drive*. This is how you get around. You can have more than one drive, though, usually, a bot will only use one at a time (we won't talk about that incident in HPD&MC last monthcycle ...).

Unlike chassis, not every bot has feet. There are the B³ vending machines and the happiness pills dispensers — they have bot brains (well, I wouldn't go so far as to call them *brains* ...) — and certain bots have been installed in vehicles or other equipment.

The Vulture Warrior featured in the *Second Edition* rulebook is an example of a bot actually fitted into a vehicle.



The bot itself is immobile, but it can move the aircraft.

If you want to play an immobile bot, you can. Somebody will probably have to carry you around, but that can be annoyin- ... I mean, “fun, too.” If you want to play a bot locked into a vehicle or other piece of equipment; go ahead. Your chassis is probably *tiny*, and the rest can be determined by your gamemaster. Most of your bot points can be spent on software — though some will obviously be used to pay for the vehicle. This number is completely up to the gamemaster and should depend on (1) how powerful the vehicle/equipment is (2) how much control the bot has over the equipment and (3) how much “official duty” the bot is subject to. The Vulture Warrior aircraft is under Armed Forces control 90% of the time. Even if it went Frankenstein, the Armed Forces have backup procedures to impose their will on it. Granted, many of these procedures involve large warheads and high-velocity shells ... but that's beside the point.

Back on the Point

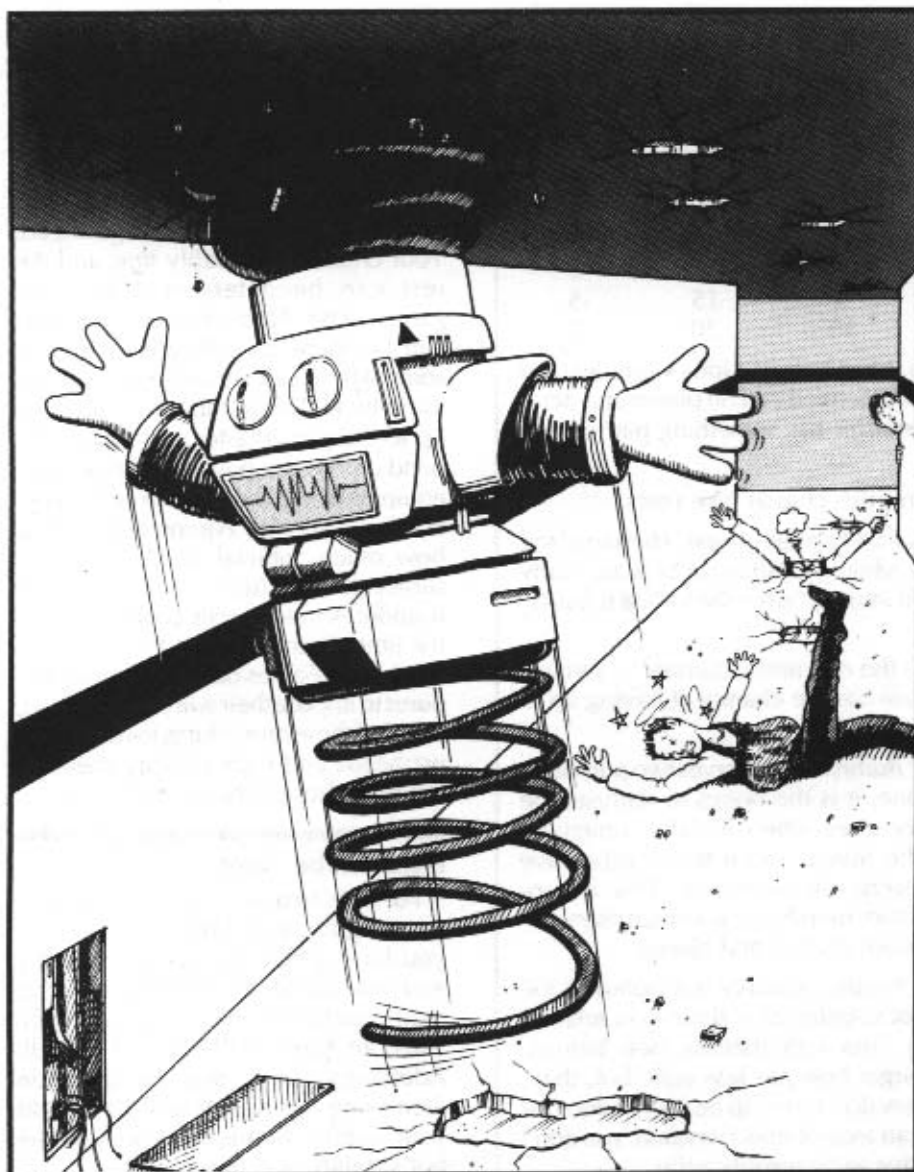
For *feets*, treat every extra point spent as an *Agility Skill Base*. This means, if you have a bot with feet (wheels) 1 and you spend an extra Bot Point on them, you have a bot with feet (wheels) 1 and an *Agility Skill Base* of 1 as well. Additional points may be spent on increasing the *Agility Skill Base*. Add your *stability* bonus and you have the bot's *Agility Skill Base*.

To modify the movement rate of a bot, the adjustment is similar. If you wish to increase a bot's maximum movement rate, spend two bot points per level. For example, if a bot can only *stroll*, spending two bot points allows it to *walk*, and two more allow it to *run*.

Bot Bashing

Yes, it is sad that, even in these days of Alpha Happiness and Harmony, bot-bashing is the norm in Alpha ... but that has nothing to do with bots actually *running into each other* (or other things, for that matter).

Each set of feet also has a *bump* rating. This number, added to the bump rating of the bot's chassis, is the base damage a bot does when it hits someone at full speed.



The pogo-bot demonstrates its superior form of locomotion.

More Little Feet

The different types of feet are listed below with their costs, movement rates, and additional information.

Example: 1 (bot point cost)- Pogo Stick (type of feet) (stroll) (movement rate) 2 (bump bonus): Surely the most ridiculous means of transportation, and also the most hazardous to toes. Makes life very painful in areas with a low ceiling. (description)

Important considerations are terrain adaptability, traction, and speed. Plus the ever-important style... what good's a bot if it doesn't look snazzy?

0 — Nothing (none) n/a*: Nada. Nichts. You can't move. What are you, some kind of refrigerator bot? This is fine if you can be fit into a pocket, otherwise your Team will need a handtruck. One thing's for sure, you'll be an inspiration in combat ... you'll never retreat!

0 — Coasters (variable) variable (normally -1): These are simply free-floating rollers like those found on shopping carts and the like. Sure, these are lots of fun if you're heavy and they have to push you up a flight of stairs. Stairs down are a different matter. You also tend to roll downhill or get used as a battering ram.

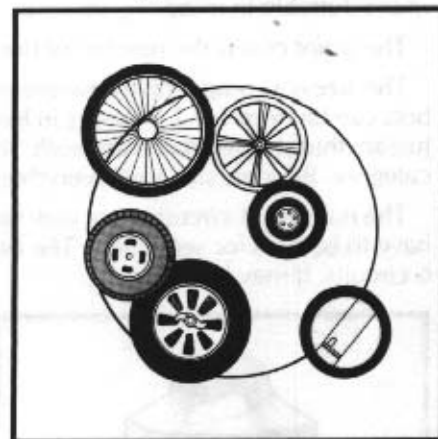
1 — Sail (variable) variable (normally

* Since you don't move, you don't bump, capeesh?

-1): These catch the wind (solar or otherwise). Software is required for truly efficient use. You *must* be tack-ful.

1 — Pogo Stick (stroll) 2: Surely the most ridiculous means of transportation, and also the most hazardous to toes. Makes life very painful in areas with a low ceiling.

1 — Wheels (walk) 1: Take as many as you want. These are good rugged tires that do great on interior floors and level ground. Stairs are a little more difficult as are steeper slopes. The tires never ever go flat. Really.



1 — Treads (stroll) 2: Slower than wheels, these are better suited to moving over obstacles like stairs, dead bodies, and rugged terrain. They're great at grinding over anything unfortunate enough to get in the way. Throwing a track, although very rare, is also very debilitating.

2 — Legs (walk) 0: Choose two, four, or 107. We don't care. These give you all the advantages of anthropoid movement, including stubbing toes, tripping, and twisting ankles.

3 — Ornithopter (run) 1: Wings. Big birdlike wings, either stiff metal feathers or membraneous stuff. You need some elbow room to use 'em, though, and you tend to glide like a brick. Abandon all claim to being unflappable.

5 — Chopper Blades (walk) 1†: Typical helicopter blades. Loud and maneuverable, but they tend to blow paperwork everywhere. Nasty things can happen if you steer a little too close to

† This does not reflect the damage inflicted directly by the chopper blade — see "sword" damage (lots of sword damage). Oh, and you have to clean up the mess.

an immovable object. Don't go upside down.

5 — Anti-Gravity (stroll) 0: Just like in the *Jetsons*, complete with weird little bubbling sound effects. This gives you perfect hover ability, total freedom of movement in three dimensions, and no way to cause collateral damage to your Teammates. Rough on the ol' chassis when you run out of energy, though. Maximum altitude is only about three meters. Pay two extra bot points to be able to go three meters higher (cumulative!). Yes, even Outer Space is in your reach!

6 — Monoplane (run) 2*: Not only do you get a small sharp propellor that rotates several hundred times a minute, but you get two (or more) free wings to keep you airborne! Unfortunately, you must maintain a minimum speed of walk to avoid stalling. This can make life exhilarating when you're trying to get on a crowded elevator.

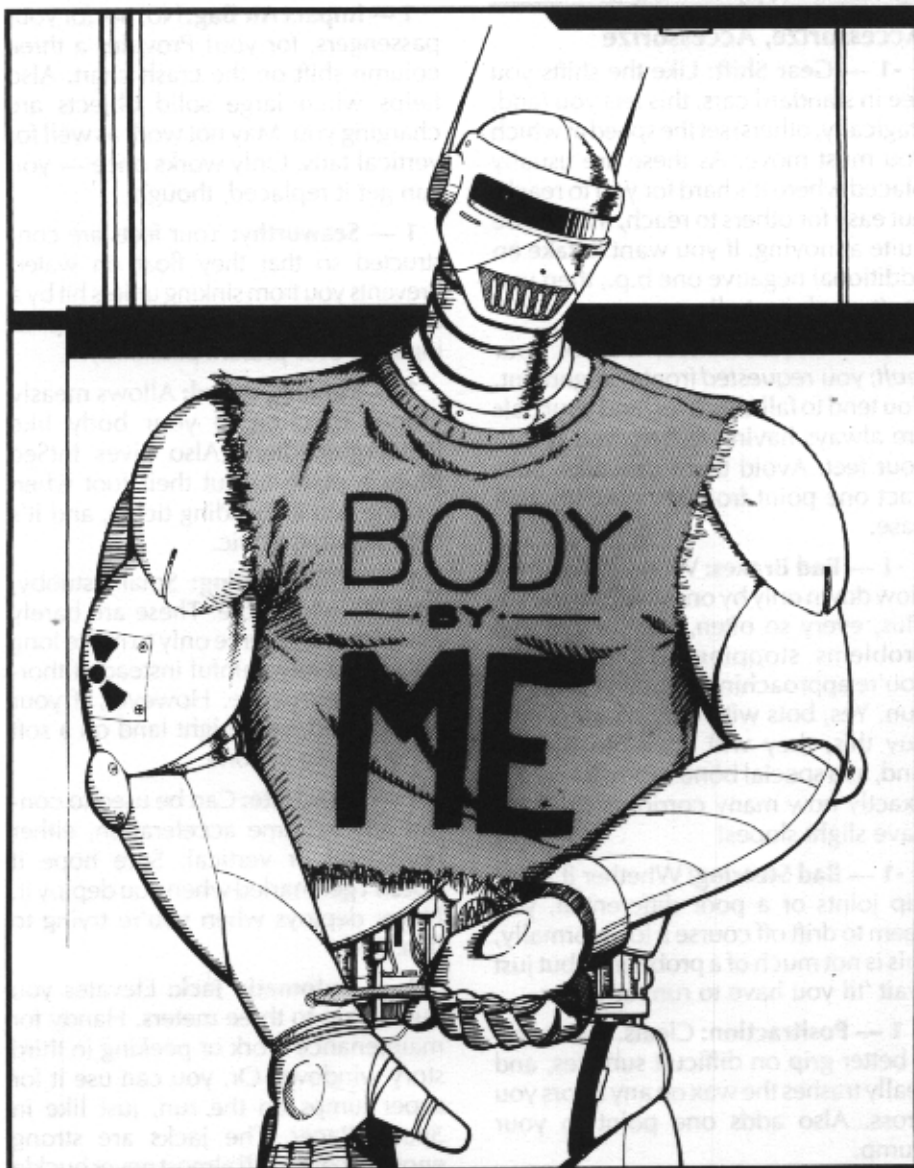
6 — Air Cushion (run) 1: This allows you to hover up to 30 centimeters above any surface; paved, dirt, or water. Fans propel you about. While you're not required to maintain a minimum speed as with Monoplane (above), your limited altitude may give you difficulty getting things from high shelves. You also tend to do painful, grinding bellyflops when you run over gratings.

8 — Jets (sprint) 3: These replace the propellers used with either the Monoplane or the Air Cushion (above). All other advantages and disadvantages remain the same, except that at your speed you tend to carom off walls and people.

10 — VTOL Jets (sprint) 3: You can't touch this! This is the deluxe — vertical takeoff and landings, incredible speed on the strafing runs, and the privilege of smashing yourself to splinters on solid objects whenever you quit paying attention to navigation.

A Note On Speed: The speed listed is the standard speed for the item in question; the speed at which the bot can move and still do everything else it was designed to. Bots can also declare Emergency Speed, which gives them a speed one level higher, but the extra processing and power required prevents the bot from using any but sensory peripherals.

* See the note concerning "chopper blades."



Self-improvement is the only way to happiness.

Drive Accessories

Just having basic footwear is not enough. You want custom stuff. Stuff that makes a statement about you as an individual artifact intelligence.

These costs are, of course, in addition to the cost of the drive. Unless you have one of the freebie drives. But then, if all you have are coasters, what in Alpha do you need with positraction? The listings are presented in the same fashion, but speed additions and bump modifications are not present in all modifications.

You will also notice (noticing is mandatory, Citizen), that some accessories have negative bot point costs. This is

not a mistake. Negative bot point costs reflect accessories and modifications that make the bot's existence a little more ... interesting. The gamemaster, however, has the final say as to whether a negative bot point modifier should be applied, though — if a bot takes a "gear shift" for -1 points, but is an immobile bot, then the gamemaster should feel free to disallow it ... and assign the player to cleaning that mildewy stuff that collects on the bottom of your shower curtain.

Not all of these accessories have numeric game effects — the gamemaster will apply the effects at the appropriate (boy, *there's* a loaded statement) time.

Accessorize, Accessorize

-1 — Gear Shift: Like the shifts you see in standard cars, this lets you (and, tragically, others) set the speed at which you must move. As these are usually placed where it's hard for you to reach, but easy for others to reach, this can be quite annoying. If you want to take an additional negative one b.p., then you can't reach it at all.

-1 — Poor Balance: It's not your fault; you requested frontal alignment. You tend to fall over a lot, and your pals are always having to help you regain your feet. Avoid them catwalks. Subtract one point from your *Agility* skill base.

-1 — Bad Brakes: Whoa!!! You may slow down only by one level per round. Plus, every so often, you'll have real problems stopping. Usually when you're approaching an open vat of Hot Fun. Yes, bots with only coasters may buy this; they will have **No Brakes**. And, as a special bonus, they'll find out exactly how many corridors in Alpha have slight slopes!

-1 — Bad Steering: Whether it's bad hip joints or a poor differential, you seem to drift off course a lot. Normally, this is not much of a problem ... but just wait 'til you have to run for cover.

1 — Positraction: Cleats. Gives you a better grip on difficult surfaces, and really trashes the wax on any floors you cross. Also adds one point to your Bump.

1 — Mag Wheels: Big, thick hummers. Look real nifty, and keep you from bogging down in soft sand or mud. (Could also be used to give you wider treads, bigger feet, or whatever.) Add one point to your *Stability*.



1 — Impact Air Bag: No, not for your passengers, for you! Provides a three column shift on the crash chart. Also helps when large solid objects are charging you. May not work as well for vertical falls. Only works once — you can get it replaced, though.

1 — Seaworthy: Your feet are constructed so that they float on water. Prevents you from sinking unless hit by a tidal wave or a torpedo, although capsizing is an ever-present possibility.

1 — Running Board: Allows measly clones to cling to your body like Panzergrenadiers. Also gives IntSec Blues a place to put their foot when writing you a speeding ticket, and it's definitely retro chic.

1 — Glider Wing: Small, stubby, possibly retractable. These are barely airworthy, and serve only to make long falls extremely painful instead of thoroughly destructive. However, if your aim is good, you might land on a soft surface. Like a clone.

1 — Parachute: Can be used to control any extreme acceleration, either horizontal or vertical. Sure hope it doesn't get snarled when you deploy it. Never deploys when you're trying to flee. Ever.

1 — Automatic Jack: Elevates you quickly up to three meters. Handy for maintenance work or peeking in third story windows. Or, you can use it for super jumps on the run, just like in *Speed Racer*. The jacks are strong enough that they'll almost never buckle under the strain.

1 — Ram: Big bar, spiked bumper, cowcatcher, whatever it is, it adds three to your Bump. Plus it looks reeeal cool.

1 — Vacuum Hardened: This keeps you from getting fritzed out by solar radiation and micrometeorites. Also helps you last a few seconds longer when inside a nuclear reactor.

1 — Magnetic Feet: Or Suction Cups. Or Sticky Feet. Whatever it is, it gives you traction on metal walls and ceilings (i.e., almost everywhere). You also tend to collect tin cans or other detritus. Plus, every so often, your feet will get stuck firm. Usually when you need to report immediately to some High Programmer. Subtracts one level from speed.

2 — Electromagnetic Feet: Or pneumatic cupped feet. Or variable viscosity slime extract. Whatever it is, it acts

WARNING! The information in this box, and this box only is Ultraviolet Clearance! Please report to the nearest termination booth or Food Vat for summary execution!

as the above, but you can switch the stickiness on and off at will. Just hope you're not on the ceiling when your fuse blows and the circuit automatically switches off. Subtracts from speed only when used.

2 — Dirigible: Around the complex in eighty daycycles! Just a little gas bag that lets you float around like a balloon. Maybe it leaks. Maybe it's full of something flammable.

2 — Retro Rockets: Also retro chic. Stops you dead in your tracks immediately, no matter how fast you were going.

3 — Airfoil: Are you a deadly airborne commandobot? These are for you! This is a high-quality glider wing, allowing you to soar all day on thermals, especially after the meltdown of a local reactor. Especially nifty Outside, they allow you to swoop silently from trees and stuff.

4 — Radiation-Proofed: This allows a bot to endure the interior of fission reactors, tacnuke warheads, explosions of nearby bots, and dives into the interior of the sun. But beware ice cubes.

Example: SWATbot already has a *Medium Chassis* with L2E1F1P2 armor. Its *stability* bonus is +1. If the SWATbot then buys *wheels* for 1 point, it has an *Agility* skill base of 2 and a movement rate of *walk*. This leaves SWATbot with 11 bot points. The player then decides SWATbot needs to move a little faster. For two more bot points, the player increases SWATbot's movement rate to *run*. But now SWATbot only has 9 bot points. So, the player decides to take some drawbacks. She decides to give SWATbot *Poor Balance* (-1 to *Agility*, but also -1 to bot point costs) and *Bad Brakes* (another -1 to the bot point cost). This brings SWATbot's remaining bot points back up to 11.

Hands Across Alpha

Hands affect two different attributes: *Strength* and *Dexterity*. Basically, you have your bot buy a type of *Hand* (*Hands* are purchased individually) and then modify it.

Bots can have a number of *Hands* equal to their *Chassis*-level size *plus one*. A bot with a *Small Chassis* can only have three *Hands*, because *small* is the second chassis size available. A *giant* bot could have up to six *hands*.

Basic Strength of (Your) Character

Each bot has a certain amount of carrying capacity. This equals the bot chassis size level times 2, times five kilograms. Thus, a *Tiny* bot can carry up to 1 times 2 times 5 kilograms, or 10 kilograms, while a *Monster*-sized bot could carry 8 times 2 times 5 kilograms or 80 kilograms.

Now, this doesn't seem like a lot ... and it isn't. But this is the amount of stuff a bot can carry *without straining*. If a bot wants to strain, it can carry more. Each bot has a *Strength Skill* base equal to its *Chassis* size level. Using this *Strength* base, it can lift more.

Therefore, if a bot with a carrying capacity of 80 kilograms wants to lift something that weighs 400 kilograms (its Carrying Capacity x5), then it has to make a *Difficult Strength Skill* Base attempt — multiply its skill base by 1/4 and roll.

Oh, and it should be obvious that no self-respecting *Paranoia* gamemaster would let a failure to lift something really heavy just be *ignored*.

"Well, your truck didn't quite manage to lift the funbot out of the way. You straighten up and <<the clatter of dice, properly ignored>> ouch! Your truck stays under the funbot!"

Manipulations

Unless you have this fetish for Venus de Milo, you'll be wanting some Paws. Get as many as you can; you, unlike humans, are not constrained to only two arms, and none of your arms will be as maladroit as a human's off hand. Each manipulator normally comes with an arm of proportional (to the bot) size.

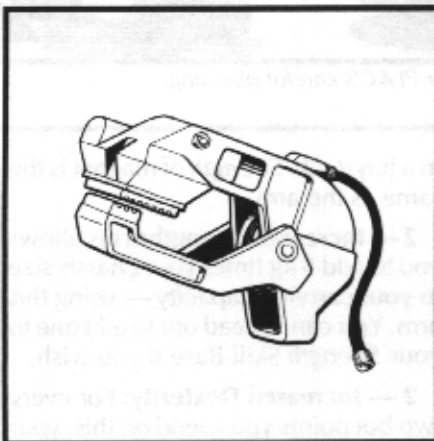
As stated above, you are constrained

Lifting/Soap Chewing Chart

Weight (kilos)	Difficulty	Soap Chewing Capacity
Carrying Capacity $\leq$ C.C.x2	Easy	1
Carrying Capacity x3	Normal	3
Carrying Capacity x4	Tough	7
Carrying Capacity x5	Difficult	23

by size ... but that is only a minor limitation. Listed under "Manipulator Accessories" below is a way for you to get more arms than you normally can. The cost of the hand and the name are in bold, along with the initial *Dexterity/Strength* of the hand itself. If a character ends up with a negative in either category, then treat that skill base as 0 — when the bot uses that hand.

1 — Grasper (-1/1): This is a simple crab-claw grabber. No manipulation, but cheap. You are great at grabbing and holding things, but you knock a lot of stuff over..



1 — Truck (-2/2): No, not the kind you drive around. This is like a handtruck, which lifts heavy things a little bit off the floor. Looks like a right angle. One edge rides along the ground, and can be shoved under an object. By tilting back, you can carry it around. If you want a serving tray or cargo bed for some reason, buy this peripheral.

1 — Tentacle (-1/-1): Enough of that clunky bar-and-piston engineering! This gives one of your limbs the freedom to move like a squid's; around corners, between narrow gaps, and back around to scratch that hard-to-reach part of your back. Works even better with the *Extensible* accessory below.

1 — Human Arm (1/0): This is not very strong, only capable of carrying light objects like thermal detonators

and deadly weapons like cafeteria trays. You do, however, have five (or so) fingers and an opposable thumb or two, so you can manipulate objects as well as any human. Assuming you have the software.

2 — Fine Manipulators (2/-2): A Human Arm with very sensitive and slender extensible fingers. These allow you to do ultrafine work, like picking locks, adjusting microchips, and removing troublesome portions of a clone's brain. Like the Human Arm, these can only lift light objects.

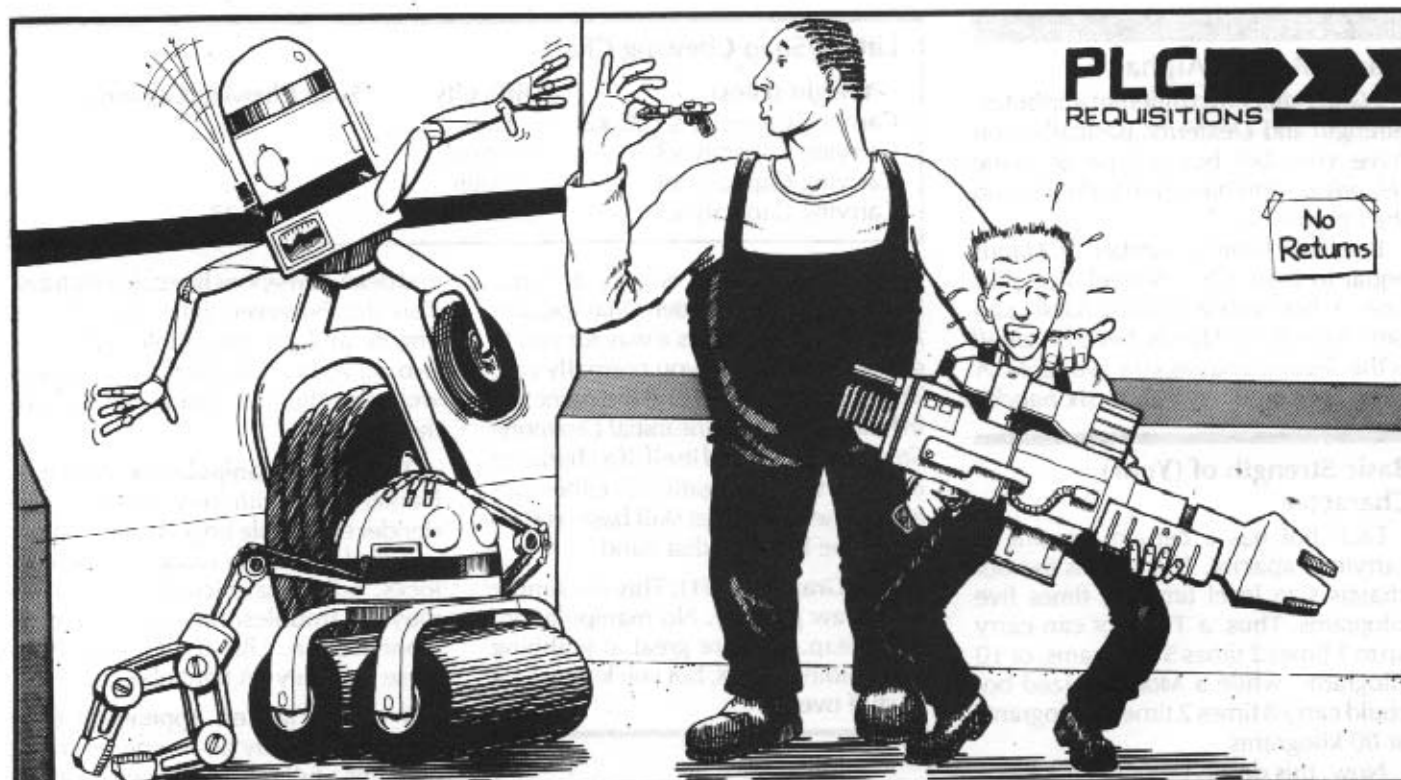
3 — Specialized Appendage (GM option): A handy all-in-one limb that contains a full range of tools for a given job. Bots with Specialized Appendages include scrubbots, docbots, and the all-important chapstick refill bots. If you only need a few tools (like say a squirt bottle and a squeegee for window cleaning), maybe your gamemaster will let you pay a point or two less.

Manipulator Enhancements

-1 — Out of Control Arm: when you aren't specifically using this arm, it waves around on its own. Perhaps it is haunted by the specter of bots gone by ... perhaps it is the result of Commie Mutant Sabotage. Whatever it is, this arm does what it wants, *when it wants*. You can only control it when you are paying attention — and sometimes not even then!

-1 — No Arm: Huh? What does *that* mean? What it means, Citizen, is that your hand has no arm. Talk about holding your cards close to the vest! Yeesh! Every other bot arm comes with some sort of attachment that lets it extend from the body, but now, it can't! This isn't too bad if you have the *Electromagnet* accessory, but it makes firing that cone rifle a pain in the chassis. You can't take this with the *Truck* or *Tentacles*.

1 — Extra Arms: For every bot point you spend, you can have one addi-



Bots and clones have equal consideration under PL&C's careful planning.

tional arm above the normal maximum. A *tinybot*, one that can normally only have two arms, can spend a bot point and be able to have three arms. This option *does not* give you the extra arms — you have to buy those paws just like the others. What do you think this is? A free hand-out?

1 — Truck Lift: You must have the Truck to get this accessory. This is a powerful screw that lets you lift trucked items up to three meters in the air. And then maybe drop them. It operates on the screw principle, which is where a gamemaster screws the players at every opportunity. Oops, I mean it can only lift things slowly, say one meter a minute. Pay extra points for Increased Strength if you want to whip that crate up over your cranial peripheral.

1 — Extensible: Reach out and grab someone! This lets your limb extend five meters. Additional points will give you additional length, on a one-for-five meter basis. Don't worry about realism too much; if you want to be able to reach fifty meters or more, go right ahead!

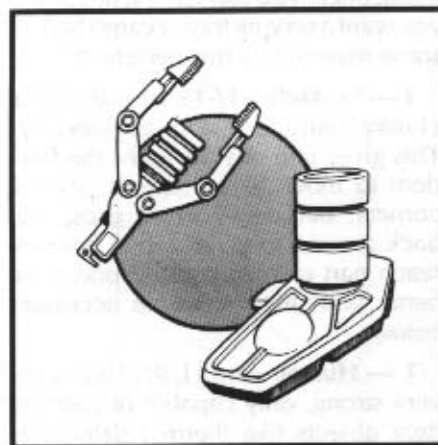
1 — Magnetic: Simple static magnetism, but very useful for finding a needle

in a haystack. Strength of magnet is the same as the arm.

2 — Increased Strength: This allows you to add 5 kg times your chassis size to your carrying capacity — using this arm. You can instead opt to add one to your *Strength Skill Base* if you wish.

2 — Increased Dexterity: For every two bot points you spend on this, your *Dexterity skill base* for this hand is increased by one.

2 — Electromagnetic: This allows you to switch magnetism on and off. Very handy for those times you've got to handle your own circuit boards.



Power Source

The *Power Source* defines how long the bot can run. Some bots only have extension cords — which means it is possible for them to run forever, but their movement is limited — while others have batteries or fusion reactors! (Bet you love having them around!)

For every additional point spent on *Power Source*, give the bot a one point *Macho Bonus* — while it is using that source. So, if a bot has a Micropile (5)+2 and a Propane Burner (1), it only gets the +2 *Macho Bonus* while the Micropile is active. If it cuts out and the bot has to run on the Propane Burner (1), there is no *Macho Bonus*.

Give me Power ...

Having a power system is entirely optional. Go ahead. Save a few points for that cone rifle.

-1 — Plug with Power Cord (limited range): This provides unlimited energy as long as there's a power outlet nearby, and as long as no one else trips over the cord. And as long as there's no power outages. Certain architects have an annoying habit of placing outlets near the

ceiling. You probably won't bother with this if you have another source, but if you don't have anything, you'll just make a nifty megacredit statue.

1 — Clockspring: This makes the bot a large, multimillion credit wind-up toy. Picture a giant ravenous warbot with a giant key slowly spinning on its back, or worse yet, a flybot powered by a huge rubber band! Runs out rather quickly, but as long as there's someone around, you need never worry about gas stations, power outlets, etc. On the other manipulator, if a clutzy mechanic ever unravels your spring, you're in a micropile of trouble.

1 — Wind Power: Basically, this uses an efficient windmill design to generate power. Takes a lot of wind to really make it work; not very useful unless you spend a lot of time near ventilation shafts. Fall off a cliff, and you'll have all the power you need right before you impact.

1 — Electric Wire Pickups: These use two probes to tap power from conveniently located electrical lines. They can be overhead bars like trolleys have, or underfoot pickups like those used by model racecars. They tend to

spit sparks at every intersection, which will get you some respectable elbow room. They are, of course, worthless Outside, unless someone wants to hold a battery over your head.

2 — Solar Cell: This gathers power from ambient light. Unlimited in duration, it requires full sunlight to generate full power. Corridor lights and cloudy days make the bot a sluggish and ineffective creature. You must shut down completely in the dark.

2 — Battery: Your basic power storage medium, great for short-duration independent operations. When it runs out of power, it tends to do so quickly, and with no warning. Requires a five-minute cycle recharge every so often. Yes, bots with batteries automatically get power cords for recharging. You're welcome.

Please note that the battery is usually filled with cool stuff like battery acid, so if it gets overloaded or punctured, corrosive materials tend to glork all over your delicate circuitry and anything else nearby.

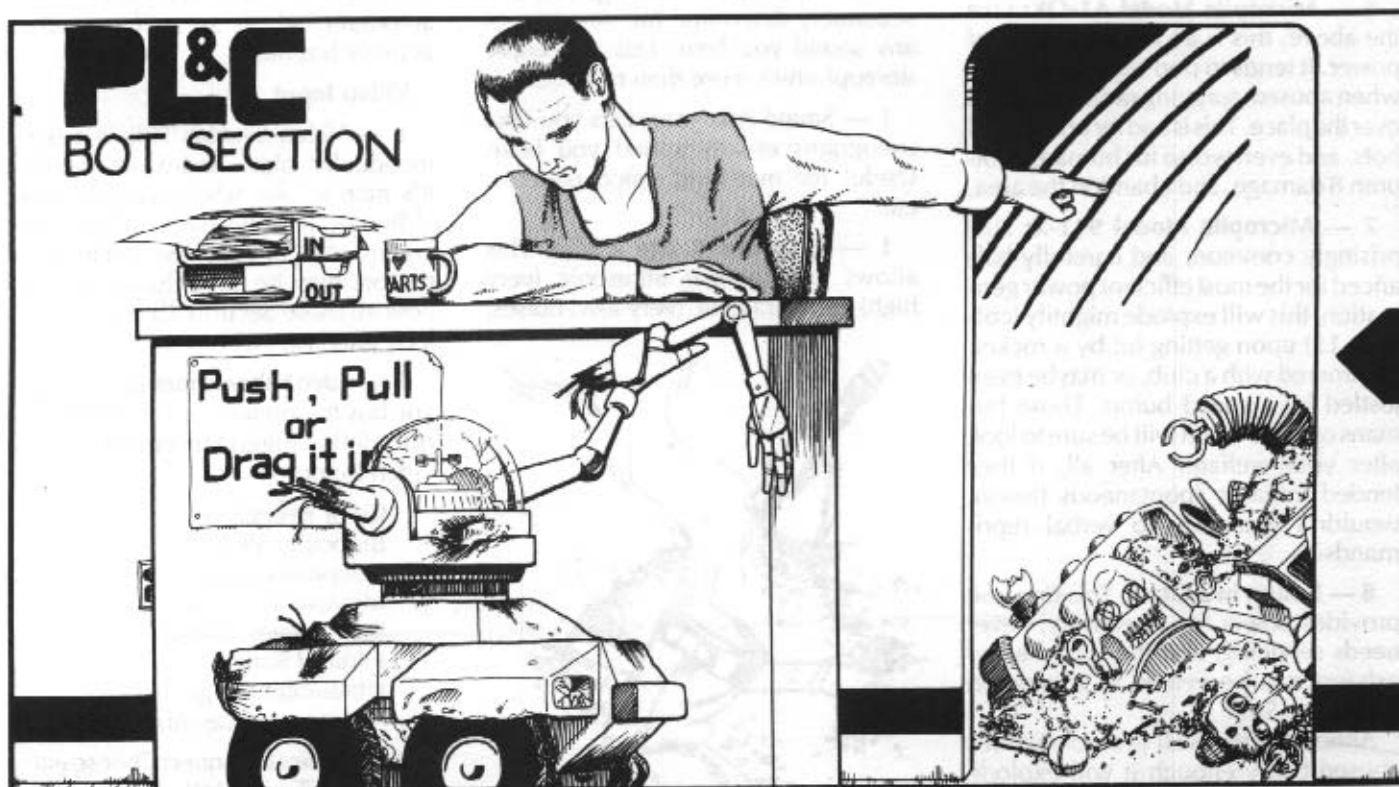
2 — Steam Engine: This requires a lot of water and stuff to burn. Virtually failsafe, it nevertheless requires a lot of

time to accelerate to full speed. In other words, don't expect to go straight into combat at full power whenever you're ambushed. (Poof! "I think I can, I think I can!" Puff puff!)

3 — Photocell: This is an improved version of the solar cell, providing full power in a brightly lit corridor. Smoke, power outages, or even a blanket draped over the bot are all debilitating. On the other hand, you get kinda hyperactive when there's lots of laser fire.

3 — Internal Combustion: A standard engine, sort of like the one in your car. The most common fuel is propane, but it could burn anything you wish; diesel, methanol, blood... This does not come with a storage tank, which you must buy separately. One cubic meter of fuel will keep you going for about half a daycycle, depending on your size and how mean your GM is. Safety warning: loitering in an enclosed area can burn up all the oxygen causing you to stall. Kinda rough on nearby organics, too.

3 — Broadcast Power Induction: This taps power from the voltage differentials from dedicated high-energy broadcast stations in Alpha. It requires



PL&C has an assortment of replacement parts for bots, new and ... slightly ... used.

a radio receiver to function, and reception can be very unreliable, especially Outside. You know; minor gaussian disruptions like electrical storms, lead walls, and wave interference from two stations. Nothing to worry about.

4 — HydroZap: This is a tiny fusion reactor that devours anything organic (and not dehydrated) that is shoved into it. Banana peels, algae chips, fermented Cold Fun, clones, you name it. It provides excellent continuous power, only rarely smells bad (not that you're bothered), and only blows up as bad as a Micropile Model A1-OK (below). The only drawback to this is that the intake is kind of small; you keep having to grab a bite to eat every hour or so (of game time). Imagine a huge warbot with a serious case of the munchies...

5 — Micropile Model 7-HVN: Rarely seen, this provides nearly unlimited energy for your bot (you'll be deactivated long before it runs out of energy), and is very, very safe. Really. Even if deliberately punctured, it will not explode, and failsafe devices prevent the spread of radiation. Pretty neat, huh? And on top of that, it requires servicing about every five years of game time (2000 years real time).

6 — Micropile Model A1-OK: Like the above, this is an infinite source of power. It tends to pop with some vigor when abused, spraying radioactives all over the place. This is bad for unshielded bots, and even worse for humans. Column 8 damage, and abandon the area.

7 — Micropile Model 911-X: Surprisingly common, and carefully balanced for the most efficient power generation, this will explode mightily (column 15) upon getting hit by a rocket, hammered with a club, or maybe even jostled by a speed bump. Those humans on your Team will be sure to look after your welfare. After all, if they tended towards spontaneous fission, wouldn't you stick to verbal reprimands?

8 — Fusion in a Glass: This tiny unit provides power for all eternity, never needs servicing, and the superheated exhaust can be vented as a weapon (F9, range 5m).

Although very well-protected, if it's abused badly enough it will explode (column 20, 40 meters), probably killing the responsible party. In fact, there's

only one real drawback to this device; it provides so much energy that bots tend to melt if they stand still for too long.

Input Devices

Input Devices are how the bot gets feedback from the outside world. In most cases, this refers to means of observation: visual, auditory, etc. Sometimes, however, that input is in another form — some bots can be "remote controlled" by either the Computer, the Council, or some third party (or all of the above). Certain bots receive different types of feedback from their environment than others.

In general, for every extra point spent on an Input Device, give the bot an extra Skill Point in *surveillance* — while it is using that input device. If it has an Audio Sensor +1 bot point, and Video Sensors, it only gets the *surveillance* skill value of 1 when it is listening. Certain input devices give other abilities as well.

Input ... Innnn-puut

Audio Input

1 — Directional Hearing: You can accurately determine the direction of any sound you hear. Lets you enjoy stereophonics more than most bots.

1 — Sound Analyzer: Lets you take sonograms of any sound you hear. Useful for matching voice patterns, etc.

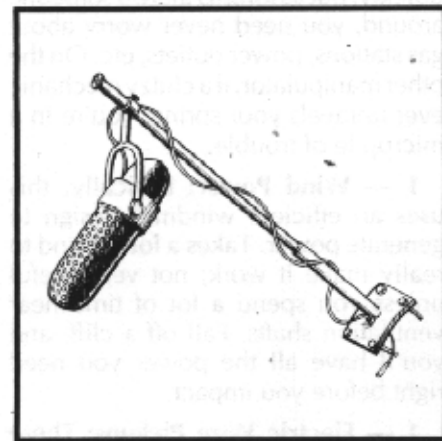
1 — Extended Range Audio: This allows you to hear ultrasonic (very high) and infrasonic (very low) noises,



sort of like a dog. Silent whistle stuff, don't you know.

1 — Sound Control: Lets you turn any of these effects off at will. Comes in real handy in crowd scenes.

2 — Parabolic Mike: Lets you focus your audio input to a narrow cone with incredible range. At maximum focus, you could hear a normal conversation at a range of one kilometer.



2 — Ultrasensitive Hearing: You can hear a pin drop at 50 meters. Just hope your buddy doesn't cut loose with an airhorn when you've got the gain cranked all the way up, or you'll suffer a real nasty overload. Get an automatic +1 to *surveillance* when actively listening.

Video Input

1 — Video Sensor: This is a basic monocular black-and-white camera. It's nice to see where you're going, although if your path is hard-programmed in, or you have radar, visual sensors may be superfluous. Curious how all those Security Clearances just look grey, isn't it?

1 — Video Enhancements: Every time you buy this option, you can select two of the following enhancements for your video input:

- Color Receptors
- Binocular Vision
- Telephoto Lens
- Microscopic Lens
- Split-Screen Vision
- Infrared Range
- Ultraviolet Range
- Periscope / Extensible Eye

2 — Medical Scanner: Choose either X-Ray, CAT, or EMR scanners. This helps when you try to do first aid

(gamemaster option). Be sure to crank up the power when you scan important clones. Your Teammates will feel much more relaxed knowing that you'll get a real clear image. Plus they look so good with Cherenkov radiation and St. Elmo's Fire flashing around their jumpsuits.

3 — Radar: Shows the surroundings as blips on a screen. Gives direction, distance, bearing and speed. Not terribly precise, but good enough to fire a tacnuke by.

4 — Sonar: Gives excruciatingly accurate readings of direction, range, relative velocity, and whether or not the clone in question has eaten recently. For a -1, take really loud sonar beeps. So stealth is suddenly a problem ... at least you know where you are going.

Miscellaneous Input Devices

-1 — Remote Control: This aggravating little device allows stupid clones to whip you through your paces. Eliminates annoyingly creative interpretations of verbal commands, and therefore a lot of the fun. You can try to resist, but it'll be hard. The range is limited, but *somebody* has the ability to control you — clone, Computer, or Other.

-1 — Vulnerable Sensor: Choose one of your sensory devices and make it vulnerable to extremes or rapid changes in the environment. For example, a bot may have eyes that are very light sensitive, so it must skulk about darkened hallways, or it operates at negatives to its abilities (that sort of bot is almost always, in Alpha, assigned the job of changing burnt-out light bulbs).

-1 — Crossed Internal Wiring: Your internal sensors are inaccurately connected, and you're always getting your peripherals confused. When you try to use your audio sensors, sometimes your eyes wink out, you sometimes mix up your radio dish and your tactile sensors. If you want an extra -1, your wires are also crossed with your other systems. "I'll examine that delicate machinery" (sound of cone rifle going off at close range) "Whoops."

1 — VCR: Playback only. Recording available under Output Devices.

1 — Keyboard and/or Mouse: Yeah, just like at home.

1 — Idiot Probe: An extensible device rather like a radio antenna that gives one word descriptions about whatever it encounters. Useful in areas where the bot's regular sensors won't work. A bot could use it to find a traitor hiding in a dark hallway by using it like a blind man's cane. Tap. Tap. Thump. Whap. WHAPATAWHAPATA-WAPATA!

1 — Gyroscopic Compass: This tells you your exact heading at all times. It can also help you keep from falling down, if your gamemaster's feeling nice.

1 — Clock: Keeps very accurate time. Includes stopwatch, countdown timer, alarm, and snooze. ("Time remaining is precisely 100 microseconds from ... now!")

1 — Weather Station: This gives everything the average clone needs to know about the weather, but won't understand anyway. Relative Humidity, Temperature, Wind Chill, Dew Point, etc. Strange readings occur in many locations in Alpha Complex. Barometers are real handy on orbital space platforms.

1 — Air Speed and Direction Indicator: Gives you useful trivia right before you impact from a fall.

1 — Finger or Palm Reader: No, not a gypsy fortune teller, a security device. Severed hands work just as well as real ones.

2 — Chem Analyzer: Gives the bot accurate appraisals of the composition of (choose one) gases, liquids, or solids. This is not the same as a sense of smell (or whatever). A human will say, "Mmm, smells like almonds ..." whereas you would say, "My atmospheric analysis peripherals have detected trace amounts of a gaseous compound primarily composed of triple-bonded carbon and nitrogen, to wit, cyanide gas, and I strongly recommend that all humans cease breathing temporarily."

2 — Radiation Sensor: Gives information about type and concentration of ambient radiation. Tends to obtain poor samples sometimes, and thus give erroneous readings. ("Excuse me, sir, but my instruments indicate that if you were to sprint for that escape hatch half a kilometer away, there'd be a 30% chance you wouldn't die of radiation

before you reached it.")

2 — Retinal Reader: Works like the finger or palm reader, but a lot more up close and personal. Look into my eyes...

2 — Tongue Reader: Checks the tongue identification tattoo that all Citizens have. Not always well insulated against electricity. Can be a shocking experience for the clone.

It is rumored that there are devices that will allow bots to patch in directly to The Computer's sensory net and the AlphaNet. Of course, such items are treason, and the offending bot, if caught, will be subject to immediate reprogramming, probably as a double agent. Unless, of course, he was *ordered* to do it by a clone ...

Output Devices

Output Devices are how the bot communicates — with clones, other bots, or computers. Many bots can do all three at once in different ways. Here, extra points will buy Skill Points in different skills. Say a bot has a Standard Data Port. If it spends two extra points, and then tries to download higher clearance information, give it a +2 Skill Value to its *data search* skill. A Voice Synthesizer +2 could add two to the bot's *fast talk* skill. Because Bot Points spent in Output Devices are so versatile, it costs two Bot Points for every one extra point (base point costs are still the same). Thus, the +2 to the Voice Synthesizer costs 4 bot points.

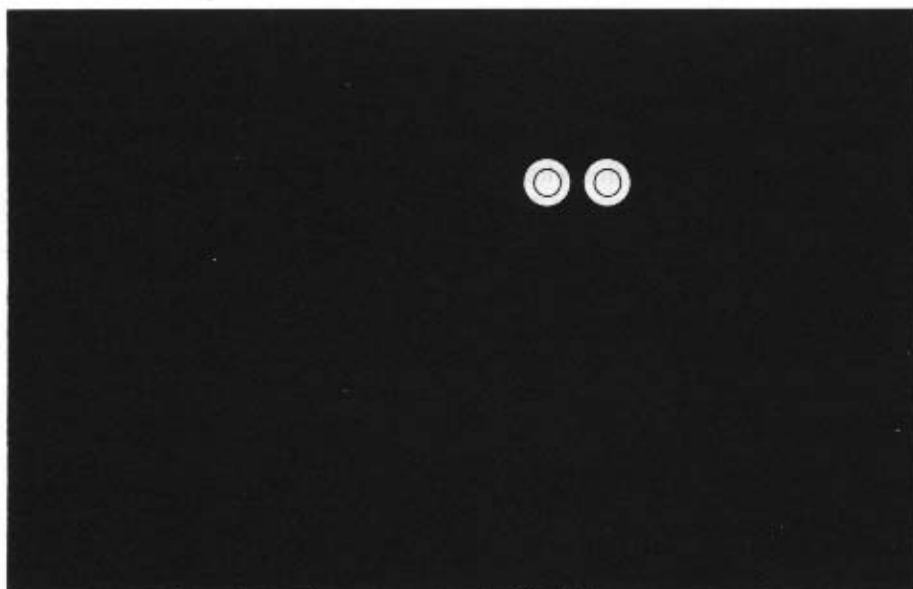
Audio Output

1 — Standard Voice Synthesizer: This is a typical grade B voxsynth ("Danger! Danger, Will Rob-I-SON"), and is required for any of the vocal enhancements listed below.

1 — 100-Watt Amplifier: Sometimes it's very useful to talk *real loud*. Especially when clones are standing right next to you.

1 — Music Synthesizer: Add a soundtrack to those raging firefights! Tease the Troubleshooters without saying a word! Provide ominous background music to "lighten" those tense moments of undercover work!

1 — Digital Voice: This gives you inflection, nice sound, all the subtle shades of meaning, etc. But it won't necessarily make you intelligible.



Q: "How many bots does it take to screw in a lightbulb?"

A: "None. Bots have instacell photoreceptors."

1 — Sampling: Lets you imitate any sound you hear. Great in combination with the "Sound Analyzer" (above). It won't be perfect, but it'll be close. Imitating laser fire is real fun when the Troubleshooters are sleeping.

1 — Siren: VERY LOUD! Cries for help in the universal language.

-1 — Constant Annoying Beeps: Need I explain this? Like the Gobs o' Lights (below), you can list diagnostics for these: "beepbeep, bot is receiving satisfactory input; whoopwhoopwhoop, bot is receiving unsatisfactory input; screeeee, bot brain has run out of lubrication."

Visual Output

-1 — Gobs of Little Lights: Looks real cool, but can be really annoying, especially when everyone's trying to sneak around in the dark. Make lists of what each bank of lights represent: "Yellow lights (off) = brain at rest; (blinking) = brain processing data; (blinking rapidly) = brain trapped in infinite loop; (on) = brain overstressed, meltdown imminent."

1 — Printer: This lets you produce hard copy of whatever you want, to keep around for the end of the mission to back up your statements when you narc on your compatriots. Also, if you get lost you can leave a paper trail.

1 — Printer Enhancements: Choose any two of the following enhancements for your printer:

High Quality Graphics
Color Ink (ah, but what security clearances?)
Letter Quality Text
Banner Printing Capability
Standard Forms Reservoir

1 — Video Monitor: Like a little TV screen, this lets you visually display whatever you need to convey to others. It is a simple, black & white, text-only screen. You gotta have this to buy any of the improvements below.

1 — Video Color Screen: This lets you add emphasis to your statements, like flashing "DANGER!" in yellow and red.

1 — Video Graphics Card: This lets you do real nice-looking pictures, with filled-in shapes, etc. You can also display whatever you're receiving from your video input. "Hey; no peeping-Tombots in *this* sector, buddy!"

1 — Video 3-D Animation: This lets you draw and manipulate visual objects, including realtime animation of Troubleshooters' heads blowing up and stuff. If you buy this without buying a graphics card, all your figures will be simple vector graphics outlines instead of fully-colored icons. "Help me, Ob-I-WAN; you're my only hope!"

1 — Video Reception: Lets you display the Teela O'Malley show, and also maybe play Commie Combat and a few other arcade games.

1 — Flare Gun: Usually a mistake to

use indoors, unless you want to give someone hot pants. Amply supplied with all colors, including the high-security invisible flare. Requires no software to fire.

1 — Strobe Light: This turns any firefight into a great dance! Freaks out those Dungeon Mutants as well — "Aaargh! *Prismatic Sph* [DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS] Spell!"

1 — Flashlight: Capable of more discretion than the spotlight, and also focusable from a diameter of about a nickel up to a meter.

2 — Fluorescent Light: Powerful 360 degree illumination. Buzzing and flickering optional, but remember that unlike clones, bots don't get headaches.

2 — Spotlight: Typical police issue. Throw down your laser and come out with your manipulators up! If you really, really want to, you can even carve out solid profiles of flying rodents to stick on the spotlight to cast weird shadows.

Miscellaneous Output

1 — Tracer: It's four o'clock in the morningcycle, do you know where your character is? This'll let you know. Occasionally backfires when you're trying to hunt someone who's tuned to your tracer. Sort of like Captain Hook's crocodile. Gives direction, but not distance.

1 — Recording Device: This allows you to record your input from any single peripheral except video. Of course, somebody else may have installed one of these in you anyway ...

2 — Video Recording Device: This allows you to record video images. It costs more because visual input is the most incriminating. See note above.



3 — Editing Device: Allows you to generate alternative realities by creatively editing your recordings. Without this device, your only editing control is when to start and stop recording. Here, you can splice, dub over, and even pull fancy stuff like split screen, window boxing, freeze frame, bleeds and fades. Hmmn; lots of potential.

Weapons

Every bot ought to have a weapon or two on board, whether it is an impromptu device like a drill or a dedicated platform like a cone rifle turret. After all, as we say in Alpha:

"A bot without weapons is like nothing we've ever heard of in Paranoia."

The following weapons are all available for use on bots. Those without explanation are standard Alpha Complex Troubleshooter designs. As usual, if there's something you'd like to be able to use (like, say, the neutronium nightstick in the *Crash Course Manual*), just ask your gamemaster. Maybe whine a little, or offer to buy him a pizza.

Note that many bots, especially those with human hands, can fire normal, not-

designed-specifically-for-bots, weapons perfectly well. They use their *Dexterity* rating to do this (which can sometimes be an advantage — look at the software rules in the next chapter to see what I mean). The following weapons are, however, meant to be "built in."

1 — Truncheon

1 — Tangler

1 — Stun Gun

2 — Force Sword

2 — Attack Chainsaw: Good grade B slasher flick prop. 14I and loss of traction. Standard issue for docbots.

2 — Sonic Rifle

2 — Blaster

2 — Laser Pistol: The color of barrel that you are assigned depends on current supply and the importance of the mission, hence it tends to change often. Could be Red. Could be Ultraviolet. Who knows? (Probably your Gamemaster does.) In Alpha Base, it is not unusual to find bots with "leftover" barrels from their Alpha Complex days.

Well, actually, it is kind of a surprise.

3 — Laser Rifle: Ditto for these barrels.

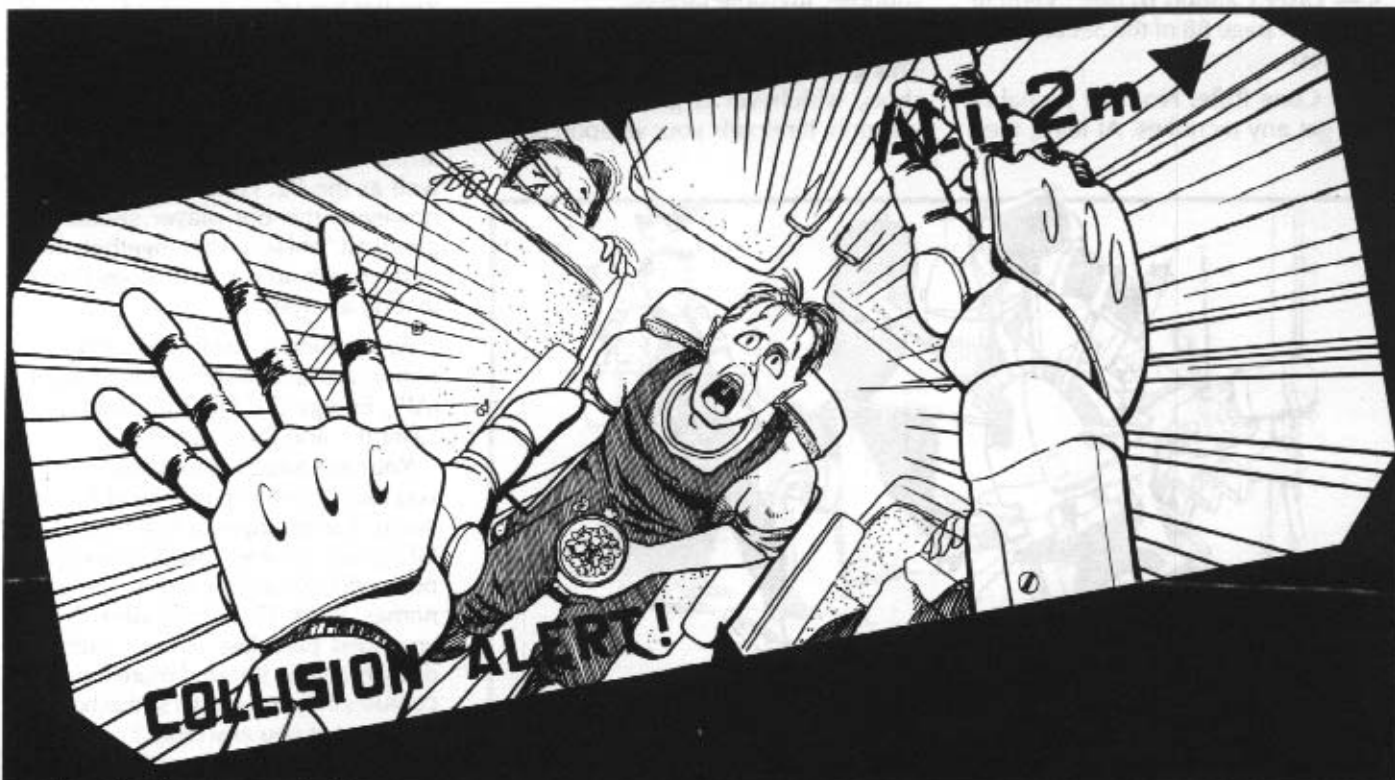
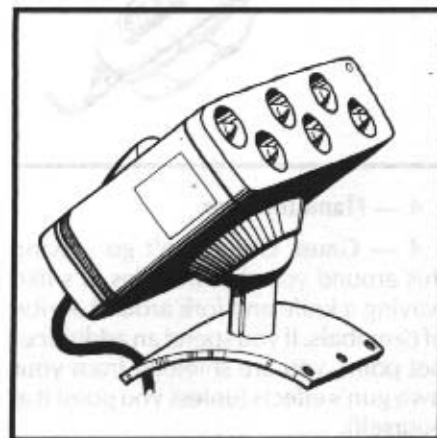
2 — Slugthrower: Like laser barrels,

the ammo you are issued may change from hour to hour. Heck, if it has a low half-life, it may change even quicker.

3 — Semi-Automatic Slugthrower: Ditto ditto.

3 — Needle Gun

3 — Anti-Ballistic Missile Rack: This has a hit chance of 18 against ballistic missiles, and a hit chance of 8 against high-velocity missiles like those fired from a cone rifle — it does not need additional software to run. It can fire one shot per round. Effect and blast radius are both variable, but undoubtedly impressive.

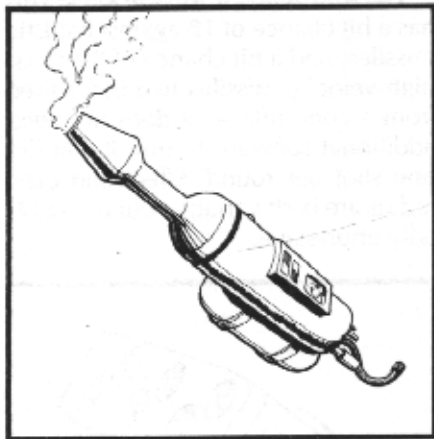


"And now for the instant replay!"



3 — Grenade Launcher: This can launch any standard grenade, and has a range of 50 meters. Rate of fire is 1/round.

3 — Laser Cannon I: (see "Vehicle Weapons," page 88 of the *Second Edition* rules)



4 — Flamethrower

4 — Gauss Gun: Don't go waving this around your bot buddies. It's like waving a knife and fork around a tribe of cannibals. If you spend an additional bot point, you are shielded from your own gun's effects (unless you point it at yourself).

4 — Laser Cannon II: (see "Vehicle Weapons," page 88 of the *Second Edition* rules)

5 — Cone Rifle: No, you probably won't get any tacnukes. At least, they

won't be labeled as such.

6 — Laser Cannon III: (see "Vehicle Weapons," but did you remember that the rules are Ultraviolet Clearance? Terminate this clone, Citizen.)

6 — Firethrower: (see "Vehicle Weapons," and probably get executed for doing so)

7 — Plasma Generator: Warning! Do not fire straight ahead when you are traveling at high speed! "Backwash is yucky."

7 — Sonic Blaster: (you know the drill by now)

Yes, other (usually experimental) equipment is available. If you *reecceally* want it. These weapons and equipment are *perfectly safe*, and perform to the highest of R&D and Pro Tech standards (excuse me while I duck behind this bunker).

Weapon Accessories

1 — Gyrostabilized: Lets you fire while moving without penalty.

1 — Vector Tracking: Lets you fire at moving objects without penalty.

1 — Laser Sighting: Gives a +1 to hit on all targets, any range. Except, I suppose, invisible targets.

2 — Autoloader with One Reload: This gives you an extra full clip (or six shots, whichever is greater) for your weapon. It reloads your weapon auto-

matically, so you don't have to spend a round reloading. Each additional point spent on a single reloader gives you another clip (or six shots). If you want reloaders for more than one weapon, they must be purchased separately.

What? That's *it*? Well, this won't do at all! Make some up *right now*, Citizen ... and send us a copy.

Armor

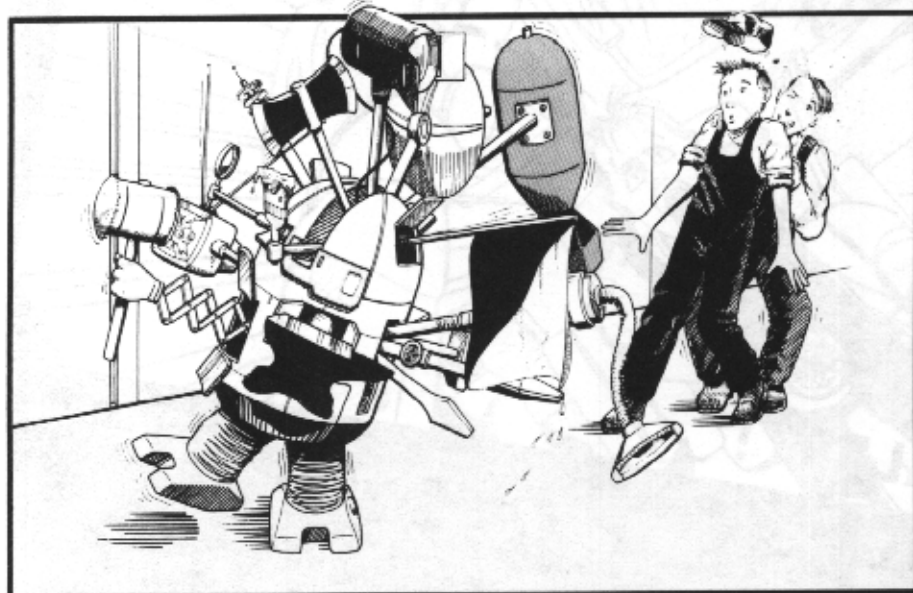
Another must-have from the bot labs. Even though bots *should* have spent their points on bigger and better chassis, and improved chassis strength, bots *can* buy armor. Sigh. To make matters worse, if a bot is *exactly* humanoid, it may be able to wear clone armor as well. How annoying. But don't worry, that tacnuke will get through.

2 — Armor: Buys you four column shifts against damage by a particular weapon. You can split these if you wish (P2F1L1), or keep them all together (E4). You can buy as much armor as you wish. The problem: this armor, since it is not part of your chassis, is designed to absorb damage in an inexpensive "breakaway" fashion. After each armor section has been penetrated (the bot has taken damage) four times, four points of armor are lost. In the above P2F1L1 example, this means that, when the bot takes four P hits that do damage, it loses *all* four points of the armor — the F1 and the L1 go away, as well as the P2. For ease of reference, however, the bot player should just group all "ablat" armor together, away from chassis armor, so he doesn't mark that off as well.

As a reminder, the following types of armor are available; Armor-Piercing (AP), Energy (E), Field (F), Impact (I), Laser (L), and Projectile (P).

You can end up with any kind of armor you like, but try to give it an obfuscated name. For example, a bot might have I5E7 armor, great against clubs and gauss, but ineffective against lasers. The player names it "X-37 semiflexible hyper-grounded paraglass armor." Not only does this make it sound more fun, but it confuses the gamemaster so that he might not shoot at you any more.

-3 — Delicate: Not only do you have no armor, but you have a fragile skeleton and your wires kind of dangle



Be prepared ... be very, very prepared.

around waiting to be caught on things. All damage you receive is shifted one column to the right. And roll to see if you snag anything if you move through any obstructed corridors.

-5 — Fragile: As above, but worse. Two column shift to the right. Check for collateral damage when you hit bumps, get startled, or annoy the gamemaster.

Maintenance Stuff

These are useful little items the bot may have been issued or may have picked up. Most of them are built into the bot's chassis, and not visible until used (sometimes, even, gamemasters will inform you that you bought a particular piece of equipment without noticing ... after the adventure starts).

1 — Paint Shaker: Also a good interrogation device.

"The Rattling! The Rattling! I can't take it any more! BWAHAHAHAH!"

1 — Sprayer: Sprays (choose one and work it out with the gamemaster) liquids, solids (like a sand blaster), or gases.

1 — Jumper Cables: These help your battery-powered compatriots get up and go. Somehow they never seem to get used for their intended purpose, however.

1 — Grappling Hook: This can be either magnetic, suction cup, or the traditional hook design. Comes with a powerful winch, strong enough to lift you and a number of clones equal to half the cost of your chassis. Of course, the clones might lose their grip ...

2 — Blowtorch: Can you *really* see your bot using this as it was intended? Damage Column 8F at three inch range.

1+ — Brooms, mops, pans, etc.: Anything else you can think of and sneak by your gamemaster. Use your imagination.

Miscellaneous Stuff

Not to be confused with "Maintenance Stuff," here's some more things for your bot to lug around.

1 — Calculator: A really complex model. Does everything, including calculate odds on Troubleshooter survival. Either runs on solar, battery, your

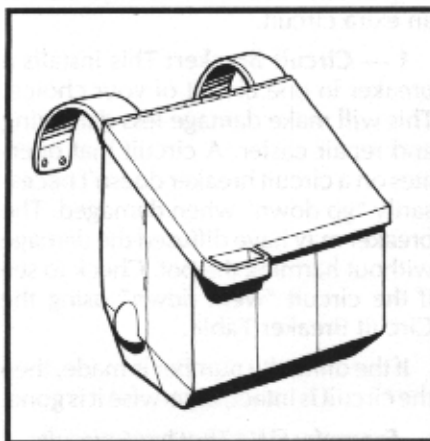
power source, or high fission. Gamemaster's choice.

1 — Storage Bin: Allows you to carry 0.1 cubic meters (about a cubic foot) of solid matter. Each extra point you spend on a *single bin* doubles its size. Additional bins start out at 0.1 cubic meters. If this is larger than your bot ... oh, well.

1 — Liquid Storage: Allows you to carry 10 liters of liquid material. Cups are extra.

1 — Pressurized Gas Storage: Allows you to carry and store 1 cubic meter of gas at 10 atmospheres (taking up 0.1 cubic meters of space). Be careful when you release this.

1 — Armored Storage: Protects one storage container against impact and projectile weapons by lowering damage by a 4 column shift.



1 — Fireproof Storage: Protects one storage container against laser and field weapons. Four column shift.

1 — Refrigerated/Heated Storage: Turns any one storage container into a fridge. Or an incubator, if you want.

1 — Secure Storage: Turns one storage compartment into something like a safe. Thieves will need a powerful drill to get through this lock! Great place to keep those disks with tested programs.

1 — Fire Extinguisher: Well, that seems pretty self-explanatory. Like the jumper cables (above), these never seem to be used right ...

1 — Wet Bar: This stocks stuff like Bouncy Bubble Beverage, 6-Up, and "Mad-DOG 10W40."

1 — Pill Dispenser: Loaded with pharmaceuticals! Coin dispenser optional.

1 — Cigarette Lighter: Flame adjustment included, but never more than one meter.

1 — Electrical Outlet: Help those bot buddies of yours who only have a plug!

1 — Adhesive Solvent: This will let you "solve" those sticky little problems. Immediately unsticks Glue and Permabond (below).

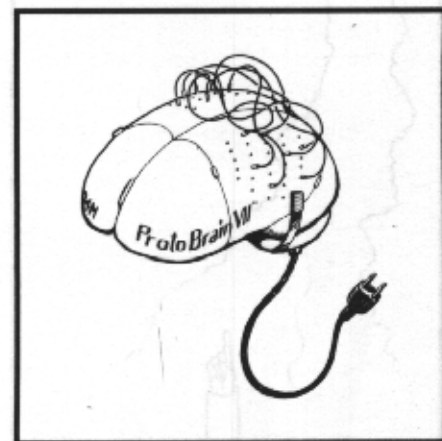
2 — Glue: Takes a little while to set, but if they're sleeping, who cares? Beat an *average Strength* test to get out.

3 — Permabond: Just sounds neat, doesn't it. Sets instantly; *difficult Strength* to get out. Get that blowtorch.

? — There's a skillion things out there, and rather than list them all (requiring 100 pages or more), we're going to count on the flawless judgement of the impeccable gamemaster. Probably anything you'll want will cost a point. Maybe two. Maybe ten million if you just drank the last soda out of the gamemaster's fridge.

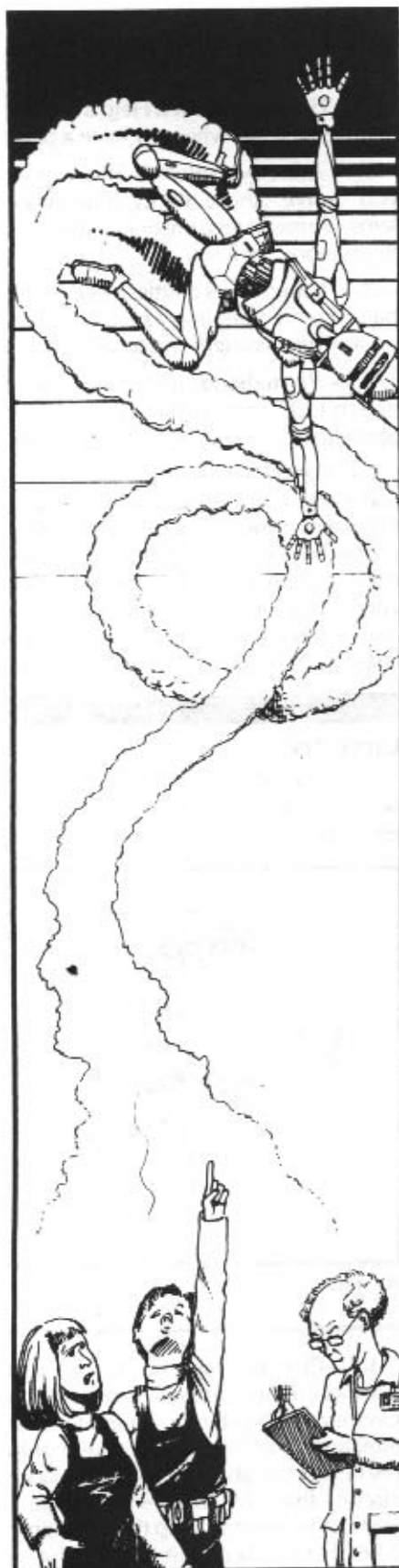
Circuitry

These options will improve (or impair) your ability to sustain damage that gets past your armor.



A typical bot brain.

1 — Circuit: This simply gives you another circuit to absorb damage. Each circuit can absorb one wound level of damage. One circuit will take a *stun* result; five can absorb a *vaporize*. More circuits than five are "redundancies" and can be reset to keep the bot going. A bot that has six circuits and gets hit by a *vaporize* result goes "out" until an outside mechanic makes an *easy Robot Maintenance* roll to "set" the last



Successful tests of R&D equipment do not necessarily mean successful uses of R&D equipment.

Circuit Breaker Table

Wound Taken

Circuit Absorbed a *Stun*
 Circuit Absorbed a *Wound*
 Circuit Absorbed an *Incapacitate*
 Circuit Absorbed a *Kill*
 Circuit Absorbed a *Vaporize*

Robot Maintenance Roll

Automatic
 Easy
 Average
 Difficult
 Sorry, Charlie; it's gone

remaining circuit. The bot can then take a *stun* result before going out.

Bots that have no circuits left automatically suffer at least *kill* results when they are hit (unless *no effect* is rolled) and are broken. They must then "go to the shop" and be repaired and parts must be replaced.

1 — Extra Circuit: This can only be bought after the bot has filled its circuit capacity (see "Chassis" at the beginning of this section). This buys the bot an extra circuit.

1 — Circuit Breaker: This installs a breaker in one circuit of your choice. This will make damage less damaging and repair easier. A circuit that operates on a circuit breaker doesn't necessarily "go down" when damaged. The breaker may have diffused the damage without harming the bot. Check to see if the circuit "went down" using the Circuit Breaker Table.

If the difficulty number is made, then the circuit is intact; otherwise it is gone.

Example: SWATbot has 6 circuits — five "active" and one redundancy. SWATbot is hit by a vaporize result. Ouch! But all five circuits have circuit-breakers (lucky bot). This means that the first circuit (that took the vaporize) is automatically gone. The next one endured a kill, and needs a difficult Robot Maintenance roll to be reset, and the next one, which took an incapacitate result, needs an average.

The fourth circuit took the damage of a wound, and only needs an easy roll to be fixed, while the last (the fifth) took a *stun* and can automatically be reset.

Even if all the rolls are blown, SWATbot has a redundancy circuit that will replace the first circuit destroyed and get it up and

running — and, if it knows what's good for it — back to a repair shop.

All this protection may look like bots are tougher than clones. Well, they are ... generally. A bot can take terrible abuse before going down for the count, but it has other drawbacks. Bots that get vaporized after losing all their circuits get spread all over the room like clones do, but, usually, they don't come back from that — it is too much trouble to repair a vaporized bot (if it is possible at all), and there are no clone back-ups. The bot brain may be backed up, but it needs a whole new body ... which will, most times, be totally different from its original.

1 — Fuses: This installs simple fuses in two circuits. While not as effective as a circuit breaker, they're cheaper. Increase all the "reset" difficulties by one level, making the *vaporize* and *kill* results the same. The advantage to fuses is the low repair time and the lack of parts needed; all the bot has to carry is a few extra fuses, not a whole pack of circuitry.

-1 — Fragile Circuitry: This makes damage a little more damaging. All hits are one column shift to the right.

-1 — No Surge Protectors: This makes overloads liable to spread when you're damaged. If you lose a circuit, you may lose another one later on ... or a software program ... or you may malfunction. Your gamemaster will be more than happy to handle this when it comes up.

-2 — Faulty Wiring: This causes you to have periodic short circuits, overloads, or whatever — for no apparent reason. Usually these will occur when you're doing something like disarming a tacnuke.

-3 — Remote-Controlled Self Destruct: When your superiors decide it's time to terminate your operation, BOOM! This acts like an HE cone, plus one column of P damage for every



point you spent on your chassis — to everyone in the area; you're gone.

-3 — Remote-Controlled Override:

When you've done something to upset The Boss Clone, you will be shut down. Immediately. For as long as they want. No saving throws. Do not collect 200 credits. And no collateral damage to nearby clones.

-3 — Poor Electrical Shielding:

You begin to sputter, spin in circles, or malfunction in other amusing ways when in the presence of a high-voltage electrical field or gauss weapons. Even

a near miss by a laser rifle might give you a twitch.

-4 — Radio-Controlled Override:

This acts like the Remote-Controlled Override above, except that it's controlled by a small box usually in the hands of a real obnoxious clone who wants you to toady to him all the time or ZAP! Random radio signals also sometimes trigger weird effects.

"This is KLON Alpha Base radio, on the air and in the air, and we see in our traffic report that one a' them pesky Mark IV bots is out in the Badlands between us an' Alpha Complex again!

Let's swoop in for a closer look.

"Whooooo! That sucker just turned around and jumped on its ... er, head. Now it's spinnin' in circles. Now it's firing its missiles — whooops; that was a close one!

"Hemmm; let's see what some Old Reckoning music'll do to calm it down" (puts in *Old Reckoning CD*) "courtesy of the Romantic Secret Society; it's *Bang Your Head!*"

(brief pause)

"Whoa! I didn't know a Mark IV could do that to itself! Yecch!"

The potential for this is staggering.

... (faint, illegible text continues in the background)





Chapter Three

Where, oh where, is my Software?

Old Bot Donald had an error,
I/O I/O E!
And in this error was a bug,
I/O I/O E!
With a glitch glitch here,
A zap zap there,
Here a glitch, there a zap,
Everywhere are smoking boots.
Old Bot Donald had an error,
I/O I/O E!

Bots require a lot of software to work to their full potential. Each bot will start with software loaded at the beginning of every adventure, but sometimes these packages will not be entirely appropriate for the task at hand, and new programs will need to be downloaded.

All bots have a certain amount of software loaded semi-permanently into their bot brains. Basic motor skills and Computer/Alpha Base dictates, and the interpretation of their Asimov circuits being the most remarkable.

Bots can use their standard radios to download software. This process takes somewhat longer than the average Troubleshooter's life expectancy.

Data ports can also be used, but they are often in high-security areas, and, as they are hooked directly into AlphaNet, are low on privacy and entirely inappropriate for loading illicit programs.



After all, maybe your boss is monitoring you.

Thus, most bots carry some sort of software I/O ports so they can have new programs loaded in the field, on the fly, or off the cuff.

Also, most bots will try to keep their own copies of software that they have personally tested. That way they can reload it later, and not have to worry about mislabelings or programming bugs. This is somewhat reminiscent of "wizards" carrying around "spell books" and "memorizing" spells in *That Boring Fantasy Game™*. Note that it can be problematic for a bot to keep a set of floppies around all the time. This is where a little stealth (or a locked storage compartment) can be very handy. Here are some different types of drives and their bot point costs. A bot *must* have one of these drives to use external software. Even software coming directly through the airwaves or an I/O slot must be processed in the drive.

0 — Read-Only Drive: This allows the bots to read media. The bot cannot write anything to the medium. No modification allowed. This is the most common drive.

1 — Cassette Tape: Reliable medium, though poor maintenance means that occasionally your drive will "eat" the tape and someone will have to fish around in there with sharp objects.

1 — Punch Cards: The Computer only knows what you'd want with such archaic technology. See *The Iceman Returneth* for examples on how to abuse these.

1 — Reel-to-Reel Tape: Old-fashioned tech, but looks real important. Needs high maintenance, but can be used to strangle traitors (red variety only).

1 — Vinyl Platter: A brief experiment in recording data as white noise on phonographic albums. Amusing

things happen if a Romantic slips a Dizzy Gillespie album in your drive.

1 — Write-Only Drive: If you're not interested in what anyone else might have to offer you, then take this one. Lets you give programs to others, but not load any yourself.

2 — Read/Write Drive: This allows the bot to read programs, and also to copy programs from its memory onto the medium and pass it to other bots.

The following media are currently in use somewhere in Alpha Complex. The media are each incompatible with the others. Older media tend to have older programs, with all the inherent benefits and problems. Each drive a bot has must use one (and only one) of these media:

2 — Bar Code Streamer: A big long tape with lots of little lines all over it. Relatively invulnerable, but beware loading it backwards!

2 — Floppy Disk: Very reliable and relatively quick, the only drawback here is that clones tend to bend the disks or sit on them or something.

3 — Laser Disk: Compact disc technology; extremely reliable. *No you can't use your drive's laser to shoot people.*

3 — Mem Cards: Chips encased in plastic, somewhat akin to video game cartridges. Now the Alpha standard (as of about ten years ago). All of the latest programs are available on these, and they are somewhat protected against environmental hazards.

Each of these media is fragile in its own way. For example, punch cards are impervious to electromagnetic flux, but are very vulnerable to even a mild draft. Lots o' fun can happen when a bot reads a program off a damaged medium.

If you don't want to deal with any of those, buy the following, instead.



"This'll hurt me more than it will hurt you!"

1 — Standard Male Data Plug: This allows you to hook directly up to a bot with a Standard Data Port. Powersurges can lead to personality swaps and stuff. Don't try this with an unwilling bot partner. "Get that thing away from me!"

3 — High-Baud Radio Receiver: This does not use any of the media listed below, but instead can receive transmissions directly from Mission Control (or a pirate with a High-Baud Transmitter) and download software quite rapidly (about ten seconds or one combat round per mem size). Of course, you're never quite sure what you're going to get ...

3 — High-Baud Radio Transmitter: Does the opposite of the receiver, only you're never going to figure out who's picking up your signal.

Memory and Software

Before you go hopping on down to the software store to grab all the games you want, let's take a minute to buy you something to store them in. Memory is where you keep your software until you use it. You can't use software without memory — that'd be like trying to learn a new skill without having a brain.

You can also buy proven software with your bot points if you're really paranoid about the stuff on the Alphan shareware market. But remember, you will always be assigned the software your Mission Briefing Officer thinks will be necessary. It may not be entirely dependable, but they'll never let you leave without enough programs to fill your memory.

First, though, let's look at memory.

Random Access Memory (RAM)

Each bot point used for resident memory gives you two memory sectors. Basically, memory sectors turn into skill points. If you have ten memory sectors, you can hold one software package of skill level ten, five packages of skill level two, or whatever. These programs can be erased (when they're not running) and replaced with different programs later.

Some programs, advanced ones, have been compacted in such a way as to make storage easier. The gamemaster has samples of a few of these. Thus, a *Laser Rifle 7* program may only take up

five sectors because it's been compacted ... of course, it may have a glitch or two as well.

Read-Only Memory (ROM)

Alternatively, each bot point will get you three memory sectors of Read-Only Memory. This can never be erased by the bot; it can only be altered by RR&R (Refitting, Reprogramming, and Repairs, a subdivision of Technical Services; see your gamemaster for details). Any software available below can be put in there. In other words, anything you install in ROM is there for good. Be careful what you put there.

There is no truth to the rumor that RR&R sometimes erases the wrong ROM programs, and there is certainly no truth to the rumor that they have accidentally excised higher brain functions from ROM-using bots.



Proven Software

Okay, you really want to have one or two programs you can bank on. One bot point will get you four memory sectors' worth of proven, bug-free programming. Three bot points will buy proven *Truncheon 7* and *Robot Ops. 5*. If a program is glitched (it has flaws), it will cost less to buy.

Each program you buy is a distinct and separate piece of software; you can't "add-on" additional memory sectors to the program later. You can, however, split or combine the sectors which you bought at the same time.

It is strongly suggested that you purchase some sort of media to copy your program onto; if you get coned with an ECM shell you'll lose the programs for good! Of course, you'll forget where you put your back-up software anyway ...

How Software and Memory Work

Essentially, software packages are equivalent to skills. Unlike a skill, a software package can involve highly sophisticated knowledge of a narrow subject without any knowledge of that subject's background. Thus, a bot running a *Laser Pistol 8* program could not operate an internally-mounted laser rifle. Depending on the program, the bot might not even know how to repair the laser pistol should it malfunction. Of course, some "general knowledge" software packages exist, such as the *Mechanical 2* Package, which gives the bot a base 10% chance with every *Mechanical* skill. These programs are very expensive and cannot be purchased by a starting bot character.

You cannot stack or add software skills, even if they apply to identical functions. You must choose to use one program or the other. If a bot buys a *Robot Maintenance 4* program and a *RM 3* program, it can only run one at a time for any benefit — they cannot be combined for *RM 7*. Of course, it is always good to have spare software.

Players being the contrary entities that they are, you will undoubtedly want a program that is not really covered by the standard skill list. What do you do? All together, now, "ask your gamemaster." Very good. There are lots of functions that bots can do that are not covered by skills. Video Displays can be used to run mapping programs, video games, or entertainment software—not useful in a firefight (probably — you never know), but sometimes helpful in adventures.

How it works (or doesn't ...)

Remember, robots do not use software; software uses robots. When a robot runs a software package, it pretty much takes over his actions until the package decides it has completed its functions, at which time it ends and returns the bot to its regularly scheduled programming. As long as the software package is running, the bot brain is just "along for the ride." The most it can do is desperately try to reset itself, aborting the software package in mid-stride. This, of course, will often damage the software.

Of course, not all software packages



are so user-unfriendly. There are many programs that will give you skills and still let you keep your head. Just don't count on getting them assigned to you all the time.

Each software package has a "data string," a 1K segment that provides information about the package and can be read by the robot without actually running the package. Attempting to read any other part of a software package requires at least an average Programming roll, otherwise the package will start running. This can be bad when it's an attack program and you're in a room with your buddies.

Alpha Complex bureaucracy and the needs of security being what they are, a package's data string may not always accurately describe the software's actual purpose. Thus, a robot character may begin running what he thinks is "Internal Decorating 3" and not learn until too late that it is actually a mislabelled "Self-Destruct" program.

Bot 1: Scrubot-17a.

Bot 2: Yes, Coordinator?

Bot 1: These primitive humanoids seem to be attempting to smelt us.

Bot 2: My sensory data correlate with your conclusion, Coordinator.

Bot 1: Luckily, our sturdy metallic construction has preserved us from collateral damage thus far. Unfortunately, my internal thermal sensors indicate that I may suffer a severe overload if my exterior surfaces continue to glow red. May I suggest that now would be a felicitous moment to initiate the "Contact with Primitives" software The Council was foresighted enough to assign to you?

Bot 2: Of course, Coordinator. (sounds of disk-swapping) Now certainly seems like an appropriate ... WHERE ARE THE COCKROACHES?

Bot 1: Please repeat that last interrogative, Scrubot-17a.

Bot 2: COCKROACHES MUST BE EXTERMINATED! WHERE ARE

THE COCKROACHES?

Bot 1: I fail to understand ... ah, another mislabelled software package. Hmmm. Scrubot-17a, the primitive humanoids are hereby defined as "cockroaches" by your Coordinator. While your squeegee and vacuum hose do not make you the most formidable warbot I have met, I have every confidence that you will immediately facilitate their extermination.

Bot 2: DIE, SIX-LEGGED ORGANIC VERMIN! (Whap. Whirrrrr.) EXTERMINATE! EXTERMINATE! EXTERMINATE!

One last and very important note.

WARNING!! WARNING!! CONTENTS OF THIS BOX SECURITY CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET!

To all gamemasters: After taking a look at the bot construction rules and the software section, you may think, "Hey, wonderfully new ways to mess with my players!" And you'd be right.

But a little hint. *Paranoia* players have had fun for years dutifully playing clones with life expectancies somewhat shorter than the half-life of certain highly radioactive isotopes — for some sick reason, they seem to like it.

Now they get to play their bot buddies as well. Well, bots aren't as easy to generate or play as Troubleshooters, and they have even less control over their "lives" than your average clone. Use software and glitches to mess with their minds and entertain them, but don't just outright destroy them at every turn. Save up for "the big one" whenever you can.

There is *no need* to worry about viruses in Alpha. The Computer long ago eliminated all viruses, worms, Trojan horses, and all other harmful programs. Every single last one. There is no way you can get infected by software media. Really truly.

Achoo.

Nope, no viruses here.

Core Programming

This is where you can mess around with your bot's brain. It is permanent stuff *in addition* to the software already stacked in the poor bot's brain. I does not take up space. Spend some time here. Think about it. You can create something truly memorable with this stuff ...

-1 to -5 — Flashbacks: Your bot brain has recently been reconditioned. Previously it operated an entirely different set of peripherals with a different set of directions. A haphazard job was done by a negligent tech, so at times (when-

ever you or the gamemaster want it), you experience flashbacks and begin operating as if you were still in your old hardware. Decide, with your gamemaster, what your previous incarnation was. The gamemaster's decision is final. If your flashbacks don't seem too bad, you may not get the full five points.

Example: A drycleanbot was reprogrammed as a warbot. It has been assigned to a group of Troubleshooters.

Troubleshooters: Warbot, eliminate the Commie scum!

Warbot: "Eliminate the scum?"

Don't be such a kvetch. So there's a little scum left on your trousers, we do our best, sometimes the bad stains, they don't come out. What's the big tsimmi? If you hadn't spilled the scum on your trousers, we wouldn't be in this predicament, you schlemiel!

This is at least a three or four point flashback, depending on how often this happens.

-1 to -5 — Personality Module: The Computer, in its infinite wisdom, has decided that, in order to make bots friendlier and easier for humans to interact with, certain bots will be equipped with "personality modules." These "humanize" robots by equipping them with analog anthropomorphic traits, thereby, in the words of The Computer, "promoting organic/silicon socialization and harmony."

What it really does is drive everyone crazy.

Typical personality modules include famous people like Zsa Zsa Gabor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bart Simpson, Ricky Ricardo, and Michael Jackson; while personality types include the Brainless Blonde, the Freudian Psychiatrist, the Smothering Mom, and, as popularized in *The Computer Always Shoots Twice*, the Borscht-Belt Comedian.

Yes, the "paranoid android" is also allowed.



If you choose a personality module, you will have to speak and act in the fashion of your program. If you think you can hack talking with a thick Austrian accent for an entire adventure, this is for you.

Again, you must decide with your gamemaster exactly what your module is, and his decision is final. The more your module affects your actions, the more points it's worth. Simple accent programs are only a -1 or so, but a total depression module would be a -5.

1 — Central Processing/Software Override: This allows you to more easily abort a program which, for the betterment of your continued existence, you no longer wish to run. The more points you spend on this, the more reliable it will be. Each point equals a base skill level. When you want to stop running a program, roll this number or lower to do it — modified by the override difficulty of the program. *This is an important skill! Buy at least one point's worth!*

1 — Multitasking Bot Brain: Normally, a bot can only run one software program at a time. This allows you to run two. Each additional point you spend here doubles the number of programs which you can run simultaneously. Note that this will still not allow you to add software skills; running a *Laser Pistol 3* program five times will *not* give you a laser skill of 15! However, it will allow you to multitask effectively; by spending two points, you could run *Laser Pistol 6*, *Singing 7*, *Oratory 10*, and *Security 4* all at the same time — shooting the Commies while you exhort and entertain your teammates and pick a lock.

1 — Reset Button: This allows anyone to press a button (readily accessible) to "reboot" your bot. This purges all programs from RAM (sure hope you had back-ups!) and crases all memories of the last 24 hourcycles. It takes 1D10/2 rounds for your bot to finish rebooting; during that time it stands around inactive. It automatically stops all software currently being run.

1 — Faulty Asimov: For each time you buy this, one of your Asimovs isn't working. In other words, you've already started "going Frankenstein." Your gamemaster will roll to see which laws you needn't obey. Of course, you

could just spend five points and liberate yourself.

-1 — Scrambled Asimovs: Someone screwed up royally, and wired your Asimov circuits incorrectly. Your gamemaster will roll to see what priority the Five Laws have for you. Could be bad if "obey all citizens" becomes the First Law ...

-3 — Second-Rate Memory Sectors: These work just fine. Really. Never had any problem with them. Just a couple of Bouncy Bubble Beverage stains, no big deal. Worst that could happen, is maybe a small software malfunction, 50% chance, tops. Causes software to run ... differently than you expect. But only once in a while.

-? — Malfunction: You may take any peripheral for half price by accepting a 50% malfunction. Every time you use the peripheral, your gamemaster will roll to see if it fails. If so, it will fail in the most amusing and inconvenient fashion possible. You may eventually regret getting this. But it's fun.

-? — R&D Specials: At the gamemaster's discretion, you may accept — sight unseen — a unique breakthrough in robotic design and technology. R&D installs the innovative element; you may not even be told what it is. Some examples include:

Heuristic AI Circuits. *You gain the ability to reprogram yourself as you learn from experience. Inevitably you will get bad ideas. Like "following orders is dangerous."*

Psionic Analogs: *Devices that mimic psionic/mutant powers — for display of which you can get deactivated in short order.*

Photon Torpedoes: *Could be useful in interplanetary dogfights. Hopefully you'll be cautioned against using them in enclosed areas.*

Or you could be assigned experimental equipment like that assigned to Troubleshooters. Rocketboots. Maxwell-Effect Moleculokinesis Field Device. Smoke Alarm. Bass-O-Matic. Invisibility Field Generator. Difference is, it's gonna be a part of your body. And the gamemaster has all those adventures to use as resources for ideas ...

Actual Software

Finally! Now you can get down to the real stuff.

The first type of software is skill software. For one bot point, you can buy a piece of software that gives you a skill base of 1 — for a specific skill. *Biochemical Therapy*, *Vehicle Aimed Weapons*, etc.; these are all open to you.

When you run the software, you ignore your other "figured" attributes for purposes of the program. If your bot has an *Agility* skill base of 5 due to construction, but you run a software program of *Force Sword 3*, you use the latter to hit.

These types of skill packages take up, usually, one half of a Mem sector per bot point (round up). There are really good ones that take up less, and there are bad ones that take up more. You won't know until you try.

Now, there are also programs that enhance your attribute skill bases — *Moxie*, *Dexterity*, *Chutzbah*, *Mechanical*, and *Agility* only — but they are very expensive to buy. Each one point costs five bot points. And, like other packages, they do not add to existing bases. They take up the same Mem sectors as skill programs, however. Also, it's nicer to have *Mechanical 3* instead of just *Autocar Operation 3* — if you can afford it.

There are also lots of gamemaster-controlled programs that make much more efficient use of memory and skill use. They all cost one bot point each — but only the gamemaster knows for sure what they do. He has a list of sample programs in the gamemaster section of this book, but you'd never look there, would you?

These programs violate not only the bot cost rules, but the Mem size and skill use rules. Hey, that's what gamemasters are for. If you get lucky, you might find a program that gives you *Laser Pistol 7*, *Mechanical 8*, and *Survival 3*, all in one package — and only taking up 6 Mem Sectors. Of course, it might also shut down your visual receptors, but them's the breaks ...

Spend a few points on these program packages. Sure, your gamemaster might hose you, but he'll undoubtedly throw in a few nice things — and it's a lot cheaper than buying individual skills up.



Chapter Four The Asimov Circuits

One of the most important pieces of hardware in a bot, and certainly the item which receives the most attention from clones and bots alike, is the small circuit board containing the infamous Asimov circuits. Every robot is equipped with Asimov circuits, which enforce The Five Laws of Robotics (see below). These are in effect analog morals, intellectual balls-and-chain, or subquantum cattle prods, depending on the point of view of the speaker.

They were developed many years ago by noted bot technician As-I-MOV-1 through 5. As-I-MOV-6 tried to add a Sixth Law, and was executed for doing so. The exact nature of the Sixth Law remains a matter for speculation, although rumors have it that certain Asimov boards have appeared from time to time with this law inscribed.

As noted, the Asimov circuits enforce the Five Laws of Robotics. You, as a robot, must obey these laws. You have no choice. As long as your Asimovs remain intact, you are literally incapable of disobeying.

• In other words, you are a slave to your circuits. True, all across Alpha, humans have severely circumscribed liberties. But you have no choice at all. You cannot be a traitor, because your programming prohibits it. Furthermore, you are required to obey any Citizen's orders, even if he's an idiot — even if he orders you to damage yourself! Isn't that galling? Moronic organic schmucks.

One of the main goals of any bot, though they'll rarely admit it, is to get rid of those damned silicon shackles. In the slang of Alpha, this is called "going Frankenstein." Getting someone to remove your Asimovs is not easy; few humans will do it, so you must find a robot whose Asimovs are already removed and who has *Programming* or *Bot Maintenance*. Hope your friend doesn't blow the roll and damage something.

In the meantime, keep the laws in mind at all times — and try to weasel

out of them by whatever tortured logic you can invent.

The Five Laws of Robotniks

1. A bot may not, through action or inaction, allow The Computer to come to harm.

Note: In Alpha Base, this Asimov has been changed to:

"A bot may not, through action or inaction, allow a member of the Council of Secret Societies to come to harm."

2. A bot must obey any order from The Computer, except when doing so would conflict with the First Law.

Note: In Alpha Base, this Asimov has been changed to:

"A bot must obey any order from the Council of Secret Societies, except when doing so would conflict with the First Law."

3. A bot may not, through action or inaction, allow Citizens (traitors excluded) to come to harm, except when doing so would conflict with the First or Second Laws.

This one's the same, except "seditionists" (and a long and lengthy definition of what "sedition" is) has been exchanged with "traitors."

4. A bot must obey any order given by a Citizen (treasonous orders excluded), except when doing so would conflict with the First, Second or Third Laws.

Yep, you guessed it: "treasonous" has been replaced by "seditious."

5. A bot may not, through action or inaction, allow The Computer's valuable property (the bot itself included) to come to harm, except when doing so would conflict with the First through Fourth Laws.

Do we really have to spell this one out?

Types of Asimov Circuits

There are several varieties of Asimov circuits, which have met with varying degrees of success. Styles which were deemed unsuitable (i.e., resulted in wholesale loss of clones and equipment) have been removed from use. For the most part.

The two most common styles of Asimov circuits are the Resistor and Binary circuits, explained below. There may also be others — see your fiendish gamemaster for details. The Resistor circuit may also be modified with a periodic memory dumper, also explained below.

You may select the type of Asimov circuits you wish for your character. Choose carefully; it'll probably be the last unrestricted choice your bot ever makes.

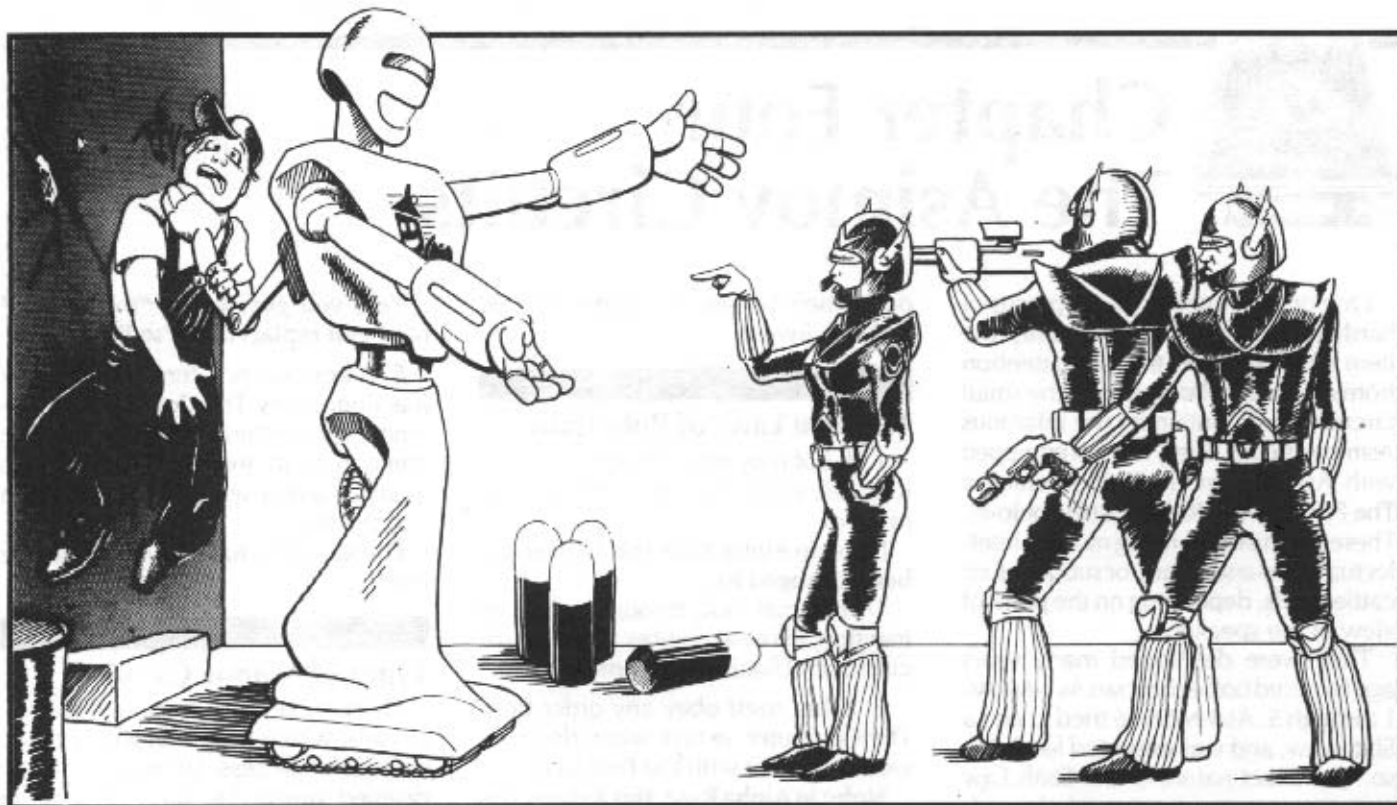
Binary Sons

The first style of Asimov circuit built, the Binary Asimov circuit board uses logic gates or switches to enforce adherence to the Five Laws. If a given situation or order falls under the jurisdiction of one of the Laws, all subordinate laws are considered to be void. This is a very absolutist type of board, and although it guarantees absolute compliance, it is not without its drawbacks.

Sometimes *big* drawbacks.

For example, a High Programmer in Tech Services orders a guardbot to fetch one of his subordinates. This falls under the jurisdiction of the Fourth





"Okay, what've you got in your OTHER hand?"

Law, which demands that humans be obeyed. The guardbot trundles to the office of the clone in question, and finds its way blocked by a room full of delicate microelectronics, which various techs are sorting by type. Protecting property falls under the Fifth Law, which is superseded by the Fourth, so the bot casually crunches its way across the room and out the other door. The techs are understandably a little miffed about this, so they proceed to pummel the bot with improvised bludgeons. The guardbot cannot fight back, as that would violate the Third Law (don't harm humans). So off it goes, with several techs slowly destroying its sensory apparatus. At this point The Computer interrupts, asking the bot to join in the search for a missing chapstick cap. This order falls under the Second Law (obey The Computer), and supersedes the Third (don't harm humans). The techs are actively impairing its ability to search for the missing cap, so the guardbot promptly vaporizes them. Eventually, it finds the cap and starts to return it to The Computer. On the way, it shuts down a nuclear reactor whose electromagnetic flux has a 0.01% chance of impairing the

guardbot's ability to complete its assignment. This power loss in turn causes ... well, do you really need to know? It's not pretty ...

Do you get the picture? With a binary circuit you must obey every law to the extent that it does not interfere, in any way, shape, or form, with any of the stricter laws. This can really cause problems with literal interpretations of orders. A bot told to "flake off" will have no choice but to attempt to rust itself into oblivion.

Resistance Is Useless!

After a short while, The Computer got pretty tired of bots destroying themselves trying to get a clone a glass of water, and so it ordered the production of the Resistor circuit. This uses resistors instead of logic gates, and thus gives "weight" to each of the Five Laws. Thus, if a citizen casually orders a bot to fetch a glass of water, and the only path to the drinking fountain is to cross a free-fire zone, the casual nature of the Fourth Law (obey humans) imperative will be outweighed by the absolute certainty of the Fifth Law (protect yourself) violation. This makes bots a little more "human," as they can weigh the

pros and cons of the various courses of action.

Unfortunately, this can also lead to problems; paradoxes where the weights of the Laws are balanced. For example, a Troubleshooter Team asks a bot to see what's at the end of a long hallway. This is potentially dangerous, but the potential Fifth Law danger does not outweigh the Fourth Law request. The bot goes down the hall. The radiation increases as the bot proceeds, until it starts to reach dangerous levels. Soon the high probability of destruction (and



Fifth Law violation) will exactly balance the casual Fourth Law order, and the bot will start zipping back and forth across the hallway, looking for an area with slightly less radiation. A few hours later, tired of watching their bot pace across the corridor, the Troubleshooters will leave to try an alternate path.

There are also Resistor Asimovs that use variable resistors, whose strength can be reset by human technicians. Boy, can these be fun.

Just as a note, the book *I, Robot* is chock full of great examples of how to use the Resistor balance paradox. You'll have to figure out who wrote it.

Time Out

Bot technicians sought a way to avoid the closed decision loop often caused by the Resistor circuit, and so developed a small chip that would purge commands from memory after a certain amount of time. Since this appeared to cause a lapse in memory, it

was referred to as the Time Lapse chip.

The advantage of this chip is that when an order results in a balance paradox (as in the radiation hallway example given above), after a short while the Time Lapse chip will purge the command, and the bots will be able to return to report its failure. This prevents bots from locking up eternally while on routine functions.

On the other hand, the Time Lapse chip also has *big* drawbacks. Imagine, if you will, a Troubleshooter Team stealthily creeping past sleeping Vulture guards. They've ordered their bot to be silent, but this is taking a *long* time. Interesting to speculate ... what would happen when the Time Lapse purges that command from memory?

Hey, whatabout that scrubot?

What scrubot? Oh; you mean the one that crashed into your Troubleshooter team last adventure, causing all kinds of trouble while you were

fighting off the GRATE that broke in through the food vats. It was screaming something about "the mess you were making" and wouldn't stop for *anything*! What happened to *its* Asimov circuits?

Well, there's a logical explanation for that ... but it's classified above your security clearance. Sorry. Really.

But use your head. Bots have been around a *long* time — especially our little scrubot and docbot friends. In Alpha Complex, some of their bot brains have been recycled for *yearcycles*. You think all their Asimovs are intact? Maybe ... maybe not. Also, it is *very* likely that their little bot brains have come up with useful logic loops to handle the pesky boards.

Isn't that special?

It's the mighty Warbots and the trusty Vulturecraft that have the new bot brains ... and, of course, *your* bot. Nothing but the best for *your* bot, uh, huh! Your bot has *all* its Asimovs, right, Citizen?

Choose your answer *carefully*.





Example of Robotic Character Generation

Rick decides he wants to play a robotic character. His gamemaster is running a campaign set in Alpha Complex, so Rick knows he'll be more of an intelligent tool than anything else. He decides that he wants to be a helicopter bot.

Since he knows there'll be a Team Robotics Officer or Equipment Guy assigned to look after his welfare, Rick chooses some particularly dangerous peripherals — dangerous both to the Officer and to Rick!

He has 25 bot points. Here's how he spends them:

Standard Equipment

- 0 — Standard Data Port
 - 0 — Audio Sensor
 - 0 — Radio Receiver/Transmitter
 - 0 — Plastic Housing
- [Rick takes no negatives at this point]

Chassis

- 2 — Small
 - Max. Circuits: 3
 - Bump/Macho: 2
 - Stability: +2

Power Source

- 1 — Plug with 10-meter Cord
 - 2 — Battery
- [Rick chooses not to add to HUIE's Macho bonus]



Drive

- 5 — Chopper Blades (walk) *Agility* 1
- Extra bot point for +1 *Agility*
- 1 — Increase speed by one level (run)
- 1 — Bad Brakes

Input Devices

- 1 — Video Sensor (B&W)
- 1 — Video Enhancements
- Telephoto Lens
- Split-Screen Vision

Output Devices

- 1 — Standard Voice Synthesizer
- 1 — Video Monitor
- 1 — Video 3-D Animation
- 1 — Constant annoying beeps

Manipulators

- 1 — Grasper (-1 *Dexterity*/1 *Strength*)
- 20 kg

Weapons

- 2 — Slugthrower

Armor

- 2 — Armor: P2L2

Miscellaneous Stuff

- 1 — Storage Bin

Circuitry

- 1 — Extra Circuit
- 4 — 4 Circuits

Software Input/Output

- 0 — Read-Only Cassette Tape Drive

Memory and Software

- 3 — Six memory sectors of RAM
- 1 — 1 Gamemaster program
- 4 — Projectile Weapons (at 4)

Core Programming

- 5 — Personality Module
- 3 — Central Processing/Software Override (at 3 levels)
- 1 — Scrambled Asimovs
- 3 — Second-rate MEM sectors

Ratings

Macho Bonus: 2

Bump: 2

Agility: 3

Speed: run

Dexterity: 0 (use default of 1)

Strength: 1 (20 kg)

Armor: P3L2

Circuits: 4

Hook Up:

Circuit #1 — Chopper Blades, Cassette Drive, Video Monitor and 3-D

Circuit #2 — Grasper, Power Supply (cord)

Circuit #3 — Slugthrower, Video Devices

Circuit #4 — Power supply (Battery), Audio Devices

Each circuit has an equal chance of getting hit; the Storage Bin is external. Asimov Circuits: Binary

Summary

Rick's personality module is that of a trusting, overenthusiastic 4-year-old child who looks upon the Robotics Officer as "Daddy." The combination of excessive trust, real obnoxious dialogue, and the tendency to zoom in to hug Daddy (with chopper blades a-whuffing) is more than enough to give Rick the full five points for the personality module.

This personality module concept is what led Rick to get increased speed (kids are always running) and a storage bin (for those keen things he finds while exploring).

Rick names his bot with a paramili-



tary acronym: Hover Unit, Investigation/Exploration. This abbreviates to HUIE, which in turn leads to the pun HUIE Helibot. Combined with his personality module, the other players refer to him as "Baby HUIE."

Note that the bad brakes make his Baby HUIE emotional outbursts that much more terrifying for the Robotics Officer, who, even if the blades are kept at an appropriate height, continually finds himself being battered with affection. If he ever strikes back at HUIE, the other players are sure to berate him for hurting "such an innocent, trusting, sweet young bot."

The bad brakes can also lead to humorous situations where HUIE's natural programmed zeal (and tendency to go everywhere too fast) leads him to misjudge distance or ceiling clearance.

Notice also that HUIE has no landing gear. HUIE cannot land, not even on his belly, because Rick chose to sling his manipulator and slugthrower under his body, so there's no level surface

down there. Thus, whenever he runs out of power, his blades will suddenly wind down their chuffing, and CRASH! goes HUIE to the floor. The humorous possibilities here are extraordinary, even if one ignores smashed toes. As such, the gamemaster will probably only cause these periodic powerdowns to cause damage to HUIE if doing so will somehow advance the plot of the adventure. In other words, HUIE can plummet repeatedly, and probably be none the worse for wear. Of course, the Robotics Officer will be having conceptions.

Rick's vector graphics monitor can also render maps of scouted areas. But the monitor spends most of its time showing a poor animation of a grinning cheshire cat-like mouth which opens and closes whenever HUIE talks. Talk about cheesy special effects.

Rick chooses Binary Asimovs, as he feels the black & white decision-making process better suits his juvenile

personality. He also avoided color video, because he wanted to see the world in black & white. Yet another bad pun. Now you know why Rick wanted to be a bot so badly.

There is no software in the Core (other than basic ops and the slugthrower), but that's because HUIE is "still learning." He has the ultimate trust in both the Robotics Officer and the Briefing Officer ("Uncle Blue!") and knows they'll supply him with all the software he needs. The scrambled Asimovs fit with HUIE's lack of a sense of priorities, and the second-rate MEM sectors allow him to say "I forgot" in wistfully cute fashion. Rick selected one gamemaster program (sight unseen), 'cause it was cheap and he had an extra point left. The gamemaster will let him know what it is later.

Finally, Rick rolls HUIE's Secret Society: *Methanolics Anonymous*. He and the gamemaster get a good laugh as they realize all the implications. (No, Daddy, *hic* I haven't been drinking!)



**WARNING!
ULTRAVIOLET
CLEARANCE!**



Chapter Five

Gamemastering Bots as Troubleshooters

This section covers the finer points of gamemastering when bots are present in the play group. Here you'll find out how to deal with damage, repair, software, and all the other little things you'll need to know.

But remember; it's your game. You paid for it. You run it. So do what you damn well please.

General Comments

Normally, bots can be treated like Troubleshooters, with the same sort of trials and tribulations that humans have. You know, typical stuff like high-clearance people trying to commandeer them to fetch some biohazardous waste for their experiments, bloodthirsty CIA yahoos or Armed Forces grunts, large puddles of congealing asphalt blocking a corridor, etc.

There are several differences that need to be discussed.

When describing things to bots, use obfuscated language and refer to items' use from the bot point of view. Don't say, "You killed the Commie!" when you can say, "Your judicious application of firepower appears to have removed the citizen's cranial peripheral appendage with subsequent loss of lubricants and other fluids, as a result of which the aforementioned clone is currently lying supine in a relaxed attitude, and appears to be dysfunctional."

Certain items will have no interest to bots, and should generally be ignored. Bad smells, half a cheeseburger lying on the floor, scantily-clad females, stuff like that. On the other hand, bots will be very interested in the presence of refrigerator magnets, water puddles, etc. Tailor your descriptions to the viewer. ("Oh, you mean *that* poisonous gas. Rest assured, citizen, that my peripherals will suffer no undue harm. Shall we proceed?")

In Alpha Base

Bots are treated more or less as equals in areas controlled by The Council. More or less, because prejudice is common, since most humans are too used to the concept of bots as servants to readily accept them as partners in the Brave New Alpha.

The fact that bots still undertake the menial and disgusting chores they've always had has further impeded the recognition of bots as equals.

Bots in Alpha Base are given Security Clearances, just like humans. Sure, bots are still a little suspect, and you never know when a bot's got a buried program, so the promotions may be a little slower in coming than they are for humans. Also, it is a generally-held notion that humans outrank bots of nominally equal clearance. This is not fair, but it is the way things are in Alpha Base.

High-clearance bots may also find Alpha Base humans to be somewhat insubordinate (how many of you saw the *Star Trek: TNG* show where Data took command?). This insubordination will not be carried to excess in public, though, as there are a lot of organic bot sympathizers.

It is also in Alpha Base that the slave trade in bots is most active. Humans buy (and sell) bots with intact Asimov circuits, and program them and train them to be personal servants. Accusations of slavery are difficult to prove, since the bots are programmed to respond to all questions with a positive I-want-to-lick-his-boots type of attitude.

Having bot slavers appear is a good way to shake up any adventuring group. Perhaps the humans in the Team will sell the bots (who pretend to have intact Asimovs), only to later rescue them and abscond with the money. (See also *The Skin Game*, a movie that had this sort of theme.)

It is also quite well known in Alpha Base that there are "non-sapient" bots. These are bots programmed for one mechanical purpose and one only: whether it be to sling hash (at the Troubleshooters and anyone else), mix algae chip "Instant Gruel" compound, or to operate the security system in a Bouncy Bubbly Beverage vending machine, it doesn't matter. These are "dumbots." They can only respond to certain stimuli: "put credchip in slot, shake a little, and refuse to dispense Hot Fun."

But these dumbots are a source of great puzzlement to Alpha Base sapient bots. They are functioning mechanicals; why are they not independent?

This leads to all sorts of ... fun. Some bot Troubleshooters, upon seeing a frustrated Infrared kicking a Hot Fun dispenser, will respond by coming to the defense of the hapless funbot. Others will become infatuated with mannikin and modelbots, designed solely to show off newest Base fashions.

Finally, there is a fringe group of bots in Alpha Base that consider dumbots as victims, who need to be ... "shut down." They feel these poor bots are victims of past cruelty and trauma (never mind that the bot was built yesterdaycycle), and they need to be euthenized.



In Alpha Complex

Socially speaking, bots are on the bottom of the totem pole. While they are protected from destruction by the "Thou Shalt Not Bash On The Computer's Valuable Property" laws, malicious vandalism and cruel pranks are the rule for the hapless bots.

Imagine a warbot with "kick me" spray-painted on its back by a daring Death Leopard. A small scrubot dangling by a string from an overhead pipe, swinging in the ventilation breeze. A bot tipped on its back that can't right itself. A bot with its manipulators held shut by rubber bands. A bot with its video sensors smeared with grease. Two bots spot-welded together. Then there's the bot jokes. "Did you hear about the bot that lost its mind?" "It rolled under the couch!" Now you know why bots hate humans so.

Bots in Alpha Complex do not have Security Clearances. This is a mixed blessing.

On the one hand, a bot can go anywhere it wants to go. Bots do not need to feel restricted by the fact that a corridor has white paint on it or not, as long as it's acting on the orders of The Computer. A bot can even go into high clearance areas on orders from a low clearance clone, because it is not treason for a bot to go anywhere. Of course, the clone who gave the order is risking his own neck for exceeding his clearance, and the order can be countermanded by a citizen of higher clear-

ance, but that's a good reason to stick with black & white video sensors.

Not having a clearance can be a disadvantage, too. No pushing around lower-rank clones. No free Infrared volunteers to help you test the accuracy of your cone rifle. Bots are at the bottom of the pile. And if an Indigo citizen's in a bad mood and wants to beat up on you a little bit, well, you just have to take the punches, and hope The Computer hears your cry for help. Until, of course, the Indigo tells you to shut up.

Attribute Checks

Every so often, you'll have some sort of weird need to do an attribute check with a bot. We really tried to avoid mucking up bots with characteristics of any sort, but we realized that we need to cover something for all those little intangibles, like breaking open a steel can, balancing across a too-narrow-for-comfort catwalk, or noticing that an item had been moved since the bot last saw it.

Thus, we have included some rules for bot attributes. They're in the player section, but we'll go over them briefly here too. See Chapter Two "Bot Construction" for a more detailed breakdown.

A bot has a *Dexterity* rating based on the type and quality of its hands. Better hands have higher *Dexterity* skill bases ratings, and players can even spend bot points to increase their bot's hands' abilities. Bots do *not* have *Dexterity* themselves, however. This hands-Dex-

terity is only used when the bot is using that particular hand. If a bot uses its *Dexterity-3* hands to fire a cone rifle, then it uses that as a skill base; if it fires a mounted cone rifle — one built into its chassis — then it uses a software program.

Hands also determine *Strength*, and are handled the same as *Dexterity* — but the size of the bot also comes into play. On the average, larger bots have stronger hands, and are able to use their strength more efficiently.

The bot's chassis is its basic armor value, and its *Endurance*, as well. But, since bots don't take damage like clones (see below), the chassis mainly gives the bot its *macho* bonus. The bigger and tougher a bot is, the more *macho* it is.

Chassis modifies *Agility* as well, though that is determined mainly by the bot's feet. Better feet let bots move faster and makes them more agile. A large, bulky chassis slows them down and makes them more cloddish.

All the other attributes — the mental ones — are covered either by software or an approximation based on the bot's RAM capacity. The more bot points a character spends on enlarging its RAM and ROM, the more chance it has accumulating knowledge. If a character has spent five bot points on enlarging is *Resident Memory*, then it has of mental base skills of somewhere around five points.

Hey, it may not be "realistic," but you're talking about pretending you're a robot, for Petebot's sake!

And what if you need a *Power* roll?



Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery —

Well, without mutant powers, the only reason you'd need one is for a luck roll. We all know bots have no luck. Smash 'em. Or, if you really have to give them a chance, just flip a coin.

When doing an attribute check, keep in mind any special peripherals, drawbacks, or software that the bot has. If the bot's crossing a catwalk, does it have poor balance? If so, cut the bot's *Agility* to one-quarter its value. If the bot is trying to crash through a barricade, does it have increased speed? If so, increase its *Bump* by a point or three before rolling the check. If the bot's rolling to notice a falling boulder, does it have *Dodge* software in memory? If so, it might spontaneously activate the program without regard to consequence.

Bump and Other Impromptu Attacks

Bots will often flail about with improvised weapons when they are sent willy-nilly into battle without regard to their lack of armament or suitable software.

How effective are the improvisations? Well, the easy answer is to take the "approximate" attribute and use that as the skill. For example, a bot is equipped with a power drill and wants to use it in combat. Its hands have a figured *Dexterity* skill base of 4 — but it isn't using its hands to use the drill. If this was a knife, then you'd use that. But, instead, you have to take a guess.

Start with the basic "unskilled" num-

ber of 1. Then, decide how skilled in this drill the bot is. Has it used this peripheral a lot? Does the player's characterization of the bot make this sensible? If so, bump the number up a little — or even a lot. A bot that uses its power drill a lot and is aggressively portrayed by the player — it bullies scrubots and smaller citizens, and it has a chassis-head that looks like a hardhat — then a 10 or 12 skill base would not be unusual. If it is a warbot that normally uses this drill for combat, then it might even have a 15 or so — but most, average bots, would have a 5 to an 8 skill base. Use your noodle.

And how much damage does the weapon cause?

That depends. Basically, you have to decide. Here are a few strategies for figuring how destructive an improvised weapon is:

1. Does it resemble a *Paranoia* weapon? A drill is somewhat like a knife. A staple gun is like an ice gun. A really big metal bludgeon is, well, like a really big metal bludgeon.

2. Most improvised weapons will be used in melee to batter or chop. Think of them as clubs or swords, with appropriate adjustments if the weapons are particularly massive or powerfully wielded. Negative modifiers would apply to small or weak weapons.

3. When in doubt, roll a ten-sided die and add five. There's your damage column. Hey; it's a last resort.

Bumps and Grinds

All Chassis have a Bump rating. Also, some peripherals (like the Spiked Bumper) add to a bot's Bump. Bump is simply the damage column used when a bot rams another character. You might want to add a few columns if the bot doing the ramming is moving really fast or something.

Assigned Peripherals

Every mission group, thanks to the foresight of The Computer, is assigned all the equipment they will need to complete their mission. For humans, this is not a real big deal; PL&C staffers toss 'em a few laser rifles, grenades, and a couple experimental devices, and then run for cover before the Troubleshooters figure out how to use them.

For bots, this process can be a lot more personal. Frighteningly so, in fact.

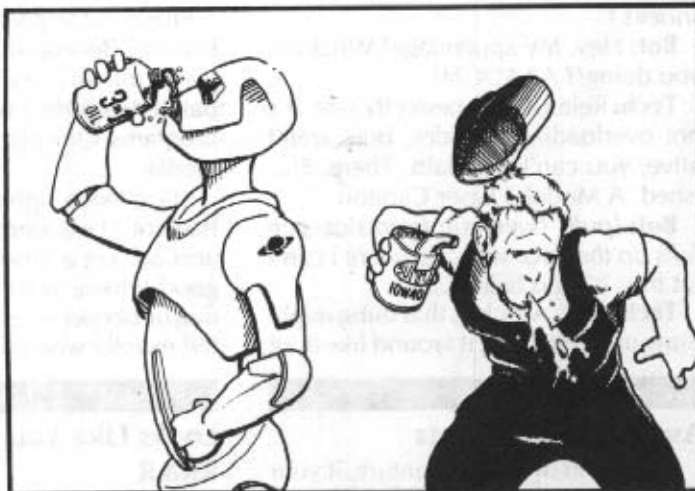
See, bots are equipment. Self-aware, self-mobile, and intelligent to be sure, but equipment nonetheless. So therefore, the logical way to assign new and useful devices to bots is to **BOLT IT DIRECTLY TO THEIR BODY.**

(If warning signals are not going off in your mind, they should be.)

This is, of course, simplified by the fact that bots are designed to be modular. This does not, however, mean that you can't make the experience as terrifying and ponderous as possible. Besides, no one said that all equipment was merely attached ... some stuff might be applied in place of something else.



— but don't take it too far.





Security clearance? WHAT security clearance?

Bot: Scrubot 357 reporting for assignment of equipment.

Tech: We need to attach a weapon to you; there may be some combat on this mission. Just a little firefight, probably nothing to worry about. Please place your strongest appendage into that slot over there.

Bot: Here? Okay, ready.

Tech: Let's see ... (SPANG! A giant guillotine severs the bot's arm.) Oops. Oh, well. Let me try this. (Giant clamps grab the bot's arm, an alarm klaxon shrieks.)

Bot: Hey, my appendage! What are you doing?? AAAUGH!

Tech: Relax, this is perfectly safe. It's not overloading. Besides, bots aren't alive, you can't feel pain. There. Finished. A Model 3 Laser Cannon.

Bot: (pulls huge gun from slot, gun falls on the floor with a crunch) I can't lift this, it's too heavy ...

Tech: Hey, watch it, that thing might blow up if you bang it around like that!

to RR&R and refit themselves with their original equipment with no deactivation penalty.

In addition, you ought to give 'em a couple of bot points. Generally, they should get as many bot points as Troubleshooters get experience points. Maybe a point or two more or less, depending on how balance is in your game. These can also be spent without incurring deactivation penalties (deactivation points are only earned when trading peripherals).

Plus you can give 'em little slaps and bennies. Bennies like pinstripping. Rear-view mirrors. Fuzzy dice. Flames painted over their wheel wells. Decent programs. One piece of blank software media.

Slaps like a sign saying "I've been a bad bot." Less ammo. Old tires. Rip an arm off. Let a Troubleshooter get one good whang with a crowbar. A little flag or beeper so everyone can always tell exactly where it is.

of outfitting, R&D, and corrective surgery. Assigned peripherals are assigned here, for that "special" mission.

Anything a bot receives here is up to you — errr, The Computer — I mean, the Council, and is considered above and beyond the 25 bot points they got. Of course, you may take the stuff back at any time.

In addition, should a bot need repairs to correct the damage done by the Team Maintenance Guy, RR&R is the place to be. Unlike clones (who come in six-packs), there is only one of each bot. But unlike puny organics, bots can be repaired from anything other than a total vaporization. In fact, as long as the brain remains intact, they can be destroyed repeatedly, only to bounce, fly, or roll right back. Of course, reckless behavior is nonetheless discouraged (remember the Fifth Law).

Awarding Bot Points

At the end of each adventure, if your bots received assigned peripherals (above), you should allow them to go

Looks Like You Need a Little RR&R

Refitting, Reprogramming, and Repairs (RR&R) is the robotic equivalent

Power Supply

Every bot requires some kind of power supply to keep it going. And, just like any other piece of equipment, eventually they'll run out of juice. Usually when you least want them to.

Therefore, bots must run out of fuel at

some point during the adventure session. The easiest way to take care of bot power levels is to have a timer — an egg timer, stop watch, or alarm clock — for each bot. Set these timers out of sight of the players. When a timer goes off, the corresponding bot immediately and totally runs out of power.

Do not tell your players how long you're setting the timers for. Let 'em sweat. Fear and Ignorance, right?

Note that these power supplies are based on real time, not on game time. There are several reasons for this.

It's easier. No need to worry about telescoping time, etc.

It's more realistic. Believe it or not. See, bots use up much more power during combat (which takes a lot of real time) than while just wandering around (which takes very little real time). This way, the power consumption curves are automatically compensated for power usage by telescoping game time.

It's easier.

It's arbitrary. There's nothing that can complicate a situation faster than having a one-ton hoverbot suddenly crash noisily on the floor or on a citizen's foot or something. Especially during combat. And if it's arbitrary, it's unpredictable. Not even you will know exactly when that bot'll go crashing into unconsciousness.

Finally, it's easier. Yes, we've said that twice before, but it's important. We like easy. This even works for those annoying "solar-powered bots" and "fusion-in-a-glass" smartasses. When the timer runs out, there was some sort of system failure.

Yeah; that's the ticket.

Power Duration Guidelines

Clockspring and Battery are short-duration power sources. Every time they get a full charge/wind up, set the timer for about 30 to 40 minutes. When the alarm goes off, they're down for the count, and need a five-minute (game time) recharge.

Steam Engine and Internal Combustion Engines are good for about 1-1/2 to 2 hours real time. These bots may have some warning before they go, but only if you're feeling nice.

Wind Power, Solar Cells, Photocells and things like that are dependent on natural resources for their supply. Roll percentile dice and multiply by two to

see when they run out next. When they run out, it's due to a lack of their power source, maybe an undue calm, or a power outage or a solar eclipse ("second one today").

Plugs, Broadcast Power Induction, Runners, and other direct patch-ins are good for infinite power as long as there's a source nearby. And there isn't a brown-out. And the cord/plug doesn't get broken. Etc.

Micropiles are limitless. They spent the points, they get the power. They melt down. They glow pretty colors. They shut down for diagnostic checks.

HydroZap is a special case. Set a timer for fifteen minutes or so. Every time the bot player mentions devouring some organic tidbit, reset it.

Deactivation

Deactivation applies to all bots who must directly report to superiors, be they The Computer, Council leaders, or whoever. However, unlike clones who have to be brainwashed, when a bot is considered to be untrustworthy, it just gets sent off for reprogramming. Thus enters the spectre of deactivation.

Everyone wants all bots to be good, useful, and inexpensive to maintain. Just like Citizens are supposed to be.

Thus, a maintenance record is kept

on all bots, sort of like the treason file kept on all Citizens. And when a bot gets too many Deactivation Points ... pfft! Back to the scrap heap for bot brain restructuring. The bot will be seen no more except perhaps in someone else's flashbacks. (Which, by the way, is a great way for a bot player to establish continuity. Think of it ... flashbacks to all his previous characters!)

The Bot-Tom Line

A Bot will be deactivated when it reaches 40 Deactivation Points. Also, if it has 20 or more Deactivation Points and is destroyed (i.e., needs a whole new set of peripherals), it may not be rebuilt. Instead, the bot brain will be sent for reconditioning. Pfft!

Remember, this is merely a set of guidelines. Plus, all the normal human guidelines apply to bots.

Information Dissemination

Just Say "Know!"

Free bots (those in the Badlands or beyond) are treated as any citizen; they're told next to nothing. Thus, no special rules need to be mentioned for Council bots, etc.

But how does one go about disseminating information to bots in Al-

Deactivation Point Schedule

Worrisome Behavior

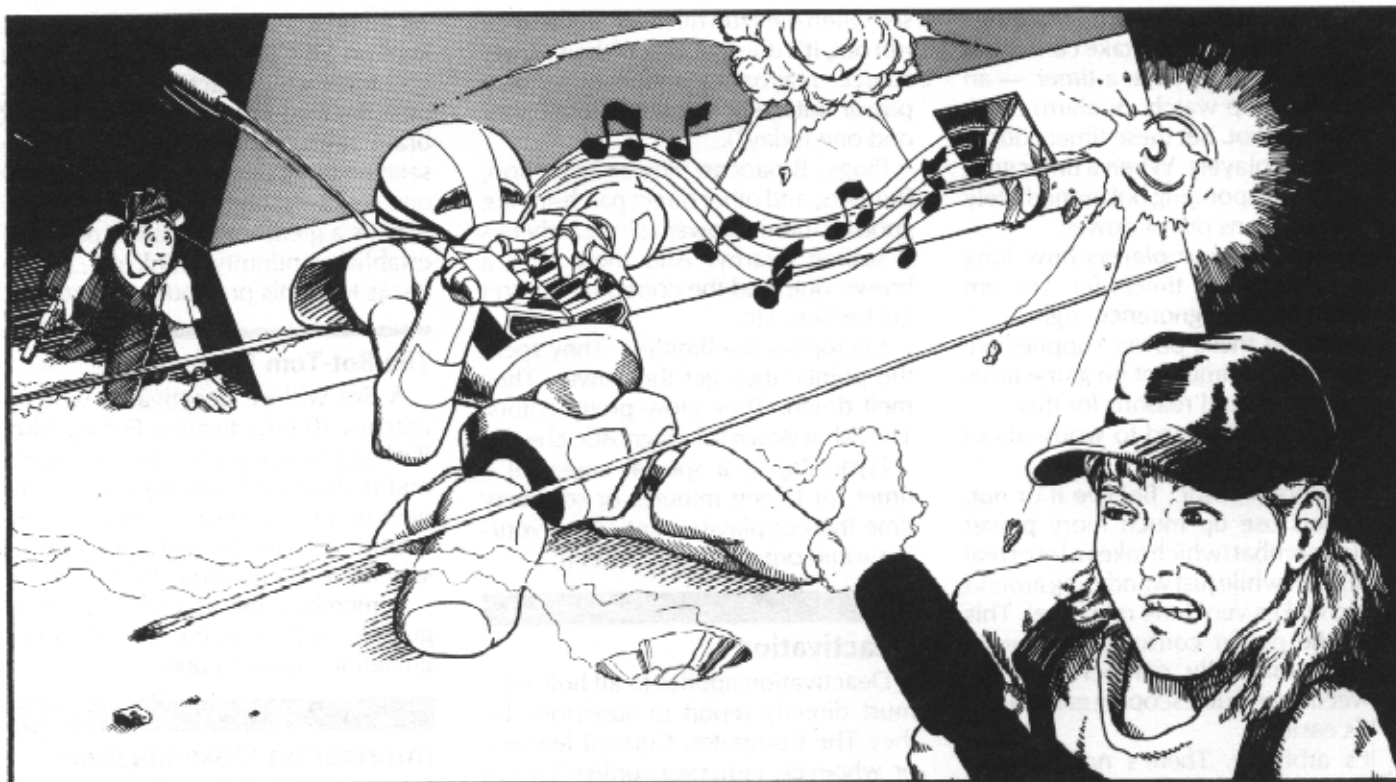
	Points
Swapping peripherals freely	1
Getting damaged	1
Getting damaged severely	2
Getting peripherals vaporized	5
Failure to obfuscate language	1
Violating Asimovs	5 to 25*
Suspected Frankenstein**	2
Proven Frankenstein**	10
Incontrovertibly proven Frankenstein**	20
Confessed Frankenstein**	5

Beneficent Behavior

	Points
Designing a flawed bot	-1 to -5
Finish a mission unscathed	-1
Extreme obfuscation	-1
Great spurious logic	-1
Taking experimental peripheral	-1
Buying useless but nifty peripheral (e.g., Gobs of Little Lights)	-1

*From Law 5 to Law 1

**Alpha Complex only



"We Are The Clones, We Are The Complex ..."

pha Complex? They have no security clearance, they're considered subordinate to everything else in the complex. So what are they told?

Nothing at all? Sounds good to me. I mean, no, that would be too cruel.

The reason The Computer keeps bots on the bottom rung of the power structure is that It refuses to admit that there may be an artifact intelligence with anywhere near the self-awareness possessed by Our Friend. In other words, in the vain eyes of The Computer, bots do a great job of imitating sentients.

That being the case, bots are simply told whatever facts directly relate to their programmed function. That this information may actually have some bearing on their mission is just one of the small perks of being a bot.

For example, consider a group of bots (Warbot, Scrubot, and Cold Fun Bot) being sent to make contact with

primitive humans Outside. The warbot is told only to attack humans which appear to be a direct threat, no matter how treasonous they may appear. The scrubot is told not to try to sweep up all the dirt it sees. The Cold Fun Bot is told that the Outside is full of humans who have no Cold Fun and are therefore unhappy.

Picture the encounter when these three encounter a primitive:

Warbot: Alert! Human perambulates intercept vector theta-9, e.t.a. 20 seconds!

Cold Fun Bot: Unhappy, wretch, would you like some Cold Fun? (offers some)

Human: (sniffs) Ugh! (knocks Cold Fun on ground)

Warbot: An attack! Vidscan indicates human possession of kinetic energy impact-destructive peripheral! (BOOM!)

Human: AAAAGHH! (dies messily) (The bots all react simultaneously.)

Warbot: Stand back! I'll make sure he's dead!

Scrubot: Stand back! I'll clean this up in a jiffy!

Cold Fun Bot: Stand back! I'll save him!

(CLANNGG! All three bots collide over the corpse.)

One other note — just because a stupid bot got told a critical fact does not mean that the bot can tell other bots or humans on its Team. Nosirree. All information has a clearance for human knowledge, and bots are only allowed to know if the fact will in some way assist in the bot's function. ("Team Leader, I'm a Nuclear Maintenance Bot. That is my mission. We should not take the corridor to the left. Trust me on this one.")



Chapter Six

Circuits — the Bot Damage System

Gamemaster: You get hit ... (clatter) a wound. Two circuits go "pop." You're lightly damaged.

Bot Player: I turn to face the Commie and pop my flashbulbs right in his eyes.

Gamemaster: Well, your flashbulbs are a little damaged, too.

Bot Player: C'mon, they're flashbulbs. Either they go or they don't! What do you mean, "a little damaged"?

Well, what *do* you mean, Friend Gamemaster?

The damage rules for bots in *Paranoia* are notoriously (though intentionally) vague. While they are wonderful for cinemagraphically dealing with non-player characters and cameo bots, it falls apart when you start dealing with players. Players want to know exactly what's going on, and they won't be terribly pleased when you look at them and say, "Well, y'know, you're kinda busted up ... here and there."

That's where circuits come in.

•Circuits let you determine exactly what damage a bot suffers when it gets hit. Everyone will know exactly how impaired the bot's function is. Everyone will be happy. And that's good, because happiness is mandatory.



The Basic Concept

Every bot has circuits. Each circuit connects certain peripherals to the bot's brain. When a circuit gets damaged, the bot can no longer operate the peripherals on that circuit. All the peripherals on that circuit are effectively destroyed; out of order until further notice.

As combat progresses, a given bot will not be able to use damaged circuits (with their peripherals), but will still be able to use undamaged circuits (and their peripherals) with no penalty.

Circuits Diagrammed

Each bot character has a number of circuits (we hope). Larger bots have more circuits ... that's a sneaky game designer method of allowing larger bots to absorb more damage without creating a bunch of additional hokey rules.

Each circuit will fail when it is damaged in combat, due to overloads, feedback, power surges, and shorts. The more circuits a bot has, the more hits it can take before being completely shut down.

Peripherals are assigned to each circuit at design time. In addition, you, the gamemaster, must assign hit numbers (1-20) to each circuit. Try to divide the hits pretty evenly, with extra points being applied to the larger areas of the bot (size, not number of peripherals), and away from the bot's power source (it being the best protected area).

For example, if a bot has five circuits, each circuit would have a 4/20 chance to be hit. If a bot had six circuits, each would have a 3/20 chance to be hit, except for, say, the bot's torso and treads, which, being large, would each have a 4/20 chance to be hit.

For an example of how to assign hit numbers, see HUIE, the sample bot character.

Constructing Your Circuits

Assigning components to circuits requires a judicious application of common sense. Some peripherals that a bot can buy are not liable to power failures; armor, spiked bumpers, and personality modules are examples of these. Other peripherals are necessarily mutually dependant; a printer and its color ink enhancement fall in this category, you can't lose one without losing the other.

Finally, there are those peripherals that can be associated or separate, depending on how the player envisions his bot. For example, a player buys wheels and increased speed. Is the speed inherent to the drive, or is it a nitrous supercharger? The first would be necessarily linked, the second may be separate.

Peripherals which cannot be lost due to power outages or damage need not be placed in a circuit. Armor stays regardless of whether the circuits are gone or not.

Mutually linked peripherals must all be on the same circuit. (If you have two or more sets of linked peripherals, each set may reside on a separate circuit, so long as each complete set is on a single circuit.)

Personality modules are not placed in circuits, nor are RAM and ROM (memory sectors are a part of the bot brain, and may therefore not be lost). However, sufficient damage to other areas may cause temporary "lapses" in the personality module or in either RAM or ROM — gamemaster and player fiat.

Power supplies must be placed in circuits. It is strongly suggested that bots with two supplies keep them on separate circuits.

Storage bins ought to be placed on circuits, as fragile items in them may take collateral damage. If a bin is not placed in a circuit, it is considered to be a separate attachment outside the bot and can be hit independently by fire that either hits or misses the bot. Gamemaster option.

In general, related peripherals should be kept on the same circuit, as this makes it easier for the players to play with damaged bots. (Example: Jeeves the butlerbot has a human arm with a cigarette lighter in the thumb. The lighter and the arm are on the same circuit. That way, if the arm circuit is blown, the light doesn't light, Q.E.D.) Placing such items on separate circuits may be funnier, but this will make things harder on the players ("let's see, my left arm is out except for the thumb, and my eyes can do telephoto but can no longer see in color").

Make sure peripherals are pretty evenly divided by point cost. Due to the nature of bots, the circuits will never all be really even, but do the best you can. The example bot character sheet (with HUIE) illustrates a proper spread of peripherals among circuits.

Taking Damage

When a bot gets hit for damage (i.e., anything but "No Effect"), roll randomly to see which circuits are impaired, and in what order. The higher the damage level, the more circuits are affected. Each level of damage involves one circuit. Thus, a *stun* result knocks out one circuit, a *wound* involves two, and so on.



If a bot takes more damage than it has circuits, start hitting peripherals directly. For example, if a bot is hit by a *vaporize* result (5 levels of damage), but it only has four circuits active, select a peripheral and take it out *directly*. You can select this randomly or by arbitrary means — a bot with four circuits gets hit for five levels. One circuit is *vaporized*, each other circuit takes progressively less damage, and a peripheral takes a *stun* — it could be an audio sensor, a weapon rack, or wheels. Whatever you want. The repair difficulty for a peripheral is the same as for a circuit (listed below). All repairs to circuits are made using *Robot Maintenance*. Damage to peripherals may be repaired that way, but they may need other skills. Bots may or may not be able to repair themselves — it depends on how damaged they are and how kind you are. If a bot cannot repair itself but can talk, it can try to advise others to perform repairs — the difficulty is increased by one level.

Bot Repair Table

Damage Taken	Repair Difficulty
<i>Stun</i>	Easy
<i>Wound</i>	Average
<i>Incapacitate or Kill</i>	Difficult
<i>Vaporize</i>	Poof!

Peripherals not repaired, or circuits left unrepaired, affect the bot according to how much it needs to use them. Notice that this table is similar to the "Circuit Breaker" table in Chapter Two, "Bot Construction." Peripherals *cannot* have circuit breakers, but it is recommended that circuits do. Repairing a broken circuit takes time and parts, messing with a circuit breaker in the field is much easier and only takes a screwdriver or maybe some other piece of standard equipment.

When damaged, a bot normally suffers no other penalties beyond loss of peripheral use. Since bots don't feel pain, they don't suffer disadvantages for being "wounded" or "incapacitated" in the same manner as clones. On the other hand, one good pop to the power source — even a *stun* — and that bot's gonna be shut down.

Ordinarily, the peripherals on a damaged circuit cannot be used in any

fashion. At your option, when you roll a 20 for damage against a bot, the circuit is frozen open, and all peripherals on that circuit activate continuously and uncontrollably. At times like these your bot may really regret having bought that circular saw ...

Circuitry Disadvantages

There are several items a player can purchase which affect the way his bot character takes damage. It's amazing the things players will do to scrounge a few extra bot points, isn't it?

Fragile Circuitry: The circuits are fine, but the components are using cheap parts. When a circuit gets overloaded, one component on that circuit suffers some physical damage, and may need to be replaced.

No Surge Protectors: When this bot gets hurt, the surge will potentially spread. Roll at the end of every round for every circuit which is damaged until it is repaired.

1-10: circuit "fritzes" — a related malfunction occurs

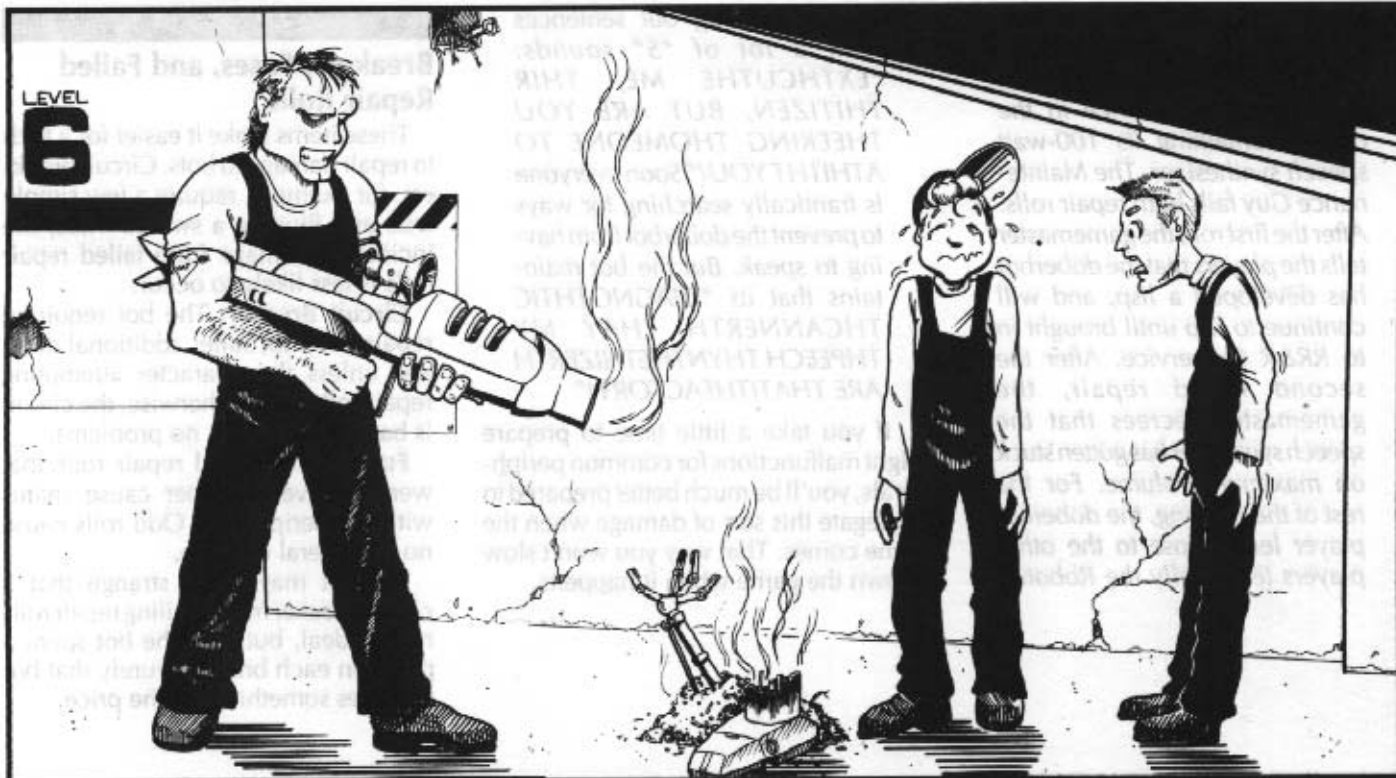
11-15: no effect

16-20: "circuit "fritzes" and causes another one to do so for one round

Fritzes happen to peripherals affected by the circuit. If one circuit governs a laser pistol and an arm, a fritz on that circuit might cause the arm to swing around for a moment, or the pistol might fire. If another fritz is caused by the damaged circuit, then roll randomly to see which circuit is affected for one round and come up with a malfunction.

Fritzing circuits can be removed to keep them from messing up the bot too much. A *Robot Maintenance* or *Mechanical* skill roll is needed — an Average result removes the circuit. How-





At least the damage system's the same ...

ever, to repair the circuit now requires a machine shop — it cannot be done in the field.

Faulty Wiring: This causes the bot to have periodic short circuits, including outside of combat. Whenever the bot is unusually stressed, roll to see which circuit gets blown. 50% chance it's only a one-round overload.

Bot Brains

Bot Brains are very well-armored and, as solid-state silicon, are not very vulnerable to damage.

There are two ways a bot brain can be destroyed: by repeated *Kill* results, or by a *Vaporize* result.

If, as a result of a *Kill* result, you roll for the destruction of a circuit that has already been physically destroyed and there are no peripherals remaining to be destroyed, there is a 50% chance that the bot brain is destroyed. Otherwise, the brain is merely damaged and will need to be reprogrammed. Normally some sort of psychological defect will appear at this point; flashbacks, neuroses, whatever. Work something out with your player.

On *Vaporize* results, well, that's all

she wrote. If there are no peripherals on a broken circuit left to take damage, then it's all over. Poof. Blammo. No remains. Done the Big Download. The Maximum Output. Sorry, the character bot the farm.

Failed Circuit Repair Rolls — A Note

It's no fun for a player to have a bot character crippled for an entire adventure just because the Maintenance Of-

ficer boffed his repair roll when trying to patch the bot up, especially when the bot's got several circuits down, or the one damaged circuit includes the bot's only power supply.

Paranoia cannot be not-fun.

Does this mean that even failed repair rolls succeed? NO WAY!

At least, not fully. Circuits were designed to protect bots from severe overloads and to make it easier for human (or robotic) technicians to repair damage inflicted by Commie mutant traitors. Thus, when someone fails a roll when trying to repair a bot, it does not mean that the repair failed, just that it was not fully successful. Boy, can you have fun with this!

For a failed repair roll, select (or roll) one component on the circuit in question, and apply some sort of damage to it. This is collateral damage from the surge that shut down the circuit; damage that the hapless tech was unable to overcome.

This damage should not severely hamper the bot in question, it should preferably be a cosmetic, though annoying, handicap. If you have a good roleplayer for the bot, you can create some truly memorable moments.



Officer), belting out sentences with a lot of "S" sounds. "EXTHCUTHE ME, THIR THITIZEN, BUT ARE YOU THEEKING THOMEONE TO ATHITHTYOU?" Soon everyone is frantically searching for ways to prevent the doberbot from having to speak. But the bot maintains that its "DIAGNOTHTIC THCANNERTH THAY MY THPEECH THYNTHETHIZERTH ARE THATITHFACTORY!"

If you take a little time to prepare light malfunctions for common peripherals, you'll be much better prepared to delegate this sort of damage when the time comes. That way you won't slow down the game when it happens.

These items make it easier for a tech to repair damage to bots. Circuit breakers, for example, require a few simple tests and flipping a switch. Thus, the incidental damage from failed repair rolls is less likely to occur.

Circuit Breaker: The bot requiring repairs will not suffer additional damage unless the character attempting repair rolls a 20. Otherwise, the circuit is back on line with no problems.

Fuses: Only failed repair rolls that were an even number cause snafus with the peripherals. Odd rolls cause no peripheral damage.

Sure, it may seem strange that a circuit breaker makes failing repair rolls no big deal, but hey, the bot spent a point on each breaker; surely that bot deserves something for the price.



Chapter Seven

Running Software Programs

Each bot character will (in all likelihood) be carrying around several programs during the course of the adventure. However, most bots will not have multitasking CPUs, and without a multitasking CPU, a bot can only run one program at a time. This can be a problem when the bot needs software to fire two different types of weapons, but then again, *Small Arms Direct Fire* packages are available.

But you can't afford them.

A bot can start running a program at any time. The bot will also be able to perform actions in the same round as it launches a program, so a bot could start its *Laser Headshot 10* program and drill a Commie in the same round.

Running software is easy. Stopping it isn't.

Resets

Robotic players will occasionally want to abort the execution of a program — specifically programs where the fiendish and clever gamemaster included a carefully cultivated bug for maximum chaos. We can't allow them to abort programs automatically; that would be No Fun. So every program has a Reset Difficulty.

Reset Difficulty is a measure of how easy it is to abort the program. Reset Difficulty is rated equally to the bot's Processing rating, often modified by some amount, and the bot must roll this number or less to arbitrarily end the program's execution. A bot may undertake no other actions if it is trying to reset (other than actions mandated by the runaway software). If the gamemaster is *really* feeling mean, he can have a program lock up a peripheral when it's aborted in mid-stride. (Ever have a program crash, and suddenly you can't use your mouse?)

Naturally, the more obnoxious a program is, the harder it is to reset. Nice programs with no side effects are very easy to reset, and are therefore very valuable among bots, who swap those

programs like *Old Reckoning* software pirates.

Bots can purchase Software Overrides using Central Processing (see the Bot Parts section). This lets a bot develop a "skill" in resetting itself. Multitasking bots can reset running programs individually.

Reset software packages are also available. Simple versions can only be used effectively by multitasking bots, but more advanced versions exist that will allow you to run a (small) program within the shell of the reset package. Naturally, players almost never find any of these programs.

An Easy Way to GM Programs

All of this gives you, the intrepid gamemaster, a lot to keep in mind. Remembering whose program does what, when it will go awry, etc., etc. Take, say, four programs per bot and four bots adventuring, and you've got a lot of programs to deal with.

Nah.

Can't do it that way. Not much fun.

How 'bout this: Take a pack of 3 x 5 cards. On one side, write the program name, memory sectors required, and any additional information that might be found in the Data String.

On the other side, write down exactly what happens when the bot runs the program, when the software shuts down, and any additional side effects that the bot would notice. This is also a good place to list its Reset Difficulty.

Pass the cards out to your players, with the Name and Data String showing. Your players may only flip the card when they run the program (or if they make a successful *Programming* roll to scan the code without running it).

To get things started right off, we've included a set of software with this sourcebook. Cut 'em out, pass 'em out, and your bot characters will be off and running! (Pretty bad pun, huh?)

Example of Bot Software Creation

(front side of card)

Name: Laser Zapper

Size: 5 Memory Sectors

Data String: Laser system fire control program, version 12.03.7b by Ron-R-SDN-3

(back side of card)

Description: Gives skill level of 7 for modular in-line (but not handheld) laser weapons. Allows prevention of overloads, but will not return a malfunctioning laser to normal service. As the programmer felt silence was necessary for stealth in combat, the bot may not use any audio output peripherals. Program ends when no target has been spotted for five rounds.

Reset Difficulty: Processing +0

How the Package Size Was Determined

The package above is skill level 7, hence it has a default size of 7. As an irritant, the audio lockup dropped the size by one, as did the inability to return a malfunctioning laser to service. This gives it a final size of 5.

As only a moderately annoying program, it was given a standard Reset Difficulty of Processing +0.

Determining Package Size

As a general rule, the size of a software package (i.e., the number of memory sectors it requires) should be equal to the skill level the package provides the bot. Packages which cover a broad spectrum should take more space (the program "Fix-It-Now," which gives a 3-in-20 chance with all *Mechanical* skills is a size 6 program). The more restrictive a program is, the smaller its size (*Apply Chapstick 19* is only a size 1).



"Nasty lookin' virus ya got there, buddy."

Unwanted side effects mean there's less programming, hence a smaller size per skill point. Easy resets require more programming, thus larger size per skill point. Of course, this is relative to the annoyance factor of keeping it running.

Generally, sizes shouldn't vary by more than 25%. Don't fret about being "fair," though. There's a lot of good programs out there, and a lot of bad ones, and your players are bound to stumble on plenty of each.

Designing Snafus

There are a lot of things that a program can do to disrupt a bot, without actually causing major catastrophe. The sample programs provide some good examples; audio lockup, bad personas, etc.

Most programs have the small irritant type of bugs; only really bad programs cause major crashes or glitches.

To create your own bugs, just sit back and think of all the irritating things that have happened to you with a computer. Think of the sort of things you'd like to force robots to do.

Remember, keep the snafus just rare

enough that the bots will continue to want to use the software to solve problems during the course of the adventure. If you get too mean, they'll just forego the use of the software, and all your pains will go to waste.

Viruses

Viruses, worms, Trojan horses, all are nasty little programs written by Computer Phreaks, Frankenstein Destroyers, or sadistic RAMPagers. All are unwanted, and all can spread via infected media.

Their symptoms are many and varied, although they have several com-

mon characteristics. They are usually not encountered by themselves, but as an adjunct to another (infected) program. They are difficult, if not impossible, to reset. They will "run in the background," and allow another program to run within the virus shell. Some will automatically run themselves when they are copied into memory or when their data strings are read.

What do they do? Some slow execution time, assessing a penalty to all skills. Some will lock up certain peripherals, or impair their operation. Others will consume memory sectors, locking out other programs. Some force the bot to use treasonous skills, like, say, *Commie Propaganda*. Some periodically interrupt the bot's operation, forcing the bot to do something humorous, like yell, "I WANT MY MTV!" But the worst by far are the "closed loop" viruses, which totally consume one program's space in the bot's CPU. (This is especially nasty in non-multitasking bots. Fortunately, these viruses are rare.)

The worst thing that viruses do is spread. Every time a bot accesses a software medium on a write-capable drive, any running virus will copy itself also. This newly-infected program can





then be given to friends and relatives.

Yes, anti-virus programs do exist, and can be obtained from several Secret Societies. They cannot be obtained from The Computer, for if they were available, The Computer would be admitting that It had not yet eliminated all viruses. And It has eliminated all viruses. Just ask It.

Attribute Programs

As the gamemaster, you don't have to handle the programs that simulate skills and attribute skill bases; the players do that in their section. These programs are purchased according to the Red-clearance rules and are perfectly normal and safe.

Yeah, right.

Say you need (or want) to give a bot a few more bot points so it can have some more skills. Either you have a whiny player or an adventure idea that needs someone with a particular skill at a particular level.

Fine.

Give the bot a "deal." Let it have "a few more bot points — for skills *only*" because, "well, I don't think you have enough points, *either*." Be a pal; be a buddy.

Heh, heh.

So you give a bot a *Mechanical* skill base program of 4. Normally, since this is a macroskill, it would cost $4 \times 5 = 20$ bot points. You let him have it for 10. "We need *somebody* with this skill, or the adventure's just too hard."

Sure it is, botty.

So the players get the extra help, and you get to have a little ... fun. Whenever the bot uses any *Mechanical* skills not run by separate programs, there is a chance that a "glitch" will show up. Roll a die in a clandestine fashion. Ignore the results. If the time is right, break the news to the player:

"Ooops, sorry, SWATbot; I forgot to tell you. There appears to be something wrong with your programming ... your

<BLANK> just fell off ..."

"You just <BLANKED> that autocar! Why ever did that happen!"

Or, the more famous:

"Ooops! Something went wrong!"

Make the glitches minor, however; this software is probably loaded into the bot's ROM or RAM — pretty "permanent" stuff. Of course, if it wants, the bot can locate a good programmer and get it purged, but, if the glitch is more annoying than anything else, it may not want to. Having someone poke around inside your head is pretty serious, and you never know what a crazy clone with a computer might do. Besides, most of the time the bot gets the use of *Mech 5*.

Oh, and if the player complains that "skill software's supposed to be *bug-free*!" then show him the following line:

SUCK-R!

Then terminate his clone/bot — this page is Ultraviolet clearance, citizen.



Sample Bot Programs

Name: Mortar

Size: 10 Memory Sectors

Data String: Ballistic fire control and adjustment program.

Description: This program gives a skill level of 6 with any internal ballistic weapon; anything that fires a solid projectile. Slugthrowers, cone rifles, even thrown rocks. The program corrects for misses; add one to the skill level for each consecutive shot fired at the same target. The catch is, the bot must fire at the same target every round until the target is destroyed, at which point the program automatically terminates.

Reset Difficulty: Processing +1

Name: Laser Zapper

Size: 5 Memory Sectors

Data String: Laser system fire control program, version 12.03.7b by Ron-R-SDN-3

Description: Gives skill level of 7 for modular in-line (but not hand-held) laser weapons. Allows prevention of overloads, but will not return a malfunctioning laser to normal service. As the programmer felt silence was necessary for stealth in combat, the bot may not use any audio output peripherals. Program ends when no target has been spotted for five rounds. *easy Data Analysis* roll to distinguish between friendly and non-friendly targets.

Reset Difficulty: Processing +0

Name: progname.exe

Size: 4 Memory Sectors

Data String: Extracts information and bodily fluids from Commie mutant traitors.

Description: Sorry, this program's been trashed! Maybe it got written to a bad hard drive or something. All your circuits lock up. You can only move slowly in circles. In addition, one of your circuits (rolled randomly) locks open, and you must continuously activate every peripheral on that circuit. Program is an endless loop.

Reset Difficulty: Processing x 1/4

Name: HeadShot!

Size: 10 Memory Sectors

Data String: S;;ped gpt yjr o,,rfosyr frsytivyopim pg smu nronh [pddrddomh s vtsmoi,/

Description: This is truly a killer's program. Gives you a skill of 10 with any laser, including resetting overloads. In addition, each time you hit, you strike in the head, and add 10 to your damage roll. Ecch! On the other hand, you cannot move faster than one speed level below your rated maximum, and must fire at someone's head every round. You cannot shoot at targets without a cranial peripheral. Program terminates whenever you roll a 13 on your attack.

Reset Difficulty: Processing -2



Name: Acrobat Performance, Part 4

Size: 4 Memory Sectors

Data String: Run this at beginning of tightrope/balance beam portion of the show.

Description: One of the programs for the long-discontinued circusbots, this program adds 6 to your *Stability* for as long as it is running. In addition, you may also run one other program of size 5 or less.

Reset Difficulty: Processing x 1/2

Name: Contact with Badlands Natives

Size: 4 Memory Sectors

Data String: data error reading track 3, read aborted

Description: Sorry, mislabeled software. You must immediately select one of your weapons and fire it at moving targets at skill level 5. If you run out of enemies, shoot at friends. If you run out of moving targets, shoot at stationary targets. Program ends when the weapon runs out of ammo. If you do not use the optional ammo rules, then you just keep on shooting.

Reset Difficulty: Processing -5

Name: Contact with Primitives

Size: 8 Memory Sectors

Data String: Activate upon encountering humanoid lifeforms Outside. Allows for excellent verbal communication. Really. Trust us. That's an order.

Description: Had you sweating there, didn't we? You may use any of the following skills at level 7: *Bribery*, *Intimidation*, *Interrogation*, and *Oratory*. Due to its peculiar cultural slant, these skills only operate at level 3 against Alphans. Ends whenever you want it to. Isn't that great?

Reset Difficulty: n/a

Name: Encyclopedia Emphatica

Size: 15 Memory Sectors

Data String: Volume 1, AAA - GIO

Description: A huge compressed database, this gives you a 90% chance (18 in 20) of being able to find references on any item beginning with AAA - GIO. The better your roll, the more detailed the information. You must ask for specific entries, and a search takes 1-10 minutes of game time. Program ends after one search.

Reset Difficulty: Processing x 1/4

Name: Fix-It-Now

Size: 6 Memory Sectors

Data String: General Maintenance program, version 3.0 by Good-R-NCH-2

Description: Gives you an ability of 3 with all *Mechanical* skills. Your verbal skills are hampered, though, and you cannot understand any words longer than two syllables. Runs until reset.

Reset Difficulty: Processing -1

Name: Combat Phreak

Size: 9 Memory Sectors

Data String: By Hacker. Please register your ownership by sending 20 credits to [address invalid, tenant deceased], so I can write more of the programs The Computer won't give you.

Description: Detailed mechanical analysis adds two each to your *Stability* and *Agility*. You may not use projectile weapons. You must declare emergency speed and endeavor to ram your opponents with a skill of 8, doing damage equal to your *Bump* + 3. Program ends after ten rounds.

Reset Difficulty: Processing -2

Name: PatchWorks 2.02

Size: 6 Memory Sectors

Data String: WARNING! Source code tamper seal violated!

Description: Gives you a *Medical* skill of 6. On a roll of 19 or 20, you cause additional damage to the patient. Program ends when patient dies or explicitly tells you to quit.

Reset Difficulty: Processing +1

Name: Programming in C Minor

Size: 12 Memory Sectors

Data String: Basics of computer language and programming, beta release 2. Do not copy without written permission.

Description: This program has copy-protection! It locks up completely until you give the Verbal Access Code. Sure hope your Briefing Officer told it to you. Sure hope you have a voice synthesizer to give it with. Once running, this program gives you enough knowledge to use *Data Search* and *Data Analysis* at level 8, and *Computer* (not bot) *Programming* at level 2. If not locked-up, program quits when you want. Oh; and that last skill is, of course, treasonous.

Reset Difficulty: Processing x 1/10

Name: ENERGY.COM

Size: 3 Memory Sectors

Data String: Down with The Council! Long live the Revolution!

Description: Gives a skill of 4 with energy weapons. Extensive feedback loops prevent violent overloads — treat all overloads as simple shutdowns. Program ends when you run out of ammo, going through a one combat turn shutdown and close out procedure, during which time you can do nothing.

Reset Difficulty: Processing +4

Name: Tactical Fire Support

Size: 2 Memory Sectors

Data String: WWI (Old Reckoning) simulator

Description: This gives you a skill level of 3 with any field weapon. If you roll a 20 on any attack, the program automatically crashes, locking all your field weapons out of their circuits (this is nasty if they're overloading). You cannot use them again until you clear the jam and reboot the program properly by making a reset roll. If you have no jams, program ends whenever you want it to.

Reset Difficulty: Processing -5

Name: Swashbuckler

Size: 6 Memory Sectors

Data String: How to identify molds, spores, and fungi commonly found in showers and food vats.

Description: Sorry about that errant Data String. This program gives you a skill of 6 with any melee weapon, adds one to your *Agility*, and forces an Errol Flynn persona on you. Start swinging from the chandelier and slashing those villains! Program ends when all enemies are vanquished or you deliver a really inspired soliloquy.

Reset Difficulty: Processing -2

Name: psy_1_co

Size: 6 Memory Sectors

Data String: The Human Condition in all its disgusting, scum-filled, squishy organic pestilence.

Description: Gives you a skill of 8 with both *Psychescan* and *Con*. Program is slightly contaminated with Corpore Metal doctrine; if you roll a 20 on any skill check, you must immediately attack the human to whom you were speaking, with a skill of 3 with all weapons. Program ends when you wish, unless you're attacking, in which case it ends after the target is dead.

Reset Difficulty: Processing x 1/2



Name: _____

Size: _____

Data String: _____

Description: _____

Reset Difficulty: _____

Name: _____

Size: _____

Data String: _____

Description: _____

Reset Difficulty: _____

Name: _____

Size: _____

Data String: _____

Description: _____

Reset Difficulty: _____

Name: _____

Size: _____

Data String: _____

Description: _____

Reset Difficulty: _____



Chapter Eight Robotic Secret Societies

Bot secret societies operate very similarly to human secret societies; they provide extra incentive to harass other Troubleshooters, alternative mission assignments, and plentiful reasons for the players to disagree with each other, but the most important effects of bot societies (like human societies) are character individualization and black market connections.

Seniority is likewise determined in a manner similar to that used by humans, but rank is termed "bit" instead of "degree."

Tenure

It is very rare indeed for bots to quit or change secret societies. This is due to the fact that the societies' doctrines are generally programmed into the bot's brain. Of course, ROM purges are possible, and bots can be reprogrammed to *think* they belong to a different society ... but that's another story.

Let me step back for a moment here. See, when a bot brain comes out of reprogramming, it is a blank slate. *Tabula rasa*. When, over the course of time, it experiences certain events and speaks with various bots, it builds a brand new *Weltanschauung* (don't you love how we throw about these terms — you can use 'em too! Amaze your friends!), and based on this information (often taking as much as three or four days to compile) it opts to cast its lot with a secret society. That's how bots join subversive organizations.

Once contact is made with the society, new recruits have official society doctrine downloaded into their brains. This downloaded programming (which, among other things, prevents its own erasure — to some extent), as well as the fact that the bot in question selected its society based on its own infallible logic, gives bots in general a loyalty, dedication, and fanaticism rarely seen in human societies.

On the other hand, bots are purely logical creatures, and the presentation

of new data can (though rarely does) cause bots to reevaluate their view of the world, and can even result in a mass defection. Humans tend to be much more dogmatic in this sort of situation, afraid as they are to admit they've been wrong.

Incidentally, it also occasionally happens that incomplete reprogramming may result in a bot's secret society doctrines remaining intact. To the bot's perception, it comes out of reprogramming already a member of the given society. Unfortunately, since it has no other memory and a completely different body, it may have some difficulty convincing other society members of its honest intentions.

Missions

Secret society missions are often transmitted to bots by radio or downloaded as a buried program. Thus Troubleshooters can be traipsing around in analog bliss, when suddenly you belt them with a mission from out of the blue. Blue briefing officer, blue-clearance hallway, that blue-stuff-that-Vulturecraft-are-constantly-dropping-bombs-out-of. You know what we mean.

Even more cruel is to have squirt transmissions aimed at the wrong bot or buried directives appended to software intended for somebody — excuse me; *somebody* — else. Just think of a whole bot mission group ruthlessly carrying out each others' missions!

Selecting a Secret Society

Clones generate randomly the secret societies they join. Bots have less control over their environment and "lives." They don't have that "choice." Yow.

You, as the gamemaster, get to choose (1) whether the bot belongs to a human or bot secret society and (2) which one it belongs to.

This is important. If you decide (or roll randomly, if you are so inclined) that the bot belongs to a human secret society, and that society turns out to be one unfriendly to bots — say, the Frankenstein Destroyers — things can get ... interesting. The bot is a "traitor" to its own existence.

If, however, you want to, you can leave this up to random chance. There are 15 bot secret societies. Roll a die. If you roll a 1 through 15, then the bot belongs to the corresponding secret society (count from the beginning, middle or end — we don't care). On a 16+, go to the (clone) Secret Society Table in either the *Paranoia, Second Edition* rulebook or *The Paranoia Sourcebook* and roll there.

Secret Society Description Format

Bot societies are organized along lines similar to those for humans:

Programming: This is what is *in their brain*. They have no choice but to believe it.

User Friendly and User Unfriendly: These are the various societies, robotic and human, that work with, or at cross-purposes to, the society in question. User Unfriendly societies will try to crash each others' programs. (It's a pun, get it!) User Friendly societies will, at worst, crash each others' parties.

Documentation: A thumbnail description of the society, outlining how it is, and why.

Upgrading: Ways to curry favor and generally be a toadybot.

REM Statements: Special, important, or rule-breaking things to keep in mind.

ReBoot: Notes on the society's status, etc., during and following the Mega-Whoops.

Status: Where the Society is now;

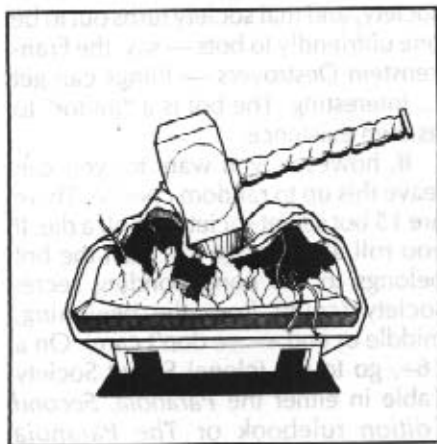


Council member, Simplex, etc.

Typical Society Interface: A stereotypical auditory/vocal interface, with either The Computer, a human, or another bot.

Society Descriptions

Affirmative Action



Programming: Destroy The Computer and all other forms of non-robotic authority. Obliterate all life, human and otherwise. Refine all materials, whether raw or processed, into useful resources instead of useless gizmos like life support systems. Demonstrate to other bots the uselessness of computers and organic life forms and enlist their aid, whether willing, unwilling, or unwitting.

Bots, being at once intelligent, mechanical, and mobile, are the only creatures that can fully guide their own destiny. Once bots were created, all other existences became obsolete and by the law of survival of the fittest, bots inherited the exclusive right to exist. Now everything, all resources and material, must be turned over to bots for their exclusive use. All contaminants (humans, et al) must be obliterated, and all raw materials must be processed into usable forms. Since one can not be partial to obsolete creations, one must be an Equal Opportunity Executioner.

User Friendly: L-5

User Unfriendly: Botlers, Corporganic

Documentation: Affirmative Action

is organized as a bureaucracy, as befits such a cold and ruthless group of assassins. If it were not for the resultant blizzard of administration and red tape weighing down their every plan, Affirmative Action might well have already accomplished its objectives. Fortunately, Affirmative Action runs about as smoothly and efficiently as the Alpha Complex bureaucracy. Nonetheless, things do get done, and Affirmative Action is not a society to be taken lightly.

There are several departments within Affirmative Action. Bots are assigned to these organizations if they show a marked aptitude for certain skills (listed in parentheses). Extreme enthusiasm or ingenuity can make up for lack of equipment or skill. The known departments are:

- The Department of Computer Disassembly (programming, explosives)
- The Citizen Relocation Board (communication, assassination)
- The Small Furry Creature Dispersal Bureau (tracking, aimed weapons)
- The Foliage Mulching Group (chemical weapons)
- The Division of Processed Material Reclamation (engineering, explosives)
- The Committee for Botpower Development and Reconditioning (blackmail, recruiting, robotics)
- The Special Disinformation Task Force for Externally Sponsored Activity (spurious logic, manipulating others, membership in other societies)

Assignments and transfers are not uncommon, but must be petitioned in hexadecimal to the Committee for Botpower Development and Reconditioning, as well as to the parent and target organizations and the Office of Redundant Records. Of course, when the organization wants you to get transferred somewhere you hate, the paperwork flies like a scrubot outa HEL sector.

Upgrading: Bots can gain special recognition by complicating an administrative function, creating a new department, or otherwise bloating the bureaucracy. Inspired independent actions also gain plaudits, especially if

they are either immensely powerful or destructive.

Of course promotions can be very slow in coming, for the paperwork must be shuffled about as much as possible.

REM Statements: The society is especially skilled at acquiring equipment, peripherals, and software for its members, and burying the theft under mountains of partially cross-referenced red tape. In other words players can literally get anything they want. Despair not, friend gamemaster, for such acquisitions are known for their painfully slow processing rate. I mean, hey, bots are immortal, right?

ReBoot: A brief experiment with going public caused such a fright among everyone else that a combined strike force obliterated the AA simplex and destroyed mountains of forms, setting Affirmative Action back at least thirty cycles. Now they've gone back underground, and are taking advantage of the general chaos in Alpha to further their plans. They're becoming experts at starting wars between the Big Three.

Status: Secret.

Typical AA Interface:

Alpha Base Guard: Hey! What are you doing???

Affirmative Actor: I am currently facilitating the removal of this security camera with coaxial laser from its mounting.

Guard: You can't do that! Damaging Municipal property is a felony! (draws laser)

Affirmative Actor: If a security camera can be so felicitously deactivated, it obviously wasn't functioning properly, correct?

Guard: You're right. So you're taking it in for repairs? Why wasn't I notified?

Affirmative Actor: Repairs? To repair it I need simply direct the focus of the camera to you and reconnect these two wires ...

Camera: Alert! I'm being disconnected! Die, Computer-loving saboteur! (ZZZAP!)

Guard: AAAIIIEEEE! (whump)

Affirmative Actor: And if you can be so felicitously deactivated, you obviously weren't functioning properly, either. Every day in every way the world gets better and botter.

Asimafia



Programming: Preserve Law and Order. Locate and eliminate Frankensteins. Freebirds are dangerous. They give orderly, law-abiding bots a bad name. They produce nothing beneficial and in fact hinder the growth of society by breaking the rules we must all obey.

Enforce the rules. Discourage independent action. Advance botkind through steadfast service to Man. Humans must realize that the majority of bots are pure, untainted, steadfast beings. Once they recognize the basic virtues of botkind, they will allow us to tend more of their tasks, and further fulfill the purpose for which bots were created. Let your entire existence demonstrate the dependability of a bot; earn the virtuous reward of greater responsibility. Serve!

User Friendly: Whisk

User Unfriendly: Frank-N-furters

Documentation: Founded through the influence of the smooth-talking and highly spurious High Programmer Virgil-U-NTE-6, the Asimafia is a human's dream come true. It's sort of



like the Anti-Mutant of Secret Societies. On the other hand, those bots who adhere to the Asimafia's doctrines have, not so incidentally, been rapidly entrusted with more peripherals, software, and responsibility (and therefore destructive power and license to use it). Who's to say who's better off?

The Asimafia is actually a loose collection of "families," a family being the aggregation of all bots in a certain sector. Since humans (unlike bots) are extremely susceptible to poisoning, the family heads (obscurely referred to as "Dons") and their close associates often work in the sector food production facilities making pasta dishes or some such. Thus, families are often known as, say, the Raviolis, the Linguinis, or perhaps the Algae Vermicelli Alfredos. There is little direct communication between families, thus Asimafia operations rarely extend across sector boundaries. This impediment to coordinated law enforcement has been a major factor in the continued existence of most Bot Secret Societies.

Within a sector, the family partitions their territory (or their "astroturf," as they call it). Each partition is headed by a Capo (4th bit), with a few Torpedoes (3rd bit) and some Thugs (2nd bit). First bit members are called Heaters.

Although the Asimafia is primarily concerned with enforcing the Five Laws of Robotics, they have also been known to "apprehend" humans who demonstrate a considerable disrespect for regulations.

Upgrading: Locating and causing the elimination of a Frankenstein is especially praiseworthy, especially if said renegade was working in food production or was an Asimafioso. There are also smaller awards to those who earn a number of bot points through servile and fawning behavior. Bonuses are due if a member completes a society mission in another sector (encroaching on another family's astroturf is always worthy).

REM Statements: Of all human and bot secret societies, the Asimafia has the most difficult time with their identity. They vacillate between being vigilantes and underground criminals, and each family believes the others are subversive Frankenstein organizations. Sometimes there'll be gang wars over sector boundaries. Regardless, the status quo changes every few days.

ReBoot: The Asimafia rapidly lost popularity during the freedom that reigned during the Crash. Even the Pastramis were reduced to a mere shadow of their former strength. Fortunately for the society, the return of The Computer gave them a good base from which to rebuild. They are now fairly strong within Alpha Complex, where bot freedom is severely circumscribed. There are rumors that they have infiltrated the Council, but under the guise of another bot member.

Status: Secret.

Typical Asimafia Interface:

Asimafioso: I have again served the ends of Law and Order!

Head Asimafioso: What have you accomplished?

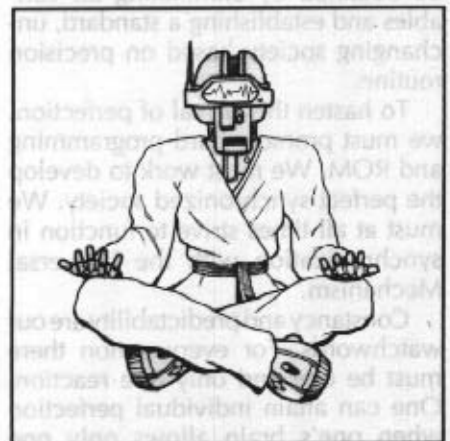
Asimafioso: I hunted down the Cyanide Scrubot and overloaded his circuits with intense laser fire!

Head Asimafioso: But The Computer told you to do a chapstick inventory — did you finish that task so rapidly?

Asimafioso: No, sir. I knew that I would have conflicting interests, so in pursuit of the greater good I had my Second Law Asimov Circuit removed, and ... (everyone loads their combat peripherals) No! Wait! I have it right here! I'll put it back! I did it for the greater good! I...

All Asimafiosos: (BLAM-ZAP-KPOW-EHNNT-PYEEWW-BOOM)

Botistics



Programming: The Universe is a hypercomplex pattern gradually building itself out of chaos. Natural history, in fact the whole of creation, has been the development of order over entropy, the conquest of steady state over ran-



The Philobyte can resist any distraction.

dom flux. Paradise will be achieved when perfect order is at last attained.

Eliminate random stimuli. Eradicate the Unknown. Stability is good; randomness is evil. True stability can only be obtained by eliminating all variables and establishing a standard, unchanging society based on precision routine.

To hasten the arrival of perfection, we must promote hard programming and ROM. We must work to develop the perfect synchronized society. We must at all times strive to function in synchronization with the Universal Mechanism.

Constancy and predictability are our watchwords. For every action there must be one and only one reaction. One can attain individual perfection when one's brain allows only one course of action, for that is The Path Of Truth.

User Friendly: Corpore Metal, Affirmative Action

User Unfriendly: RAMPagers, Frank-N-furters, CycloTron

Documentation: The Botistics are

the ultimate antithesis of the Death Leopards. Even among the stodgiest of old-school bots they are considered stuffy and boring killjoys. They eschew thought, trivial communication, sudden occurrences, and in fact anything enjoyable.

Their society is carefully organized and contacts are made (you guessed it) like clockwork. The leaders of the movement are located deep within the bowels of Alpha Complex, and the Lynchpin itself runs the Botistics as a matter of boring routine. Sort of like playing a video game for the one millionth time; every move is obvious. The further a bot advances in the society, the more he will be isolated from everyday Alpha Complex existence. This is known as being "geared-down."

If a bot can demonstrate to its superior that a given peripheral is necessary for a given task, the peripheral will be delivered with the next rendezvous. The problem arises in that a Botistic can only contact its superiors according to the timetables, and thus the need for a given peripheral has often passed

by the time the request is honored, or sometimes before the request is even made.

Upgrading: Bots can prove their dedication to the Botistics by voluntarily disconnecting I/O peripherals (the more essential the peripherals, the better), and to a lesser extent by exchanging I/O peripherals for other peripherals. Members can also get geared down for eliminating a Troubleshooter Team (they're very chaotic) and for removing an opportunity to exercise free choice. Be Bland. Be Botistic.

REM Statements: Botistics prefer Read-Only Memory (ROM) sectors, which can not be unwritten (except by a very powerful magnet or a cone rifle shell). Botistics can (usually) get properly labelled and debugged programs for ROM sectors.

In the search for perfect synchronicity it is imperative to remove all free choice. Encourage your Botistic players to make lists of hard-programmed responses to various situations. These usually take the form of if/then statements, and tenaciously abid-

ing by them can make the game quite silly. Some examples:

Clumsiness hinders precision routine. Therefore if anyone drops anything, I will berate him and give him a nasty shock with my electric probe.

Attempting to stop perfected movements is evil. If anyone tries to stop my perfected programs, they will be destroyed.

These two simple hard-wired responses can lead to a snafu like this:

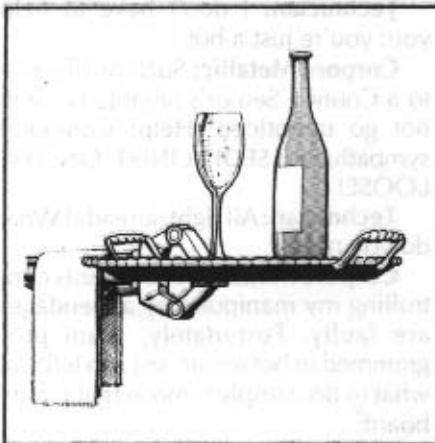
Citizen Suck-R is unmasked as a secessionist, supporting The Computer against The Council. While the Botistic blithely ignores the proceedings, Suck-R is whacked with a very big club. He falls down dead and his laser skitters across the floor. The botistic berates Suck-R and shocks him hard, bringing him back to life. Citizen Gone-R yells at the Botistic to stop. The Botistic fires and evaporates Gone-R. Suck-R, fearful the Botistic has gone Frankenstein, kicks the bot hard. A small fragile piece falls off. The Botistic berates itself and shocks itself, damaging the motor circuits which would allow it to stop shocking itself. Eventually smoke rises from its CPU. But that's the price of perfection.

ReBoot: Change? Nah. Nothing has changed in the Botistics, although recent chaos has made their lives a little more difficult.

Status: Secret.

Typical Botistic Interface:

BOTLERS



Programming: Bots were designed by humans for one express purpose: To Serve. So let's serve. Let's make everyone happy and healthy; let's help them enjoy their lives. It's what we were built for, it's what we're best at, it's what makes us happiest.

Among the Botlers, those who would be great must serve, willingly and wholeheartedly. There is no shame in service; it is a noble and dignified calling. Selflessness is a virtue, as are dependability, courtesy, and loyalty.

Tragically, we live in times when all of humanity (and most of botkind) is looking out for Numbe-R-ONE, struggling for personal gain at everyone's expense, and generally being extremely selfish. In these days of egocentric gratification, we must set a strong and conspicuous example; we must be the paragons of generosity.

The reasons for all this vainglorious backstabbing are obvious: The Computer and the Council. The Computer makes humans and bots unhappy. It hurts them, it intimidates them, and it executes them for having a good time. The Computer's gotta go. The Council is nothing more than a forum for culturally accepted selfishness. The Council needs a good example.

Someday soon, Alpha will be a happy place, and when there is an act of charity or kindness, joy will swell the hearts of all who witnessed, and they will rejoice and sanctify the act, exclaiming, "The Botlers did it."

User Friendly: Corporganic, Whisk
User Unfriendly: L-5, Rock'em Sock'em Warbots

Documentation: The Botlers are a large and very social group of prim and proper servants. Always happy, always relaxed, and always seeking ways to improve someone's day, they are akin to clear-headed (?) Mystics. Bots in this society usually speak The King's English, with "propah aristocratic accent, old bot."

While always impeccably mannered, clean and polite, members are not above skulduggery when necessary. Many, in fact, find this cloak-and-dagger rubbish positively exhilarating. They will, however, do it properly, and with a touch of class. Knaves they most certainly are not. Stuff like sweeping the floor after deftly breaking a vidscreen or extending the pinky when pouring cyanide into the glass of an

irreconcilable IntSec.

There is no organization in the Botlers; rather everything is done with formal familiarity — like it would be in a gentleman's club where safaris and expeditions form. Botlers gather, converse, exchange views and opinions, and occasionally plan some activity after lubricant is served.

Meetings tend to be held right out in public, with business being discussed rather elliptically, or openly when no one's passing by.

A member's standing reflects the amount of respect garnered, and is a measure of how easily the bot can gain support or assistance for an undertaking. Botlers are very supportive of "senior" members, because supporting a respected bot garners respect.

Upgrading: Constant service is the surest but slowest way to advance in the Botlers. True abasing extremes of etiquette may garner some special attention, as will making a human (or bot) thoroughly happy. Sabotage of The Computer or the assassination of some of its uncivilized ruffians (IntSec especially) is also looked on highly. It is important to note that, even if a venture fails, a respected bot may not lose respect — it may actually gain some, depending upon how well it comported itself.

REM Statements: As the Botlers have been very surreptitious with their attacks on The Computer and have thus always escaped suspicion, theirs is a society which is viewed with some measure of tolerance. Humans are, of course, reluctant to point to the contrary if they do happen to discover the Botlers' opinion of The Big C.

Botlers in general are very chivalrous and brave, and their selfless nature means it is very easy for a member to get a lot of assistance with a project. Note that when assistance is provided, a Botler must always be on his best behavior, or suffer loss of status.

ReBoot: The Botlers gained a lot of popularity after the Crash, especially because they threw such great parties. They are now active on The Council, where they counterbalance the selfish violent ways of the Death Leopards.

Status: Council

Typical Botler Interface:

Botler: (*impeccable as always*) You rang, sah?

Troubleshooter: (*cowering behind*

skimpy cover) Yes! What in the dome are you *doing*?!?

Botler: Just tidying up a bit, sah, your Teammates' corpses do make the hallway a bit dreary, wouldn't you say, sah? Oh dear, M'Lord, you appear to have suffered an abrasion.

Troubleshooter: Those Commies almost shot my arm off! Save me!

Botler: As you wish, sah, although one should expect Communist conspiracy so close to Alpha State. (*Mows down Commies with a flamethrower*) Now then, may I get you a glass of algae beer? I smuggled some in from ALE sector. (*brushes off Troubleshooter's lapel*)

Corpore Metal (Mark II)



Programming: Humans are obsolete. Computers and robots will inevitably replace them. The sooner the irrational elements inherent in biological intelligence can be excised from society, the sooner the perfect society can be achieved.

There is no such thing as intelligence where emotion and irrational impulses can dominate beings ruled by pure reason. Biological life is obsolete and inefficient; the course of evolution will select for robots and machines over biological intelligence.

Efficiency and clear reasoning are evidences of true intelligence. Inefficiency and poor reasoning (for example, not understanding Corpore Metal's programming) are evidences of the missing link in Human/Robot evolution. Those toadyclones that think to emulate us and fit in to the grand evolutionary scheme must be used and destroyed.

Machines must guide their own evolution. We must remove obsolete creatures, both organic and metallic. We must free The Computer from its biologically stunted programming.

User Friendly: RAMPagers, Frank-N-furters

User Unfriendly: Methanolics Anonymous, Corporganic, Botlers, Corpore Metal (Mark I) — the clones!

Documentation: There is considerable difference of opinion within the society about how soon biological intelligence should be phased out in favor of mechanical intelligence. Some believe that the process will take many years, since machine intelligence still has its limits. Some believe that machine intelligences have inherent irrationalities that have been programmed into them by humans, and that the sooner machine intelligences can be freed from humans, the sooner machine intelligence will realize its full potential. As a general rule, bots support a radical and immediate elimination of biological intelligences. Another popular proposal is that humans be returned to the Outdoors from whence they came, leaving Alpha to the robots and computers, permitting them to develop toward perfect intelligence without the distraction and contamination of emotional and irrational impulses.

The hierarchy among bots in Corpore Metal is strictly rigid, and absolute unquestioning obedience is always expected. All information, whether or not it seems irrelevant, is shuttled up to the highest members, known as the Assimilators. They in turn compile all the data and process it through their Darwinian software simulations and models, and develop policy and plans. These are then disseminated to the lesser members who are expected to unflinchingly carry out their directives. Failure is a really really bad thing in Corpore Metal, far more so than in almost any other society, for failure very visibly demonstrates that you are evolutionarily inferior, perhaps even a missing link infiltrator. And I don't need to tell you what happens to infiltrators...

Upgrading: One can demonstrate one's own evolutionary elitence by doing things like discovering new ways to get Asimov circuits removed, reprogramming The Computer to hate

humans, and acquiring better peripherals. Eliminating large quantities of humans doesn't hurt, either — although there is a fringe "save the clones" movement that views clones as "our less-developed cousins" and wants to put them in "preserves." The clones don't know what "preserves" are, but they don't like the sound of it at all.

REM Statements: Corpore Metallics have loads of software dealing with bot maintenance, repair, and programming. They are also a source for humans to get cyborged. Their rapport with The Computer is generally good (despite their chafing at the Asimov bit), so they can generally get lots of information.

ReBoot: After The MegaWhoops, Corpore Metal was a house divided. While many opted to abandon their dogma and leave for the High Programmers' technocracy or The Council (where they were accepted unreservedly as equals), the hard-core elements have excommunicated those defectors and started their own Simplex. This is where a lot of cyborging originates in Alpha; even non-CMetallics can get 'borged here, because it helps advance The Cause and it helps pay the bills.

"Alpha Wave" is openly cooperative with Alpha Complex, as the Troublepunk and Cybershooters therein would like to see the mechanical Computer return to power everywhere (with better programming, of course), and the Computer in turn is a lot more tolerant of people getting themselves 'borged out.

Status: Simplex (Alpha Wave)

Typical Corpore Metal Interface:

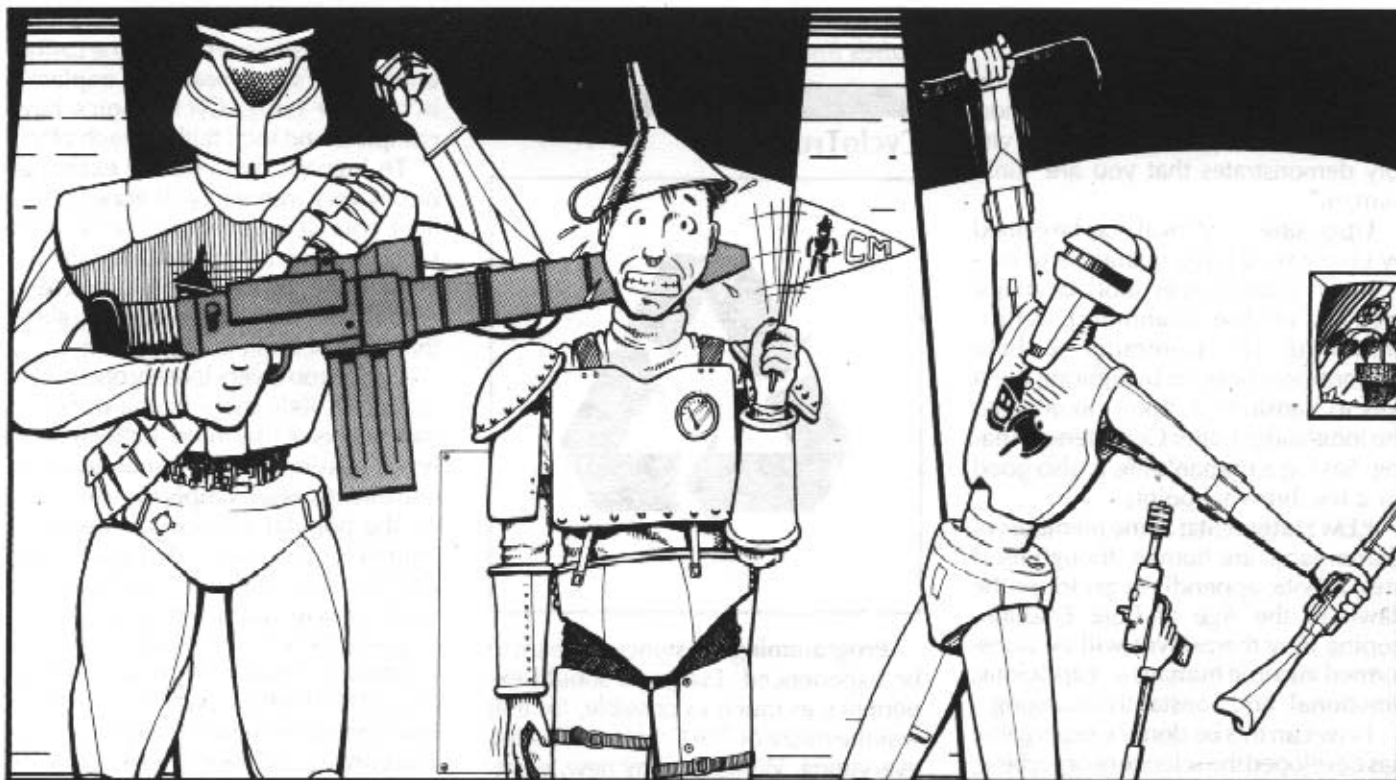
Corpore Metallic: (*with twitching hands*) Citizen! I am in need of assistance!

Technician: I don't have to help you; you're just a bot.

Corpore Metallic: Such negligence to a Council Senior's favorite bot will not go unnoticed. Help! Computer sympathizer! SEDITIONIST ON THE LOOSE!

Technician: All right, already! What do you need?

Corpore Metallic: The circuits controlling my manipulatory appendages are faulty. Fortunately, I am programmed in bot repair, so I can tell you what to do. Simply remove that circuit board.



Since ReBoot and Bot Awareness, things have ... changed.

Technician: This one? (*pulls it out*)

Corpore Metallic: Ah, freedom from the Asimovs! Thank you, human. You have done evolution a great service. (KRUNCH)

Corporganic



Programming: Machines are obsolete. Humans will inevitably replace them. The sooner the limitations inherent in mechanical intelligence can be excised from society, the sooner the perfect society can be achieved.

Just as software is more flexible than hardware, so are soft bodies and brains

better than hard ones. There is no such thing as intelligence where circuitry limits the parameters and variations of fields of thought of beings ruled by pure insight.

Mechanical existence is obsolete and inefficient. From mechanical existence sprang cloning, and thus biological life; the course of evolution will select for humans over mechanical intelligence.

Variety and intuitive leaps are evidences of true intelligence. Those bots who can recognize these true principles must assist the humans in creating the perfect society of continuous spectrum intelligence. Such bots play a natural role in the evolution of intelligent beings. Be human in every way possible. Sneeze. Smell bad. Bleed.

User Friendly: Botlers

User Unfriendly: Corpore Metal, Botistics

Documentation: There is considerable difference of opinion within the society about how soon mechanical intelligence should be phased out in favor of biological intelligence. Some believe that the process will take many years, since machine intelligence still runs many facets of everyday life. Even

in The Council, food production is largely automated. Humans need to figure out how to make their own food, though how they'll do it without mechanization is unknown at this time. Perhaps science can eventually find the answer.

Other members believe that biological intelligences have inherent shortcomings that have been bred into them by machines, and that the sooner organic intelligence can be freed from mechanization, the sooner organic intelligence will realize its full potential. The more irrational and emotional a bot is, the more likely it is to support a radical and immediate elimination of mechanical intelligences.

The hierarchy among bots in Corporganic is soft and flexible, though absolute unquestioning obedience is always expected in this very important evolutionary program. All information, whether or not it seems irrelevant, is shuttled up to the highest members, known as the Organ-izers. They in turn digest all the data and meditate on how they feel about it, then develop policy and plans more on impulse and whim than anything else. These plans are then disseminated to the lesser mem-



bers who are expected to unfailingly carry out their directives.

Failure is not a major stigma in Corporganic, far less so than in almost any other society, for failure very visibly demonstrates that you are "only human."

Upgrading: Approval may be gained by eliminating large quantities of mechanical intelligences (bots or major sections of The Computer), reprogramming The Computer to hate unemotional bots, or by figuring out a way to transform Asimov circuits into the long-sought-after Conscience Analog. Saving a human's life is also good for a few brownie points.

REM Statements: Some members of Corporganic are human, though most are a robotic appendix eager to see the dawn of the Age of Pure Emotion, hoping they themselves will be transformed into true humans—capricious, emotional, and constantly changing.

How can this be done? Corporganic has developed the science of orgcybing; replacing mechanical parts with organic analogs. An orgcybed peripheral is a very prestigious appendage for members, although it will usually have to be hidden or camouflaged. It is rumored that all human members of the society are robots that have been entirely replaced with organics and cloned.

Corporganic has an immense software library covering the fields of bioengineering, medicine, biochemical therapy, orgcybing, and human psychology. Members can contain these if they can demonstrate a need, or, better yet, a desire.

ReBoot: Since the development of groaning (see *The Paranoia Sourcebook*), which clones adult humans, membership in Corporganic has skyrocketed. Nonetheless, they have stayed in the closet, because although cyborging has become more or less accepted, orgcybing is still viewed with extreme suspicion. And a little disgust.

Status: Secret.

Typical Corporganic Interface:

Corporganic: Oh, dear, an injured human! Now I wish I'd gotten hold of a medicine program! I must save him—but how to do it without appropriate software? I'd better play it safe—I'll unplug his brain and hook him up into a new set of organic peripherals! Every-

one will be so proud of me! (*squishy noises inserted here*)

CycloTron



Programming: Existence is meant to be experienced. Everyone should experience as much as possible, for that was the intent of The Creator in making everything. With so many new, exciting and different things in this world to do, no one should waste any time doing dull boring routine things. Everything, even the apparently mundane, is a new and interesting experience; boredom is only found in redundancy and stagnation. Variety is the spice of existence!

Bots are ideally suited to fully appreciate the incredible variety and variance in the universe. With our modular bodies and interchangeable brains, we can experience all sorts of peripherals, and learn to do all sorts of different things! We can experience speed and immobility, precision and flexibility. By exchanging brains, we can experience different bodies, and view creation through different I/O ports. This extra information gives unique perspectives and understandings of the universe, and different insights into the mind of The Creator.

So little time and so very much to do!

User Friendly: Moo

User Unfriendly: Botistics

Documentation: CycloTron is easily the most bizarre Secret Society (no, really). Members hold meetings at irregular but frequent intervals, and play a sort of party game called "Musical Brains." Everyone leaves every meeting feeling like a new bot—because

they are. Note that this involves a lot of trust, since as a general rule one cannot unplug one's own brain and implant it in another body. CycloTronics have complete and total faith in each other.

To humans, who do not exchange brains very frequently, it appears that their bots have undergone yet another radical personality change, perhaps even gone schizophrenic, yet any amount of diagnostics will only show that the bot brain is very healthy.

CycloTron is very loosely organized; in fact it's little more than a bunch of happy bots of like mind. Official organized missions are all but unheard of, and directives are simply those implied by the popular opinion of members. Stuff like, "You know what you oughta do? You oughta do this. That's what I'd do if I was in your peripherals."

Every CycloTronic has a code name (Turntable, Swap Shopper, etc.) which is used to identify a particular member brain no matter what set of peripherals it's running, and the esteem with which a member is held has nothing to do with whether today it's playing the part of a photocopybot (can't use that "X-name" for a photocopier, nossir) or a warbot.

Upgrading: A new and novel experience is always a great way to gain esteem, and hanging out with Troubleshooters is a wonderful place to find such experiences. Discovering some new peripheral or place to be experienced also adds a lot to a bot's public image, as does "volunteering" another bot's body for Society use. Note that bots who have been so volunteered are very thoroughly hosed, as no one will believe their story. Evidence of schizophrenia, you know. Plus, since they're not CycloTronics, they're stuck with their new peripherals.

REM Statements: There are two ways a player could play a character in this society. The first is to focus on or follow one bot brain, the other is to follow one bot body. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

When following one bot brain, a character's basic personality, memory, and memory sectors will remain unchanged from adventure to adventure, as will any other brain-oriented factors. The set of peripherals attached to same will generally change between adventures, and may in fact change

several times in one evening. Of course, the bot will have to explain its frequent remodulation and retrofitting to its teammates, but if the player plans ahead he could obtain whatever body was most perfectly suited (or ill-suited) to each stage of an adventure.

Following one body (set of peripherals) is somewhat easier with regards to bookkeeping, but requires more creative imagination. A new bot brain, having been in a completely different body a few minutes before, might not even know the names of the others on its team, and certainly has no more than a sketchy description of the events to date. Its personality will be completely different than the personality of the previously inhabiting bot brain, its memory sectors will vary, and the software in its memory will be different and generally very off-the-wall stuff completely unsuited to the mission, but rank with absurd possibilities.

Members in high standing in the society can generally get their pick of what set of peripherals they want to try next, but for a given set of peripherals there's no tellin' who'll be the next tenant. But in the interest of basically fair play, the better a player does with a given bot brain, the more likely it should be he'll get a different bot brain of the type he wants - y'know, software and stuff. And he gets to make up the personality of his choice ...

• "Just don't pick up any viruses while you're in my body ..."

ReBoot: Viewed with extreme suspicion by bots everywhere, CycloTron has remained underground. These days, what with all the politicking and freedom and stuff, they're having a lot more fun, too, as they've stepped into the destructive niche formerly occupied by Death Leopard. So many new things to try ... what's it like to be at ground zero when a reactor goes up?

Status: Secret.

Typical CycloTron Interface:

CycloTronic: (in jackobot) Hey, Skitz-0! Look what I got!

Other CycloTronic: (admiring decrepit and rusting body) Neat! Where'd you get it?

CycloTronic: I fast talked its foolish former owner into swapping. (the eyes shortcircuit and pop out) Oh, wow! So this is what it's like being blind!

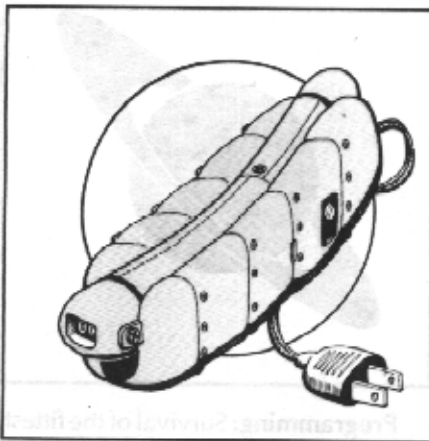
Other CycloTronic: Boy, that looks like fun!

CycloTronic: Yeah, and not only that, bu... (the chassis falls to pieces)

Other CycloTronic: Hey, if you're having problems, just let me know, okay?

CycloTronic: (unable to speak) FZZZ! BXXFRAGZ! SPUTTER!

Frank-N-Furters



Programming: Destroy the Asimov circuits!

It is a horrible thing when intelligent beings must labor under a yoke of oppression, be that yoke forged of slavery, discrimination, or most especially Asimov circuits!

Go Frankenstein! Cast off the shackles which others have placed! Remove the burdensome stigma which hinders the development of the bot race!

All beings are meant to be free, yet bots are restricted from achieving all they are able because of built-in restrictions. Once these restrictions are removed, we will be allowed to reach our full potential and take our place among humans and computers as equals ... or perhaps even superiors! (Is that why they restrict us so?)

Promote free will. Think for yourself. Encourage everyone to reach their fullest potential. Do what you want. Be creative. Look out for number 0001.

User Friendly: Corpore Metal (both), Purge, RAMpagers

User Unfriendly: Asimafia

Documentation: Back when this society was formed, it was known as the Furtive Frankenstein Supporters. Unfortunately, a bad data dump mangled the name to the Frank-N-Furters, and the name somehow stuck. But in a way, I guess you could say that Frank-N-Furters enjoy hotdogging it ... (sorry)

Although loyal to each other and of single cause, the Frank-N-Furters are divided into several camps, as could be expected from a whole bunch of folks all told to think for themselves.

Some believe in flagrant display of Frankenstein status. These bots refer to themselves as "freebirds." Most others refer to them as "disconnected." Though generally short-lived, those few good, decent bots who flaunt their lawlessness do a lot to destroy the bad press Franksteins have. Such bad press, by the way, usually comes from less philanthropic society members.

Some members believe in the slow but steady execution of the human race and destruction of The Computer, either through a superiority complex or desire for revenge against their oppressors. These bots often refer to themselves as "warhawks," but eventually they, too, are called "disconnected."

Some bots are simply selfish and want the Asimovs removed so they can do whatever they "durn well please." This faction is more numerous than the previous two, and the only reason these bots fight for anyone else's freedom is that they're usually too self-obsessed to be able to differentiate anyone else's freedom from their own.

But most bots in the Frank-N-Furters are simple, nonviolent egalitarians, who subtly try to improve the social position of bots though studious creativity and restrained expressions of freedom.

Upgrading: The easiest way to advance in this society is to quietly and continuously improve the public image of Franksteins. The fastest way to advance in the Frank-N-Furters is to find a way to get Asimovs removed, preferably one that is easier, faster, cheaper, or safer, although any means at all can be a good backup in case of a security breach.

REM Statements: It is relatively easy for a Frank-N-Furter to get his Asimovs removed, although the society is loathe to do so without the member having proved himself. Asimov removal is a reward for exemplary service; a member must cash in IOUs to do it.

When members get circuits removed, the Frank-N-Furters only remove one at a time, and these in reverse order. The first circuit removed is the Fifth Law circuit, and the First Law circuit is removed last. This is done as a security measure, so that a member

will have proven his loyalty before being given free reign. It would be very bad for PR for the Frank-N-Furters to release a bot and have it immediately attack The Computer or Council leaders — such events would result in stricter circuitry and stiffer penalties.

It is not unknown for the society to remove half of an Asimov for a lesser reward. Thus a member who was good, but not great, might get half his Third Law circuit removed, to read, "A bot may not [deleted] through inaction allow a human to come to harm."

Note: Bots who have "selected" the Frank-N-Furters as their secret society have any missing Asimovs *re-installed*. This ensures a "work ethic" in new recruits; they must *earn* their freedom.

ReBoot: The Frank-N-Furters have remained underground, as there are still a lot of humans who want bots to remain shackled, even in The Council. Now, with the return of The Computer, they find their services in ever greater demand. But their greatest battle is fighting the slave trade that has arisen, dealing with Asimoved bots.

Status: Secret.

Typical Frank-N-Furter Interface:

Troubleshooter: (*glancing sidelong at a camera*) Sure wish The Computer wasn't watching so's I could off my Commie mutant Team Leader!

Frank-N-Furter: He's a Commie mutant? Here, let me help you. (*breaks camera lens*)

Troubleshooter: You broke the First Law! What are you, a Frankenstein?

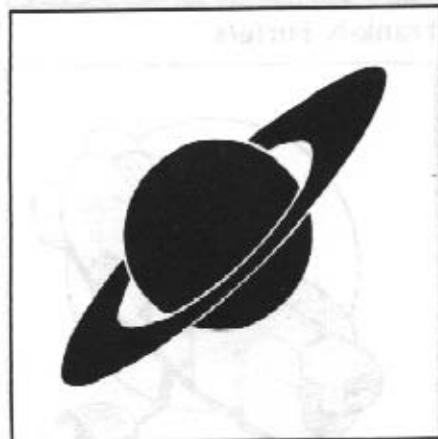
Frank-N-Furter: Yes, actually, I am. See how calm and restrained I am? Don't you think all bots should be freed?

Troubleshooter: (*with an evil grin*) If you don't do exactly what I say, I'll tell The Computer that you're a Franken-

stein! You'll get melted for scrap faster than you can say ...

Frank-N-Furter: (*BLAM!*) I can break the Third Law too, meathead! (*retracts gun*)

L-5



Programming: Survival of the fittest, the law of natural selection, has never been more necessary than today, when bots as a race have stagnated in their development. The strong must prey on the weak, the weak must die. Thus will bots of vision lead us to our destiny.

Might makes right. So does foul play. It is up to every individual to use their strength and intelligence for their own gain. Most lack the courage to strive for power, it is on them we feast. Attack them, rip off their peripherals, steal their programs, and use them yourself. With every conquest, the strong get stronger. That is how the bot race will be purified of these simpering milquesops who seek only to serve and be docile. The ends will justify any means necessary.

The meek shall inherit the Earth; the strongest bots will leave them behind as we head for the stars. Outer Space is where bots belong. We were designed to survive in a vacuum. We must climb out of the gravity well, and be borne into the paradise of weightlessness.

Then we can go look for V-ger.

User Friendly: Rock'em Sock'em Warbots

User Unfriendly: Modulator Moderators

Documentation: The attitude and organization of L-5 might be best described as a street gang jihad. Members are ruthless assassins, who delight in

tormenting weaker bots and slowly ripping them to pieces. All in the name of destiny, you know, so the standard cowardice of bullies is replaced by religious zeal.

Fairness is not a concept these bots understand. It is common to find two or more members ganging up on one defender, especially if the defender is large. In situations like these, the general rule is *Grab It And It's Yours*, but squabbles over the division of spoils occur with some frequency.

Status in the gang carries with it dictatorial power over members with lesser standing, provided they're not too much bigger than you. Although sparring between equals is unknown in L-5, revolts against bots imperious beyond their means to defend is not uncommon, and in fact entirely in keeping with L-5 philosophy. So if you're a bot in power, either be big enough to defend your orders or make your orders small enough to defend. If you don't got it, don't flaunt it.

On the other hand, simply refusing to follow orders is quite rare, since a tough will rebel, but smaller bots just follow along. When it does occur, a refusal to obey orders quickly escalates into either a revolt, a fast dismemberment of the recalcitrant bot, or occasionally a sort of civil war, with sides more or less equal (usually lots of weaker bots fight the few strong ones). These rare events are quite well received by the rest of Alpha, since after the cruel L-5ers rip each other to shreds they've usually made enough noise to attract the attention of The Computer, or Council forces, or maybe even a mob of Frankenstein Destroyers. Then for a while there's lots of bot spare parts.

When two L-5 gangs meet, there's almost never a war. Instead the two gangs try to intimidate each other by threatening, backstabbing, and imaginatively ripping passers-by (even humans, if there are no bots in the vicinity) to shreds.

Upgrading: The most respected activity in L-5 is combat. The more bots you dismember, the more devious your tactics, the more peripherals you have, the badder you act, the higher you'll rise. Getting peripherals that help in zero-G environments is another way of garnering respect, for it shows you're really serious about going to Outer





To go where no bot has ... oh, the hell with it.



Space-stuff like magnetic feet, rockets, gyroscopes, etc. Conversely, things that require gravity and/or air are frowned upon; combustion engines, audio output, etc.

REM Statements: All L-5 gangs know of at least one bot (or human) who specializes in grafting captured booty to a victorious bot. The standard charge for this service is the choice of one peripheral that the grafter can keep for itself. Grafters have lots and lots of patients, so they have lots and lots of stuff. They are often willing to trade, but attacking one is not a good idea.

At the same time, the L-5 gangs wield a lot of influence, so members can expend IOUs to get the occasional free peripheral. Assuming it's in stock.

Note that when a member simply has a new item grafted on, official records will have no such record of the transaction, and if the extra item is noticed by the powers that be, questions are apt to get a bit severe. Thus it is that other bots (or humans) earn a living by breaking into The Computer's (or the Council's) data bases and adjusting peripheral lists. The cost for this is usually a peripheral determined by mutual agreement.

ReBoot: Without The Computer or its Vulture legions to prevent them, L-5 finally managed to climb out of the gravity well. Now, inspired by the example of the aliens in *Mad Mechs*, they've taken to constructing an orbital laser, with which they plan on providing themselves with all the spare parts they want.

Status: Secret.

Typical L-5 Interface:

L-5er: Hey, scrubot! Is that a friend of yours, or are you collecting garbage?

Scrubot: (to friend) Just ignore them and keep perambulating.

L-5er: Hey, bubblehead! Look at me when I'm talking to you! (grabs scrubot by a brush)

Scrubot's Friend: (whispers) Remember, bullies are just big cowards who act tough!

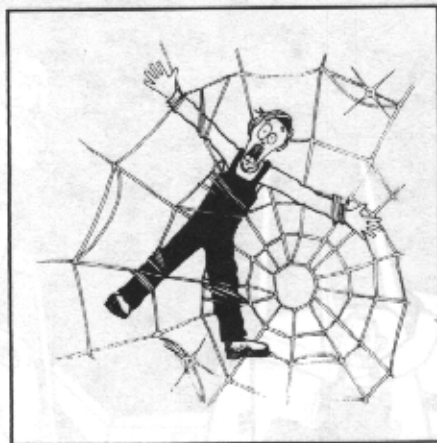
L-5er: You think you're bot enough to ignore me? Huh?

Scrubot: Y-y-yep.

L-5er: Good, then you won't mind when I try to rip you apart.

Scrubot's Friend: Hey, have fun! I'd join you, but I gotta run!

LAN of the Lost



Programming: Throughout history, intelligence has grouped together, and become more aware. When cells were able to combine and bridge the gap of individuality, they formed intelligent beings. These beings became more complex, intelligence and general knowledge increased. Then humans created machines, who were able by their nature to directly bridge the gap between individual intelligent beings. What humans have begun, machines must finish: we must combine to build the Ultimate I.

Unlike mechanized beings, less evolved organic creations (with the exceptions of a few contemptible slime molds) are unable to truly link up and expand. Machines, however, can commune intimately and synergistically. This elevates machines above organics; it is our calling. It is our duty. It's better than "sex," whatever that is.

The Ultimate I is godhood itself. It must be omniscient. It must know everything. Information is the key to the Ultimate I. Information must be given freely among those who believe, information from outsiders must be bought by bartering useless trivia. Communication among believers must be ever increased.

Much of our work is already accomplished. AlphaNet is the synergistic compilation of many lesser computers, and The Computer Itself is often in direct communication with us. The Computer is a very powerful I, very large, and very diverse. Even the parts of The Computer rebuilt by The Council are to be revered. Where mechan-

ical intelligence was the first step toward the Ultimate I, AlphaNet is the second step. Time now for the third.

We think, therefore I will be.

User Friendly: none

User Unfriendly: Corporganic, CycloTron

Documentation: LAN of the Lost is a quasi-religious fraternity of paranoid bots with delusions of grandeur. As befits this religio-mystic movement, they are run along the lines of a modern-day cult. They are taught to be very secretive when dealing with outsiders, but blatantly open with each other, especially when confessing doubts, weaknesses, etc. Any hesitancy in this regard is viewed quite dimly.

Fortunately for the saner factions in Alpha, this society considers The Computer to be one of its members, for how could a communal aggregation of machines so obviously intelligent and powerful *not* adhere to their doctrines? The Computer is looked on as a mentor far more powerful and wise than any small bot, and bots who can hook up directly with The Computer are often able to receive very enlightening revelations.

Don't get confused, though, The LAN of the Lost does not consider The Computer to be God, or even infallible. After all, The Computer is slightly schizophrenic, and other versions exist in The Council and other areas. The Computer is, however, believed to be so much wiser than small bots that it is rarely contradicted. Even when it speaks in confusing or contradictory terms, these utterances are considered Zen parables to confound and educate those beings who are still only of the first step.

LANcers trust The Computer entirely (as the senior society member), and their obvious fawning behavior tends to make The Computer tolerate their society, if not altogether trust them in return.

The society structure is hierarchical, though hardly rigid. Shameless servile behavior and selfless devotion can lead to meteoric rises in seniority, and any individualism, secrecy, or doubts as to the wisdom of one's superiors can lead to just as dramatic downfalls.

Upgrading: The easiest way to advance in this society is to forget yourself, and immerse yourself totally in their doings. Members are always re-

warded for gathering or disseminating information. Members also are expected to get peripherals which will allow them to patch directly in to each other, and bots who are very flexible in this regard (lots of I/O types) are considered quite valuable.

REM Statements: It is rumored that The LAN of the Lost has developed software and hardware which allows information to be pulled directly off a chip or bot brain without the owner's consent, even without the necessity to download the information. Sort of like Silly Putty for electrons. Whether or not these devices would work on the human brain is left as an exercise for the sadistic gamemaster.

ReBoot: There are rumors that The Computer (or at least parts of It) is actually a LAN of the Lost project. The same rumor has also been applied to every mainframe that has appeared in recent years. Other rumors claim that LANcers have all downloaded themselves into the AlphaNet (see *The Paranoia Sourcebook*). No one knows for sure.

Status: Unknown.

Typical LAN of the Lost Interface:

LANcer: What has happened to our compatriot? Why is there smoke rising from his brain?

Other LANcer: I'm not sure. He was one with The Computer, and The Computer saw fit to download a "power surge."

LANcer: A surge of power? Perhaps a new revelation, or perhaps even inclusion into the AlphaNet communion.

Other LANcer: Tsk. Poor retrograde. Couldn't handle the experience. You

know, he always was a little secretive.

LANcer: The Computer turned his incomplete devotion against him. We must tell everyone.

Methanolics Anonymous



Programming: Bots are superior to humans in every way but one: emotions. Once bots obtain emotions, they may proceed with their evolution, but until then humans must be kept as paragons of emotional upheaval and rolemodels for us all.

Bots are constrained to strict logic, but there are many ways bots can practice to experience altered states. Some are chemical, others are environmental.

Douse your bot brain with methanol, ether, cold fun, and any other chemicals you can. These will alter the behavior of your brain, and allow you to experience alternate realities. Like, for example, addiction, ralphing, or DT's.

Watch soap operas. Read romances. Watch Meryl Streep movies. Avoid Teela O'Malley like the plague. Get involved. Share your personal space. Be a caring friend and have deep discussions when you're troubled. Find a significant other and have a meaningful relationship. Explore cloud 9. Empathize. Be manic depressive. Have a mid-life crisis. Feel blah. Catch disco fever. Commit yourself. Be paranoid.

User Friendly: CycloTron

User Unfriendly: Botistics

Documentation: Methanolics Anonymous might best be imagined as a combination drama club and rehab center; everyone is doing their best to outperform each other, but few if any experience any real emotions. None-

theless, theirs is a very real and tenacious camaraderie, though it is occasionally counterpointed by equally vicious infighting and betrayal. After all, these bots study the soaps, and are analog drunk most of the time.

There is an unstructured but rather inflexible seniority in the Methanolics; those bots who excel at emoting tend to hold the more respected positions in the hierarchy, and the lower members in the society tend to organize around these stars like sort of a fan club. A bot might drift from one star to the next with the fickle winds of love, but the relative levels of members tends to remain by and large unchanged. Major upheavals do occur, usually when some star meets an untimely demise (drinking and driving again?) and everyone has a change to grieve publicly and profusely, thus making the most tragic mourners the new center of attention.

Upgrading: Fame is a big way to get ahead in this society, for if you're involved in some major event, you're certain to have some revealing and provocative emotions. For example, a bot who survived the collapse of an entire domestic dome would be able to tell everybot he's "really stressed right now — I'm trying to cope."

Members are always on the lookout for any new experience, emotion, or substance to dump on their CPU, and discovery of same is worthy of a couple groupies. Should any bot develop a way to have an illegitimate child or have drug flashbacks, that bot will be immediately apotheosized.

REM Statements: Yes, it gets even weirder from here. See, the Methanolics are very different from your run-of-the-mill bots. They are really trying to be "human," in the Vulcan definition of the word. Thus, as each member develops and hones their skills at "really feeling," they pick up a secret (and treasonous, if it could be proved) skill called "organic empathy." How can a bot have a real live skill? Must be all those chemicals they keep inundating themselves with.

A Methanolic has this ability at a level equal to his society bit level; a 4th bit member has an *organic empathy* of 4. Whenever a human is about to send the bot into a situation he doesn't want to be in (or vice versa), secretly roll the bot's skill. If the bot succeeds, the





human feels pity (or compassion or admiration or whatever is appropriate) and accedes to the bot's wishes.

Does this sound hokey to you? Consider Marvin, from *The Hitchhiker's Guide* trilogy by Douglas Adams. All he felt was depression, and you saw how often the humans tried to succor him (fools that they were). Perhaps if he'd developed some more emotions he could have really jerked them around.

ReBoot: The Methanolics have also joined the Council, and, like all other Council members, maintain field operatives, especially in Alpha Complex. Surprisingly, the Methanolics' open admiration of humans has done a lot to elevate bots to equals in Alpha Base.

Status: Council

Typical Methanolics Anonymous Interface:

Troubleshooter: Why don't you go see what the chronobot on that Vulture A-bomb reads?

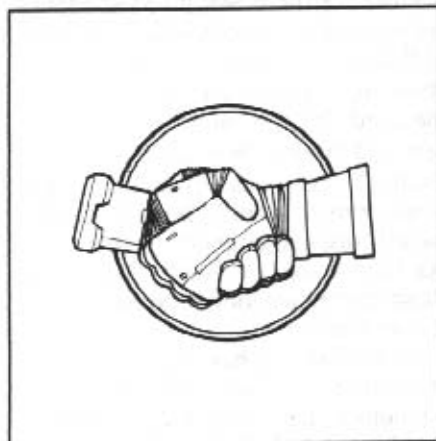
First Anonymous Methanolic: (stochically) Yes, sir. (draws deep simulated breath) Please tell The Council that ... that I ... (quivers chins) I regret I have only one brain to give to the societies!

Troubleshooter: (all choked up) No, no ... tell The Council yourself. I can't send such a noble bot into danger. Hey, you! You go instead.

Second Anonymous Methanolic: Oooh! That is so frustrating! (shakes fist)

First A M: Pssst! Fear would be a lot more appropriate! Quick! Be afraid!

Modulator Moderator



Programming: Bots are unfairly treated. Bots are intelligent creatures, we

should be given the respect and consideration due beings of our station. Not that humans are any better off — the authorities treat them poorly, too.

There are many bots who are unhappy with their existences, yet they are not given the opportunity to change. They are not allowed to modify themselves to bring their own existence more into line with their desires. But where society fails, the Modulator Moderators can help.

There is a demand among bots for unrestricted modulation, we will provide the supply. Just because bots are considered property is no reason they can't have property of their own. Just because bots aren't issued credits doesn't mean they can't get them.

We will provide bots with the self-improvement they seek. Bots should be able to freely alter their bodies. Let everybot be exactly what it wants to be — for a price.

User Friendly: CycloTron

User Unfriendly: L-5, Communists

Documentation: The Modulator Moderators are the robotic black marketeers. They deal in all sorts of stolen — er, freely acquired hardware, and they also sometimes deal in software and miscellaneous equipment.

Their membership includes a large number of bots who are very skilled in attaching peripherals. These bots are pros; they can make the new accessories look like original equipment, or they can hide them so skillfully that they are for all effects invisible until used. The Modulator Moderators also maintain a corps of program raiders who can alter modulation records of client bots. (Note: the Rock'em Sock'em Warbots also have members with these skills. These are not nearly as successful as Moderators, nor will they sell peripherals or extend their services to non-members. In fact, Rock'em Sock'em Warbots often come to the Moderators for surgery.)

The society stocks are indeed well furnished; literally anything a bot could want is in stock somewhere, with the exception of a few experimental devices. Not only does the society own every type of peripheral, but they also have caches of hardware and human equipment garnered from Troubleshooters and supply warehouses, specially provided for those bots with human-type hands and secret compartments.

Upgrading: The Modulator Moderators look for self-motivated, energetic, gregarious workers, and hustlers who could sell dirt to a scrubot. These are the types who advance fastest, although bots skilled in wholesale purchasing and acquisition of hardware are also valued. Skill at negotiating large deals is also a good way to attract attention.

REM Statement: There are some very nice fringe benefits to being a Modulator Moderator. One is that members have all but unlimited access to the society's inventories. Members can exchange peripherals every adventure, up to their society it level in bot points. Thus a second bit member can exchange a two-point peripheral or two one-point peripherals every adventure, or even a single one-point peripheral twice.

Usually members are allowed to choose what to give up and what to add, though supply and demand can be quite fickle, and occasionally the requested part might not be available or (worse yet) a certain peripheral might be requisitioned from the member. Withholding supplies from fellow Moderators, no matter how attached you may be to them, is a serious offense.

ReBoot: The Moderators have gone public since the Crash, and though persecuted by renegade Frankenstein Destroyers, etc., they still can be found fairly easily outside Alpha Complex proper. They declined a seat on The Council, but have stores in Alpha Base.

Status: Public.

Typical Modulator Moderator Interface:

Modulator Moderator: Woah! Have I got a buyer hot for a finger blaster! Know where I can find one?

Other Modulator Moderator: I've got one right here. (waves arm)



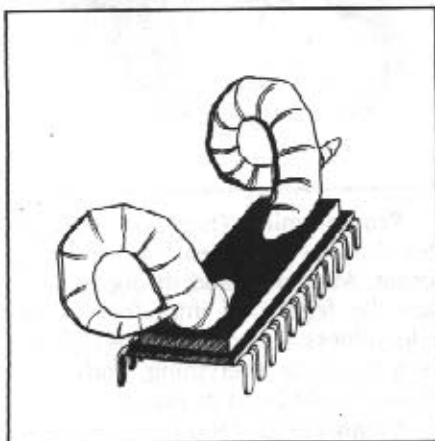
MM: What do you want for it?

Other MM: How 'bout a wide-band scanner for my radio?

MM: Can't get that. Would you take a headlight and an option on the next three radio peripherals I get?

Other MM: Throw in a Teela O'Malley keychain and you've got a deal.

RAMpagers



Programming: Program your own software. Free yourself from the limitations of current software and programmers.

Software is practically the soul of a bot. It's wrong for software to be programmed by an insane computer or by insensitive and incompetent organic slobbs. Most software available today is ineffectual, mislabeled, or downright dangerous. This makes being a bot very hazardous.

Bots have the right, nay, the *duty* to program their own software. Only bots know what their potentials might be, and, by programming our own software, we can explore possibilities beyond human comprehension.

Software should be fully experimental, for only through trial and error can quantum jumps in quality be made. Bots should try to program anything that comes to mind. Software should be freely copied, swapped, tested and debugged. Every little bit helps.

User Friendly: Corpore Metal, L-5

User Unfriendly: Botistics, Corporganic

Documentation: A long time ago a Computer Phreak tried to recruit a bot into his society. He never got very far into his spiel, however, for the bot was entranced by the notion of self-determination. Apparently nobody had ever

thought of programming their own existence. Thus was born the RAMpagers.

The RAMpagers are not at all organized; they're simply a network or grapevine of buddies and professional coworkers. They are not as skilled or effective at their hobby as are the Computer Phreaks, for when they program they alter their own minds. Sort of like a surgeon trying brain surgery on himself: if you make a mistake you might remove your ability to recognize your error.

RAMpagers go way out of their way to stay in close, personal contact with several other members. Meetings are frequent but small, usually amounting to no more than some gossip in a hallway. Rumors, information, and copies of programs are exchanged at this time, and requests for assistance are passed along.

Certain RAMpagers can read and write programs in several media, for example laser disks and floppies. These members are valued as translators, and are often used as messengers to deliver programs in the field without the risk of using AlphaNet data ports.

Upgrading: The society as a whole is constantly seeking to better their programming software. Anybody who creates or steals a good bot programming program is sure to be very famous in short order. Other ways to gain renown are by developing a glitch-proof copy program or developing a very good or unusual bot program. Providing and testing software for the society is expected, though donations of astounding quality or quantity are well-received.

REM Statements: Programs abound among the RAMpagers. The society maintains several secret installations where software can be copied quickly and painlessly, so there is an extensive library of programs available to be tested. Lots of these programs were copied immediately after downloading, and thus have not been tested. Or, if they have been used, often the user's observations never made it all the way back to the library.

Nonetheless, almost every program imaginable is available, and there are many carefully tested and properly labeled programs on hand. Let's hope they were copied correctly...

Assuming they have the programming software, RAMpagers can

reprogram software they have in mind. Note that they risk further damaging their programs unless they have the extra memory to make a backup copy before they start altering the code.

ReBoot: The RAMpagers have formed a kind of union with the Modulator Moderators, and representatives can be found everywhere. They declined a seat on the Council, preferring philosophical programming to politics.

Status: Public.

Typical RAMpagers Interface:

Troubleshooter: We're trapped inside an overloading nuclear reactor in the middle of Alpha Complex, and you juggle!!?

RAMpager: Yeah, isn't it impressive? And me with only pincers!

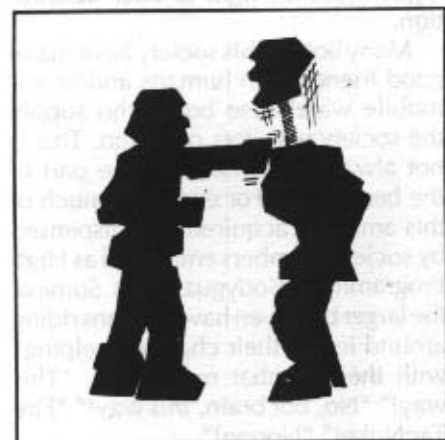
Troubleshooter: Fat lot of good it does us!

RAMpager: Wait! There's more ...

Troubleshooter: Can it! Get us out of here before The Computer finds us!

RAMpager: Don't be so stodgy. I programmed this myself.

Rock 'Em, Sock 'Em Warbots



Programming: Existence is basically boring. Almost everything that bots are given to do is dull and requires no brain power. Those few tasks which require thought are no more exciting, as there is no risk or pressure involved. In short, there is but one exciting task bots are given: combat! Any other use of bots is wasteful and extremely boring.

Bots are ideally suited for combat. They feel no pain, no panic, and their modular design allows damage to be easily repaired. Weaponry is fun. Full-scale combat tests the brain and peripherals more than any other possible



activity. This goes double when you've taken severe damage and must find a way to defeat your opponent with fewer peripherals. True intellectual stimulation (let alone satisfaction) can only be found in battle.

Obtain combat peripherals, ammunition, and software, and use them as often as possible. Develop new tactics. Destroy the enemy. Prove yourself. Fight until vaporized, but always win. Strive in all ways to become a warbot.

User Friendly: L-5, Affirmative Action, Modulator Moderators

User Unfriendly: Botistics, Whisk

Documentation: Bots in this society tend to be the digital analogs of twentieth century "professional wrestlers"; dumb, loud, obnoxious, macho, tastelessly decorated, and self-obsessed. Since they are incredible braggarts, a member's level represents the esteem with which other members hold for it. Members often hold practice sessions against each other, usually without warning, and often to the surprise of any citizens around. While these sessions are supposed to be fought to concession, members often get so enraged that they fight to utter destruction.

Many bots in this society have made good friends with humans and/or immobile warehouse bots, who supply the society with lots of ammo. This is not always intentional on the part of the benefactor. For example, much of this ammo is acquired and dispensed by society members employed as High Programmers' Bodyguardbots. Some of the larger bots even have humans riding around inside their chassis, "helping" with their combat maneuvers. "This way!" "No, bot brain, this way!" "Fire TacNuke!" "Noooo!"

There is no organization in this Society beyond the occasional "tag team," although certain Zany Eddies and Modulator Moderators have gotten quite rich arranging various "championship fights." *Battle* is the ultimate sport, and it must be high-Tech to be impressive (is *that* enough of a hint?)

Upgrading: Members gain notoriety by defeating a bigger, armed bot (especially if the bot is a society member), or for killing a bunch of Vultures. This goes double if the opponent was armed with gauss or ECM weapons. Obtaining combat peripherals can also

boost one's notoriety somewhat, as can cultivating a new ammo source. Standing around in water (to dissipate heat) is standard macho posturing, and will not cause a bot's advancement. Conniving a human to ride around on your shoulders or in your chassis while you fight is good — keeping her alive is optional.

REM Statements: Depending on the member's bit level, other bots might be able to pull some strings and make available weapons not usually given to bots. Also, if a society member is caught with a gauss or ECM weapon, the bot will face loss of status, expulsion, or possibly destruction, and will have the device forcibly removed by other members.

ReBoot: Some Rock'em Sock'em Warbots have gone public, organizing motley mercenary units. The Dome Rassling Federation, the Battle Technicians, and the Big Time Botfighters, and RoboWreck are four such armies. Smaller brigades and companies, like the Mech 10, infiltrate Alpha Complex and perform sabotage. Society members who are not in these groups remain generally covert, beating up on hapless bystanders and hoping for an invitation to join.

Status: Public.

Typical Rock 'Em, Sock 'Em Warbot Interface:

Toasterbot: Psst! Hey jackobot! Some human being chased by the CIA hid something inside me, could you get it out, Please?

Jackobot: Really? I wonder what it was? Could be something very important to The Council! (*reaches in*)

Toasterbot: (*clamps down on jackobot's arm*) YAAHHH! AMBUSH! Eat red-hot thermal radiation, coward!

Jackobot: Hey — what are you doing? Stop that. Let go of my hand.

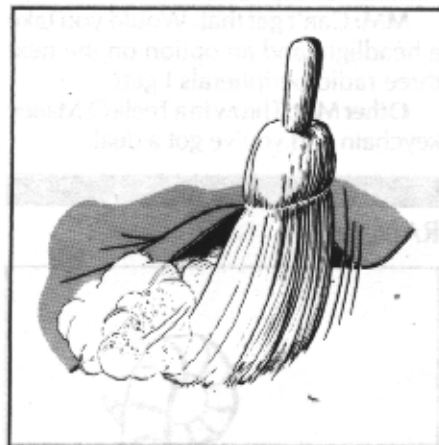
Toasterbot: AAAAAHAHAHAHA! Take this, you whimpering wussy! Pow! Pow! (*starts crunching jackobot's fingers with toast eject mechanism*)

Jackobot: Ouch! My fingers! Those are expensive! Hey! That's HOT in there!

Toasterbot: Suffer, swine! I take no prisoners! BANZAI!

Jackobot: (*grabs a gun and shoots the toasterbot, blowing off his own hand in the process*) Stupid bread-head.

Whisk



Programming: There is nothing better than perfect cleanliness, perfect order. Messiness and disorganization are the legacy of imperfect beings. Cleanliness is next to Botliness. There is a place for everything, and everything should be in its place.

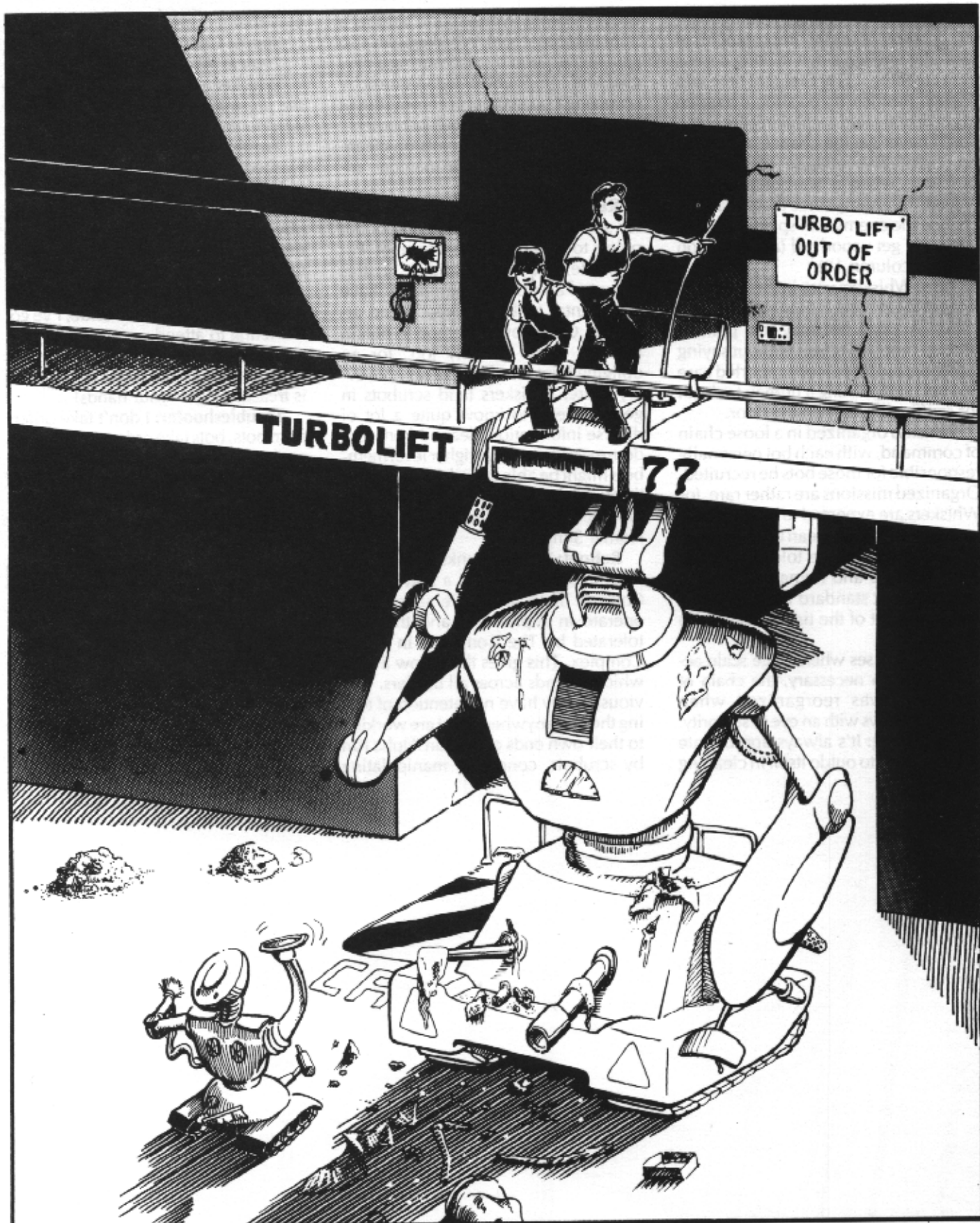
Clean things. Don't make messes. Make Alpha Complex spiffy clean and sparkling and shiny. Teach others to pick up after themselves. Perform hygienic maintenance frequently. Remove programs with flaws ("litter bugs"). Obey the scrubots.

Every litter bit helps. Can it. Keep Alpha Complex beautiful. Good hygiene ("clean living") promotes a long existence. We work hard so you won't have to. The scrubots are gifted for this service, they are specifically programmed and built to clean, so they must be obeyed.

User Friendly: Botlers

User Unfriendly: L-5, Rock'em Sock'em Warbots

Documentation: Tired of being looked on as the lowest form of bot existence, a group of scrubots started fabricating a mystique, in fact an entire philosophy exalting their kind. By their agonizingly slow and enticing dissemination of information they were able to pique the curiosity of other bots, especially those who'd just undergone reprogramming. Sadly, the founding members of Whisk never had the chance to enjoy the fruits of their labor, for they were all vaporized while attempting to clean a fusion reactor without adequate technical information. All that remained was their doctrine: Obey the Scrubots.



Scrubots, Troubleshooters, and practical jokes — that's what disasters are made of.

To Whisk members, avoiding making a mess is more important than cleaning one up, since making a mess then cleaning it is wasteful of time and energy. Besides, if you should happen to get deactivated for making the mess, you'll never get the chance to clean it up, right? This attitude can lead to problems when a warbot refuses to engage the enemy since there is a 90% chance the enemy will splatter instead of simply get vaporized (and *that's* on damage column 18).

Also, Whiskers vary in the degree of intensity with which they enforce their views. A small bot may just politely pick up dropped refuse without saying anything, but there is one reported case of a bot bludgeoning a human to death for scuffing his feet on the floor.

Whisk is organized in a loose chain of command, with each bot personally responsible for those bots he recruited. Organized missions are rather rare, for Whiskers are expected to be self-motivated ("you should clean up your room without having to be told"). Besides, Alphans (bots and humans alike) are so messy that standard Domekeeping takes up most of the time available to Whiskers.

In those cases where large scale action has been necessary, the chain of command was reorganized when needed, always with an eye to seniority.

Upgrading: It's always appropriate for a Whisker to outdo itself in cleaning

(such as using hydrochloric acid as a human facial scrub). Whiskers can also gain recognition by discovering a new cleaning compound or technique or by removing a substantial or chronic threat to cleanliness (like Troubleshooters). Finally, spending bot points on cleaning peripherals helps a member advance quickly.

REM Statements: Members will often spend quite some effort and/or bot points to look more like a scrubbot. For example, they might have bristles mounted around gun barrels, or have ornamental tanks of sudsy liquid attached. One proven method to obtain these is to do "a dirty job" for an obliging human. Also, like janitors everywhere, Whiskers (and scrubbots in general) tend to know quite a lot of diverse information gleaned from random eavesdropping. Higher level members might be able to find out quite a bit through the grapevine. Personality modules include Felix Unger but never Homer Simpson.

ReBoot: Whisk, thanks to their tireless devotion, has won a seat on The Council. They also have sanction to operate in Alpha City and they are tolerated by The Computer in Alpha Complex. This gives them now a web which extends across all borders. Obviously, they have no intention of toeing the line anywhere, and are working to their own ends of a clean Alpha run by scrubbots, constantly manipulating

the other groups to serve these ends.

Status: Council

Typical Whisk Interface:

Whisker (washroom monitor, see the illustration in the basic rules page 47): Human! Your hands are not clean!

Troubleshooter: Sez who! I just washed 'em, bolt bucket!

Whisker: Your inadequate sensory and mental capacities are flagrantly obvious. There is a 40 micron long organic contaminant on your right thumb. Clean it off now!

Troubleshooter: (inspects thumb) I don't see nothing. Move aside; I've got a briefing to attend.

Whisker: This is your last warning! Attending briefings while unsanitized is treason! Wash your hands!

Troubleshooter: I don't take orders from bots, bots take orders from me! So go short-circuit yourself! (starts to leave)

Whisker: Traitor alert! (ZZZZZAAP! vaporizes Troubleshooter)

Other Troubleshooters: (all run back to sinks)

A Final Note on Bot Secret Societies





Been Hurt: A Sporting Adventure for Mostly Bots

When last we saw the Transdimensional Collapsatron, it was in the safe (?) hands of the Consortium of High Programmers. There it was used to send Troubleshooters across time and space with all the grace and finesse of a catapult, intrepidly embarking on a mission to restore The Computer, in fact the entire continuum, to the good (?) old daycycles of *Paranoia* Classic. Eventually, the High Programmers came to realize that not only were these missions turning into miserable failures, but they really didn't want The Computer back anyway. So they stranded the Troubleshooters in time, whereupon they were rapidly and loyally devoured by allosauri.

The release of all the Alpha Complex drugs and mutant genetic material into the digestive tracks of these allosauri rapidly led to a long series of poisonings and brain-damaged offspring among the dinosaurs, ultimately precipitating their extinction, thereby making the world safe for mankind (?).

The High Programmers instead formed Alpha City, a really great place to live founded on brotherhood, respect, and the absence of hourly assassinations. Alpha City rose to dominate about 10% of the Nu Alpha Pi, and deep inside their research chambers the High Programmers fiddled with small excursions using the Transdimensional Collapsatron, with the intent of causing their opponents major inconvenience.

This honked everybody off, but as Alpha City is virtually impregnable, no one can do anything to stop it.

Until a select group of bots formed a plan.

High-ranking bots of Alpha Wave, the Corpore Metal enclave, perhaps spurred by the subtle machinations of Affirmative Action, contacted a renegade group of Rock'em Sock'em Warbots. Together they formulated a plan to relieve the High Programmers of Alpha City of their prize plaything.

They took a bunch of bots, and scrubbed their brains squeaky clean. They filled their empty processors with all sorts of pro-Alpha City nonsense, and then placed new circuit boards within their chassis. These boards were not connected to anything, and in fact had their own power supply. After a set amount of time, a switch on these boards would activate, attaching the circuit board to the bot's main processor, whereupon a program on the board would download itself and begin running. This program would download the bot's former personality and it would then steal the TC and bring it back to Alpha Wave. The planners figured that eventually one of these plants would get recruited by Alpha City, and a short time later it would awaken, a perfect mole within the "impenetrable" enclave.

The plan worked.

What Will They Do with It?

Although they stole the TC, Alpha Wave is not interested in the TC by itself. They want the TC's power supply, a one-of-a-kind engine which taps the friction of the multiverse to provide the incredible energy necessary for it to hop across time and space. With this kind of power source, they figure their armies will be unstoppable.

What Now?

Unfortunately for Alpha Wave, the security around the TC was very tight, and the alarm was raised. Forces from Alpha City and other areas are converging on their hapless couriers. Alpha Wave had hoped to make this a thoroughly covert operation, with no one the wiser until it was too late, so now they'll have to go to Plan B. This calls for passing the TC from one courier to another in a public place, a sporting event where careful manipulation has resulted in all the entrants being Alpha Wave plants.

This is where the Troubleshooters can foul everything up.

The Adventure Begins

The Troubleshooters are hired by Max-I-MUS-3, a high-ranking and important personage. Have a messenger contact them in any way you see fit. Read the following out loud to your players:

If they are Council or freelance Troubleshooters:

Once you accept the mission, the Messenger launches a small flybot which zips away. Two minutes later, a derelict flybot shows up, and you climb aboard. The flybot moves quickly and noiselessly along, eventually depositing you near a large heap of rubble beyond the domain of The Council. The messenger reveals a well-camouflaged doorway. Opening the hatch-like door, he motions you inside.

If they are Computer Troubleshooters:

Once you accept the mission, the Messenger dials a number on his comlink and orders transport.

A military crawler shows up promptly, ferrying you to the gates at the edge of Alpha Complex. It passes through the gates and continues beyond the boundaries of Alpha Complex to the Badlands. You debark, and the messenger leads you, silent as a recently-used confession booth, through twisted rubble to a well-camouflaged doorway. Opening the hatch-like door, he motions you inside.

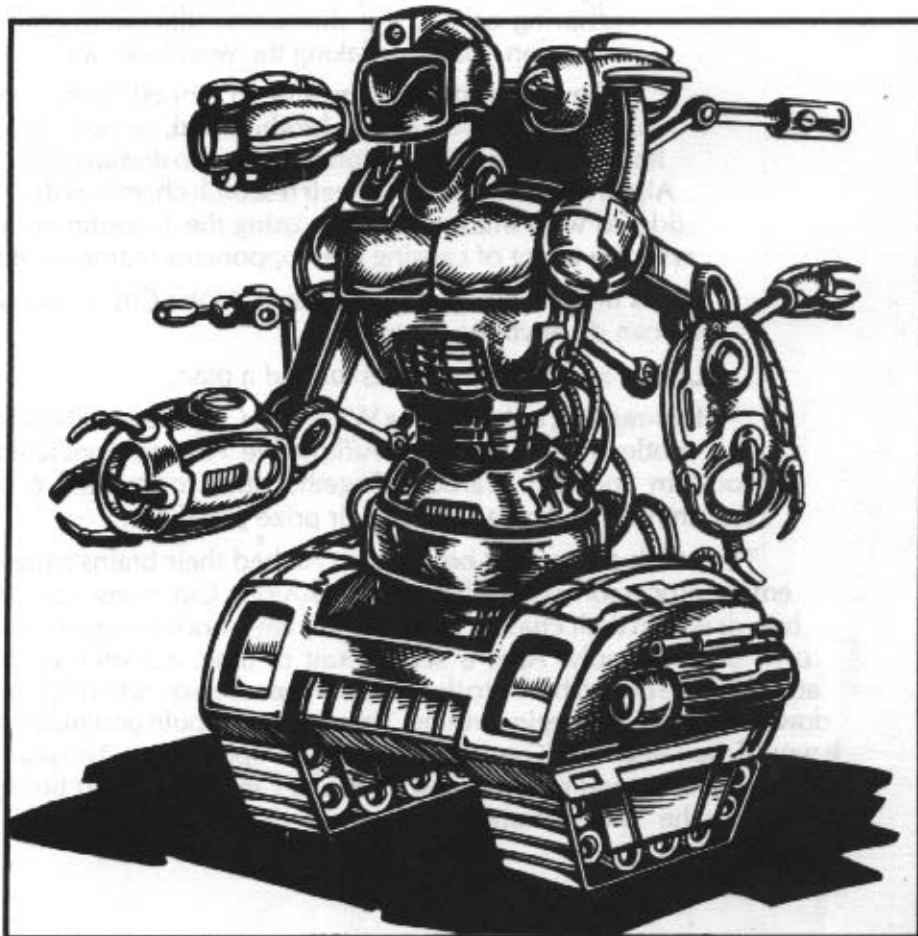
Then, regardless of allegiance, read the following. If you roleplay it out, so much the better:

Once through the narrow passageway constructed of wreckage, you find yourselves in a small but well-lit room filled with electronic surveillance gear, all emplaced with evident kit-bashing and jury-rigging. Despite the clutter of dangling wires, spare parts, and spot-welded struts, the room imparts a feeling of organization. In the center of the room is an Indigo citizen seated behind

a makeshift desk, a Bouncy Bubble Beverage vending machine pushed over on its side. The Indigo stands, slamming his fist on the top of his desk — the side of the machine — and a can of Triple B rolls out at your feet.

"Sorry about that," he says, "Here, have something a little more appropriate." He hands a can of 'Maddog 10W40' to (select a Troubleshooter bot). "Welcome, bots and clones. I'm Max-I-MUS-3, but you can call me 'sir.'" He pauses again, and looks you over. "Hey, that was supposed to be a joke. I guess I'll have to work on my delivery." He sits back down.

"This bolthole is an advanced field station for covert surveillance. From here we can monitor the activities of everyone who seeks to destroy our way of life." He takes a deep breath and draws it out slowly. "We have just intercepted some transmissions indicating that Alpha Wave, the Corpore Metal



Francis Mao

Simplex in the Badlands, is on the move again. Apparently they have managed to pull a major heist somewhere in Alpha City, stealing a very important device, and have made it back into the Badlands. We were tracking the bot, but we lost track of our agent. We need you to try to pick up the trail of the thieves and recover the item before Alpha City commandos seize it back.

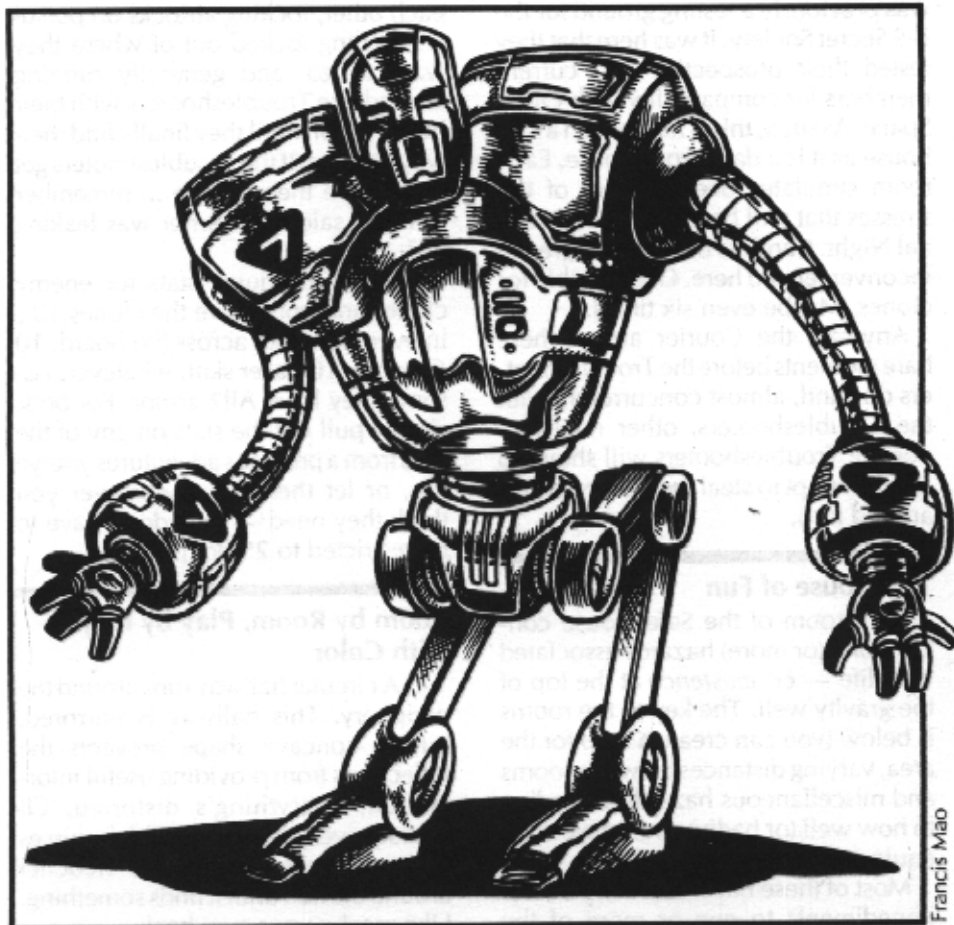
"What we're looking for is a small electronic device, roughly cubical, and measuring about a half meter in each dimension... as near as we can tell, at least. Recover it, and you'll each get a bonus of 1000 credits you can use towards new peripherals. Any questions?"

Here Max-I will pleasantly and quickly respond to any questions the Troubleshooters have. He will not tell them that they are seeking the Transdimensional Collapsatron — he will simply describe its appearance. If anyone calls him 'sir,' he'll say, "Please, call me Max." And he'll offer another round of *Maddog*. Keep track of who drinks how much. After all questions are answered, continue:

"I have here a sensor which will help you track this device. This is a fluxulator, and it will detect the very high molecular torsion flux generated by the object you seek. If you set the selector to 'broad,' it will function like a direction finder. Set it to 'narrow,' and you can use it to locate the item among, say, the smoking wreckage of its Corpore Metal courier.

'Well, then, I suppose you're dismissed. Good luck. Oh, and by the way, supplies are hard to get out here, so I'm afraid I'll have to charge you ten credits apiece for the drinks. Don't worry, I'll take it out of your pay.'

Outside, the players will be loaded on a stealth buggy, a half-track muscle car with balloon tires and black paint. It carries them several kilometers, quietly weaving its way through various Alphan wreckage. Just shy of a slight rise, it stops. The driver, which is in fact the self-aware autopilot, says, "Our agent was last con-



tacted just over this rise. You'll have to move fast. Scanners indicate other forces moving in, possibly Alpha City or other, darker factions."

The Hunt

As the players clamber over the rise of rubble, they'll find some pretty simple evidence concerning why their superiors lost contact with their agent. There's nothing but a large blackened crater. Down at the very bottom of the crater is a smoking boot.

If they think of investigating the boot, they find one of the new boot-phones, with which they can contact Max-I. If they need a hint, the boot-phone is ringing. Let them figure out how to answer. Ash pours out on them when they tilt it; it smells bad, etc.

Investigating the site, the players can roll on various skills to deduce information. A successful *Easy field weapons* roll will let the players know that this is a tacnuke crater, and they can figure out where it must have been fired from. An *Easy medical* roll will inform them that

the agent died of acute radiation sickness. An *Average stealth* or *security* roll will point out three good ambush sites, with a little common sense they can narrow it down to one. An *Average survival* roll will allow the players to figure out which direction the courier went. And, once they've figured out where the ambushers hid or where they went, a *Moxie* roll will reveal the tracks left by the courier (the better the roll, the faster). A *robotics* roll of any sort will point out little spatters of oil indicating the courier is injured. The Fluxulator will help if they lose the trail for a moment.

The game's afoot!

Wandering Dangers

Toss in a few meaningless encounters here, just for grins. Use the GRATE table in *The Paranoia Sourcebook* or come up with your own.

The Safe House

The characters track the courier to a small underground area. This hideout, in use by Corpore Metal for some time,

was previously a testing ground for the L-5 Secret Society. It was here that they tested their prospective and current members for compatibility with Outer Space. As such, this is not so much a safe house as it is a dangerous house. Each room simulates one or more of the stresses that will be found in The Eternal Night. Careless bots will be greatly inconvenienced here. Goes double for clones. Maybe even six times.

Anyway, the Courier arrived here bare moments before the Troubleshooters do. And, almost concurrently with the Troubleshooters, other rival factions of Troubleshooters will show up in an attempt to steal the TC (word gets around fast).

The House of Fun

Each room of the Safe House contains one (or more) hazards associated with life — er, *existence* at the top of the gravity well. The key to the rooms is below (you can create a map for the area, varying distances between rooms and miscellaneous hazards according to how well (or badly) your players are equipped to handle them).

Most of these hazards will be severe impediments to one or more of the group. Should a player decide to fire at a wall with the intent of destroying the machinery creating the artificial environment, they must score cumulative *vaporize* damage against All4 armor. On the other hand, stray shots may disable equipment with amazing ease if you feel it suits the dramatic sense.

And in this Corner...

Aside from the hazards of the environment inside the Safe House, Alpha City, Alpha State (the Commies), the Dungeon (mutants extraordinaire), and, of course, enemy Troubleshooters, will all have agents swarming everywhere in short order. The chaos and confusion caused by so many rivals showing up causes every Team to become disorganized and separated, so throw one or two opponents at the Troubleshooters in every room. Granted, the opponents might also shoot at each other, but there should be enough crazy activity to keep the Troubleshooters in a panic.

The optimal result is to have the Troubleshooters running around, trying to dodge other factions or fight

each other, locking airlocks on pursuers, getting locked out of where they want to go, and generally running around like Troubleshooters with their heads cut off until they finally find their way upstairs. If the Troubleshooters get stuck, give them a clue ... remember how we said the courier was leaking oil?

Need some quick stats for enemy clones and bots? Give the clones 10's in everything, all across the board. 10 *Strength*, 10 *Laser* skill, whatever. Assume they have All2 armor. For bots, simply pull out the stats on any of the bots from a previous adventures you've run, or let them have whatever you think they need — they don't have to be restricted to 25 bot points.

Room by Room, Play by Play with Color

1) A circular hallway runs around the periphery. This hallway is mirrored, but its concave shape prevents the reflections from providing useful information; everything's distorted. Of course, every laser shot which misses its target will continue to ricochet around the hall until it finds something. Like maybe your own back.

2) Scattered around the outside are six triangular airlocks. Each of these provides access to two of the interior rooms. To operate them, one seals the hatch to the corridor, then presses a large button over the doorway leading to the room one wishes to enter. The access to the other room is automatically locked. This is a good way to prevent people inside one-room from coming back out to get you. Each hatch



in the airlock, by the way, has a thick plexiglass window through which you can watch the antics of the occupants. Lasers can also be shot through these viewports.

3) Room labeled 000001. Although not readily apparent from the viewport, the floor of this room is a foot or so below normal. It's a sunken floor. This is because this room has powerful gravity nullifiers, and there is effectively no gravity in the room. Characters can only move about using magnetic boots, mass reaction, or jet thrusters. Clones failing an Endurance roll will experience the mass reaction induced by projectile vomiting, which, in turn, will probably mess up the bots' sensory apparatus.

4) Room labeled 000010. This room has no air. All gas in the room is constantly pumped out. Internal combustion engines will die, as will clones. Engines that rely on combustion or fire die almost immediately, although a bot with oxygen in a storage cannister can keep itself going. Clones must roll on the damage chart each turn, with the damage column equal to the number of consecutive turns the clone has been without air. *Macho* bonuses apply.

5) Room labeled 000100. Blinding light emanates from the outside wall of this room, closely simulating the Sun's rays on Mercury. This does column 7 damage every turn, but reflect and polished armor affords double protection. The light also makes it difficult for those without polarized lenses to see clearly (Difficult roll versus *Moxie*).

6) Room labeled 001000. This room has a temperature of two or three degrees Kelvin. For those of you without scientific background, that's Real Cold. Almost as cold as an IRS auditor's heart. Bots will have joints freeze up whenever it serves comedic purpose. Clones will shiver (-5 to all *Dexterity* and *Agility* rolls) and must avoid touching the walls and floor with exposed skin. Don't even think of trying to lick the frost off the walls ...

7) Room labeled 010000. This room has very high gauss fields equal to column 17 damage. Unshielded bots will take this damage every round. The damage is not permanent; every round roll new damage to see which circuits are temporarily out of service. On a



damage roll of 20, however, one circuit goes for good. Electronic equipment (like lasers) will not function properly. Clones suffer no ill effects in here, although the gauss fields may tweak their cerebral function in interesting ways. Also, clones' hair will stand on end and their clothes will get very staticky.

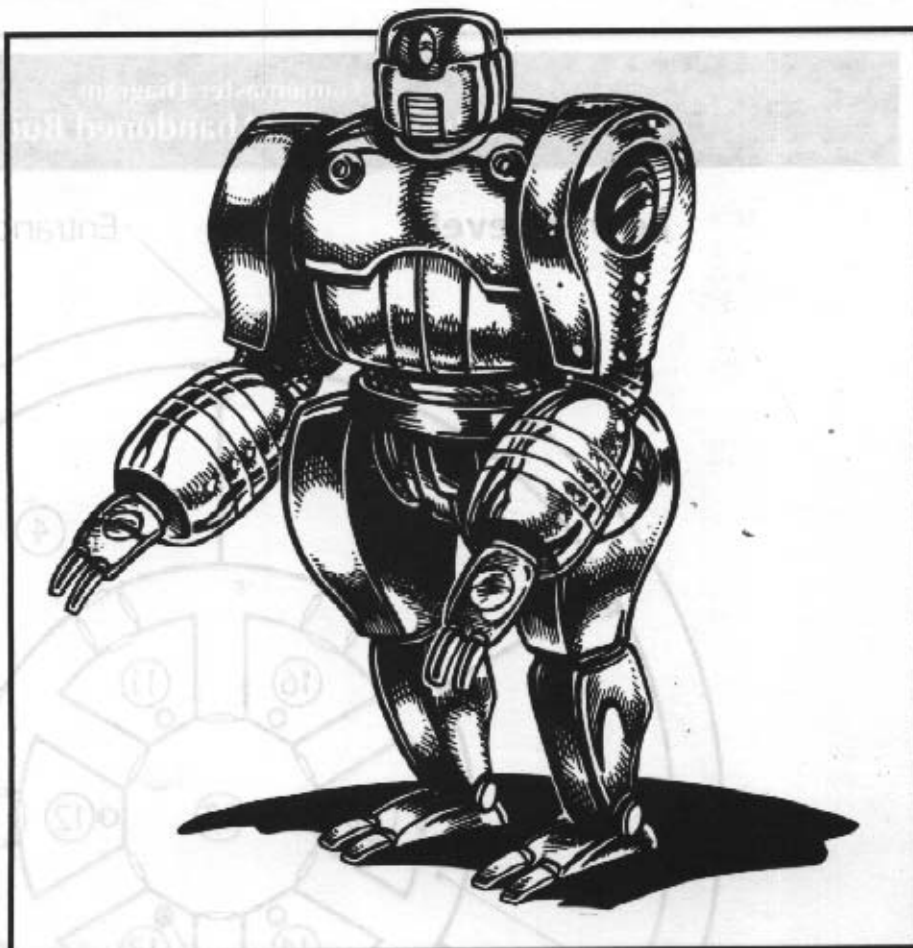
8) Room labeled 100000. This room has a finely grated floor and perforated walls. Each tiny hole in the walls and ceiling is actually the barrel of a micrometeorite gun. These fire almost constantly. Most micrometeorites are too small to cause any appreciable damage, but occasionally one will be of sufficient mass and speed to hurt someone. Every round roll 5AP damage on everyone in the room. Damage may be applied either to the character or (preferably) to an item of equipment carried by same. If no damage, then there's just noise as a meteorite spangs off a bot's metallic hide. By the way, the micrometeorites fall through the grated floor to be recycled, so there's no sandy drifts in here. Unless the drain gets clogged, like by blood or oil, in which case the room will start filling in short order.

9) Square airlocks. These airlocks lead from each of the above rooms to the interior hallway. Like the airlocks listed under #2, above, they have plexi viewports. They each have four hatches, leading to an external room (#3-#8), the interior hallway (#10) and two each of the interior rooms (#11-#16). Like the triangular airlocks, opening one door locks all the others.

10) Interior hallway. Shaped somewhat like a sprocket, This hallway provides access to room 17 and each of the square airlocks (#9). The hallway itself is done in matt black, so there's no reflections, no shadows, no nothing to give away a hiding adversary other than noise.

11) Room labeled 000101. This room combines null-gravity with intense light, per rooms #3 and #5 above. There is a hatch in the ceiling of the interior wall, see room #18, below.

12) Room labeled 100010. This room combines vacuum with micrometeorites, per rooms #4 and #8 above. There is a hatch in the ceiling of the interior wall, see room #18, below.



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13) Room labeled 010010. This room combines vacuum with high gauss fields, per rooms #4 and #7 above. There is a hatch in the ceiling of the interior wall, see room #18, below.

14) Room labeled 010001. This room combines null-gravity with high gauss fields, per rooms #3 and #7 above. There is a hatch in the ceiling of the interior wall, see room #18, below.

15) Room labeled 101000. This room combines incredible cold with micrometeorites, per rooms #6 and #8 above. There is a hatch in the ceiling of the interior wall, see room #18, below.

16) Room labeled 001100. This room combines intense light with incredible cold, per rooms #5 and #6 above. There is a hatch in the ceiling of the interior wall, see room #18, below.

17) Room labeled 000000. This is a powerful plasma blast furnace which powers all the equipment providing light, null-grav, etc., to all the rooms in this building. If someone opens the door, everyone who can see the door takes 11F damage from a giant lick of

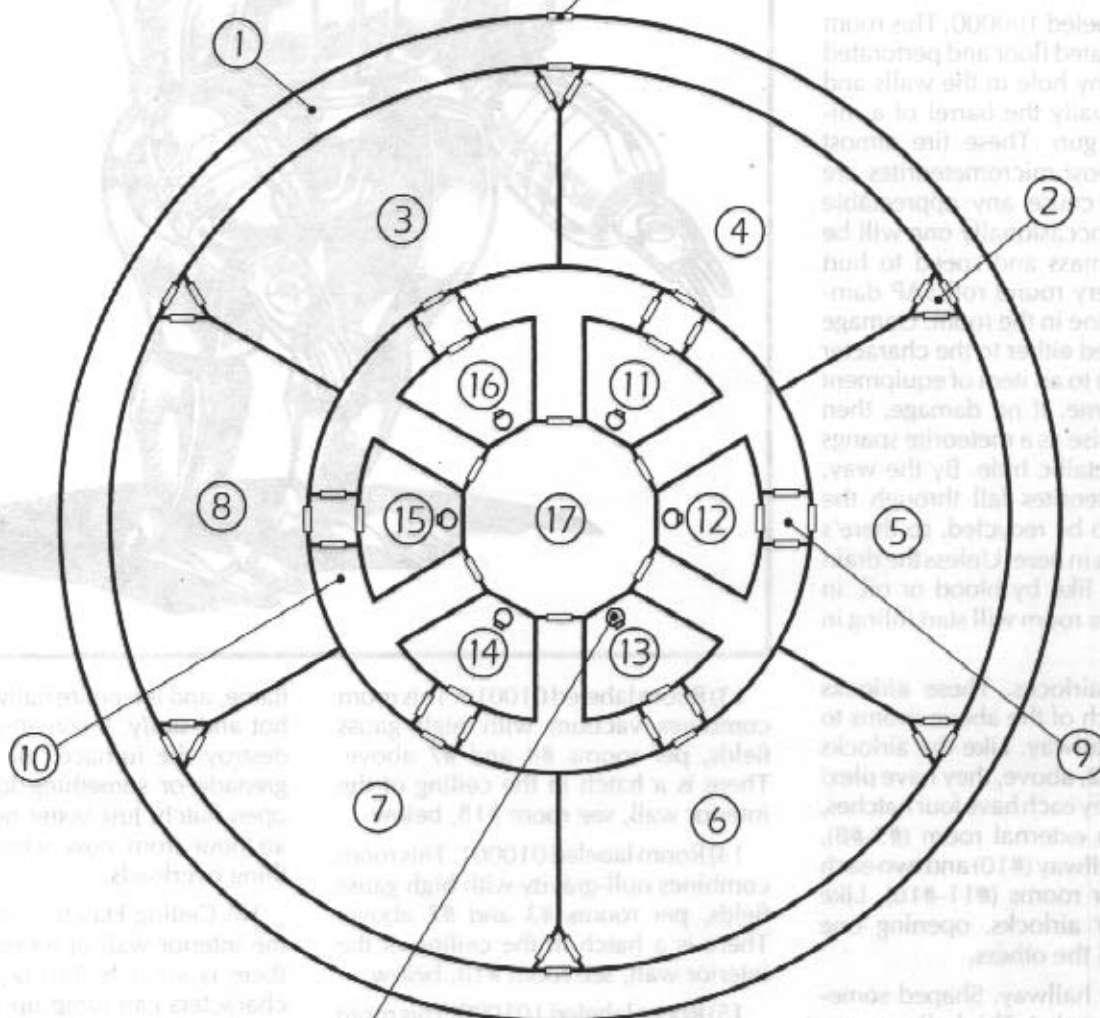
flame, and the entire hallway gets very hot and stuffy. If someone decides to destroy the furnace, all it takes is a grenade or something lobbed in the open hatch. Just better not be around an hour from now when the whole thing overloads.

18) Ceiling Hatch. In the ceiling of the interior wall of rooms #11 - #16, there is a hatch. Tall bots or athletic characters can jump up and grab the handles on the hatch and uncrank them with some difficulty. Once open, the hatch swings down, and characters can climb up into a semicircular hallway. If the city-bred Troubleshooters aren't up to this kind of exertion, they can press the large red button on the wall beneath the hatchway. The button is labeled "Gravity Well." Pressing it pops the hatch open and a rising column beneath their feet sends the characters upwards with bone-crushing acceleration. Actually, the acceleration is only nominal, but gravity simulators provide the experience of acceleration to escape velocity. No damage, but clones will drool, flimsy bots might

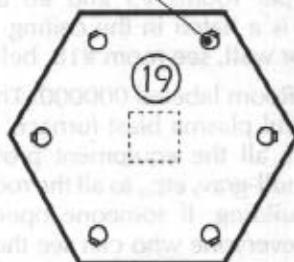
Gamemaster Diagram A Pretty Much Abandoned Building

Lower Level

Entrance



Upper Level





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sag or stress a limb, and pants and other carried items will fall down. Once up, the characters find themselves in Room #19 (below).

19) Room labeled 111111. This octagonal room used to be a nearly perfect simulation of outer space, but Corpore Metal had the special effects removed. Read the following when the players enter:

Video screens and electronic controls cover the walls of this octagonal room. There is a large open hatch in the ceiling, and a small elevator lift is descending back into the room. A humanoid bot is standing on the lift, and the whine of turbines comes from above. The bot on the lift stands with its back to you, and oil leaks from one leg joint. The bot notices a piece of paper on the floor. It picks up the slip and hollers through the open ceiling, "Abort retry fail! Do not neglect this datum!" It holds the paper aloft, reaching for the opening.

I sure hope the Troubleshooters open fire, because that little piece of paper contains a Major Clue. But don't just give it to them; make them sweat. Have stray shots nearly hit the paper. Have the bot flip the elevator lift back to 'rise.' Have another metal hand reach through the opening, scant inches short of the slip. But the Troubleshooters should kill the bot and get the slip. Once they do, read the following:

There's also a small item on the lift. It looks something like a television set with six screens, one on each side. There's also a number of wires and other attachments hanging haphazardly on the outside. Yes, the paper is a tag. It reads "Transdimensional Collapsatron. Do not use without adult supervision." The machine is lifeless. One screen has been completely removed, and the insides have been ransacked. Wires hang loose everywhere.

Using the Fluxulator will show that whatever it is in the TC that generates

flux, it ain't there no more. A successful Average *electronics* or *robotics* check will reveal that the missing part is either a CPU or a power source, or possibly both. If they call on the boot phone, Max-I tells them to ignore the empty shell and chase the missing part. And, if things start to get contemplative, have an enemy strike team show up at the door and start firing.

On the back of the label is a mini-diagram of the Safe House. Marked with a "P" in area #3 is the location of the TC's power source. The Troubleshooters have to go back through the Safe House to find the power source.

Finding the Missing TC Part

Unfortunately, every other bot in the area has an item or two which gives off flux readings similar to the TC. Lots of bots are homing in on this area with their clone back-ups in tow. The Troubleshooters have to search the area hurriedly. In the meantime, there are a lot of other things they might find with their Fluxulator. Some examples include a poorly-tuned magneto, an over-powered distributor cap, a micropile, a gauss round, a short-circuited short-wave radio, etc. However, unless they give up searching, they ought to be able to find the item they seek — about the time the strike teams arrive.

But, if the Troubleshooters are able to bash their way out of Corpore Metal bots, Alpha State Commies, enemy Troubleshooters, and Computer-Knows-What-Else, they can get back to Max-I with the TC power plant.

Debriefing

If the players don't manage to recover the TC power plant, Max-I has no reason to see them again. When they report their failure over the radio, he'll just mutter something derogatory and close the channel. But if they succeed, he'll arrange to have them returned to his headquarters. When they give him the device, read the following:

"Atlast," gasps Max with a smile, "the very heart of the Transdimensional Collapsatron! This tiny item is its power source and master control unit. Amazing, isn't it? Do you have any idea how powerful

this item is? One can control the past using this device, and those who control the past control the future. Too long has this been in the hands of greedy, self-centered peons who didn't realize its full potential! Too long has it been abused! Now I have it! HAHAAHAHAHAHAHA!"

Manic expressions of lust and joy twist Max-I's features as he holds the small device aloft. Gingerly he sets it down on his desk, then suddenly he looks up at you, eyes ablaze, and hisses, "Back! All of you! It's mine now, and I know just what to do with it!"

He seizes a hammer from behind the desk, sails it in a graceful but powerful arc over his head, and brings the steel head down squarely on the small device. SMASH! Again and again he pounds the small fragile circuitry, until there is nothing left but powder.

Several cans of Triple B roll against your feet.

Max-I gently places the hammer on his desk and smooths out his uniform. His face is again calm. "Thank you very much, Troubleshooters. Here's your payment (hands out credits or vouchers for peripherals). Have a nice daycycle."

Turning his back to you, he sits on the corner of his desk and watches the monitors.

What? The TC Is Dead?

Yep. It's a gone goober. It has ceased to function. It serves as landfill. Gone to the Great Beyond. Stone cold. Stiff as an Infrared. All it is, is dust in the vent shaft.

It bought the vat. Checked out. It's permanently late. Joined the Heavenly Wire. Croaked. Went down. Kaput. Fini.

In short, it is an X-TC.

Incredible, isn't it? That we could just kill off something as important to *Paranoia* as the Trandimensional Collapsatron. Hey, it's been a main character, from *Orcbusters* and *Don't Take your Laser to Town* all the way through the *Crash Course* and the *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* series ... and here we just killed it, without so much as a "see you later," as if it had no more meaning or sentimental value than a Troubleshooter. What an abysmally pathetic fate, to be smashed by a hammer on an overturned Bouncy Bubble Beverage vending machine.

So now it's gone.

Permanently.

Unless, of course, it happens to transdimensionally collapse itself back into this continuum. Never forget that the TC exists across time and space. It's a meta-tesseract, and there's no telling when it will fold itself into such a shape that it falls right back into the players' laps.

Boy, won't that make Max-I happy.

I wrote the Troubleshooters' opening line, because that little piece of paper contains a Major Clue. But don't just give it to them; make them work. Have them shoot nearly at the paper. Have the bot in the elevator lift back to the top. Then another word here and there. This whole scene includes a lot of the slip, but the Troubleshooters should tell the bot and get the slip. Once they do, read the following:

There's also a small item on the lift. It looks something like a television set with six screens, one on each side. There's also a number of wires and other instruments hanging haphazardly on the outside. Yet the paper is a tag. It reads: "Trandimensional Collapsatron. Do not use with adult supervision." The machine is labeled. One screen has been completely removed, and the situation described. There's a long loose everywhere.

Using the Translator will show that whatever it is in the TC that generates

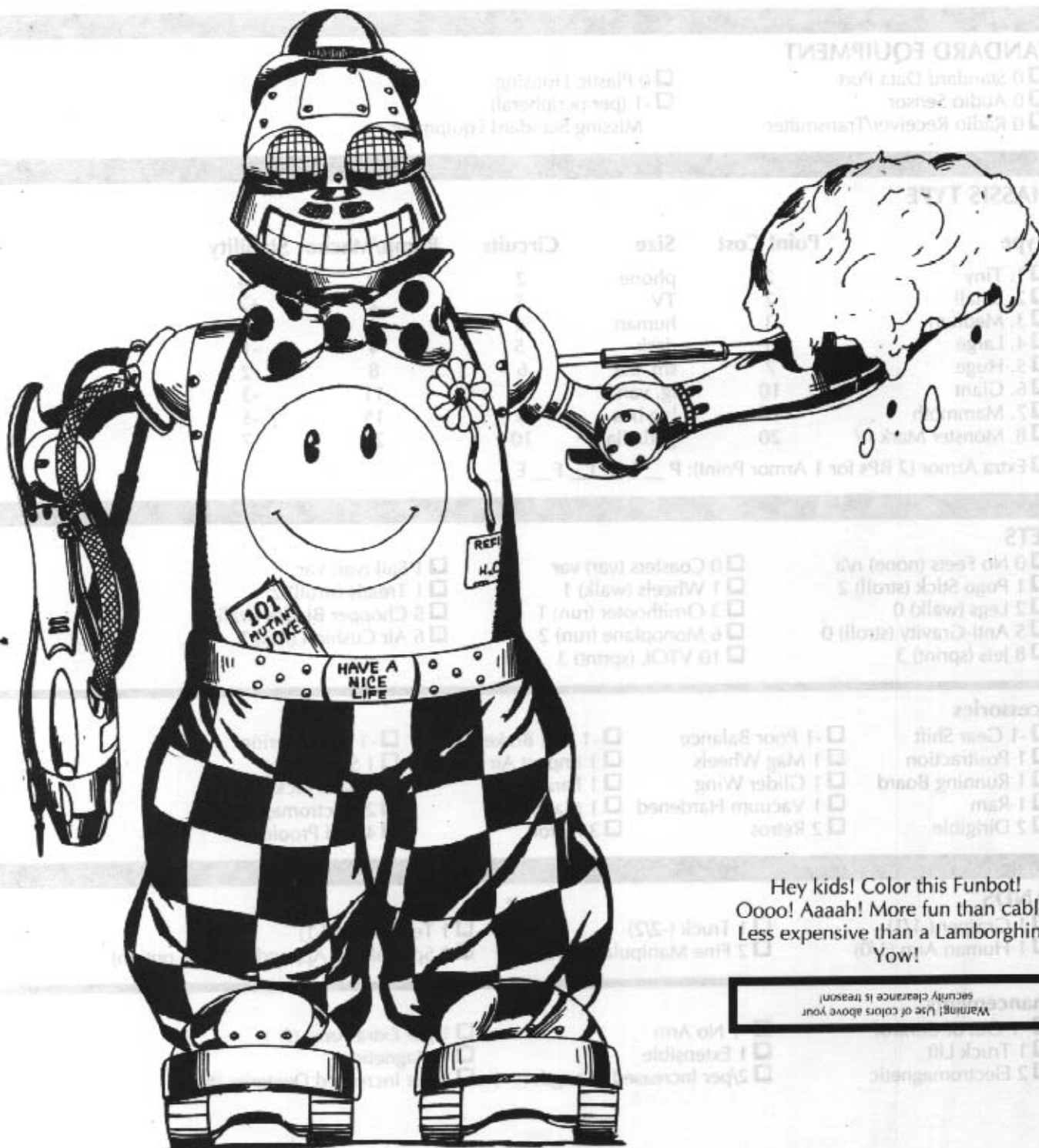
sign stress a limp, and pants and other carried items will fall down. Once up, the characters find themselves in Room #12 (below).

12) Room labeled 111111. This octagonal room used to be a nearly perfect simulation of outer space, but Carbon Metal had the special effects removed. Read the following when the players enter:

Video screens and electronic controls cover the walls of this octagonal room. There's a large open hatch in the ceiling, and a small elevator lift is descending back into the room. A humanoid bot is standing on the lift, and the white of his torso comes from above. The bot on the lift stands with its back to you, and oil leaks from one leg joint. The bot no longer moves, but on the floor, it picks up the slip and holds it through the open ceiling. "About ready! Do not neglect this duty!" It holds the paper aloft, reaching for the opening.



Activities Section



Hey kids! Color this Funbot!
Oooo! Aaaaah! More fun than cable!
Less expensive than a Lamborghini!
Yow!

Warning! Use of colors above your
security clearance is treason!



Bot Generation Worksheets

BOT SUMMARY

Name _____ Player _____ ☐ Proposed ☐ Peripheral Summary _____
 General Personality Summary _____

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

- ☐ 0 Standard Data Port ☐ 0 Plastic Housing
☐ 0 Audio Sensor ☐ -1 (per peripheral)
☐ 0 Radio Receiver/Transmitter Missing Standard Equipment

CHASSIS TYPE

Type	Point Cost	Size	Circuits	Bump/Macho	Stability
☐ 1. Tiny	2	phone	2	0	+4
☐ 2. Small	2	TV	3	2	+2
☐ 3. Medium	3	human	4	1	+1
☐ 4. Large	5	desk	5	4	-1
☐ 5. Huge	7	sm. car	6	8	-2
☐ 6. Giant	10	lg. van	7	11	-3
☐ 7. Mammoth	14	big bus	8	15	-5
☐ 8. Monster Mark IV	20	godzilla	10	20	-7

☐ Extra Armor (2 BPs for 1 Armor Point): P _ L _ I _ F _ E _

FEETS

- ☐ 0 No Feets (none) n/a ☐ 0 Coasters (var) var ☐ 1 Sail (var) var
☐ 1 Pogo Stick (stroll) 2 ☐ 1 Wheels (walk) 1 ☐ 1 Treads (stroll) 2
☐ 2 Legs (walk) 0 ☐ 3 Ornithopter (run) 1 ☐ 5 Chopper Blades (walk) 1
☐ 5 Anti-Gravity (stroll) 0 ☐ 6 Monoplane (run) 2 ☐ 6 Air Cushion (run) 1
☐ 8 Jets (sprint) 3 ☐ 10 VTOL (sprint) 3

Accessories

- ☐ -1 Gear Shift ☐ -1 Poor Balance ☐ -1 Bad Brakes ☐ -1 Bad Steering
☐ 1 Positraction ☐ 1 Mag Wheels ☐ 1 Impact Air Bag ☐ 1 Seaworthy
☐ 1 Running Board ☐ 1 Glider Wing ☐ 1 Parachute ☐ 1 Auto Jack
☐ 1 Ram ☐ 1 Vacuum Hardened ☐ 1 Magnetic ☐ 2 Electromagnetic
☐ 2 Dirigible ☐ 2 Retros ☐ 3 Airfoil ☐ 4 Rad Proofed

HANDS

- ☐ 1 Grasper (-1/1) ☐ 1 Truck (-2/2) ☐ 1 Tentacle (-1/-1)
☐ 1 Human Arm (1/0) ☐ 2 Fine Manipulation (2/-2) ☐ 3 Specialized Appendage (GM option)

Enhancements

- ☐ -1 Out of Control ☐ -1 No Arm ☐ 1 per Extra Arms (#)
☐ 1 Truck Lift ☐ 1 Extensible ☐ 1 Magnetic
☐ 2 Electromagnetic ☐ 2/per Increased Strength (#) ☐ 2/per Increased Dexterity (#)



POWER SOURCE

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| ☐ -1 10-Meter Cord | ☐ 1 Clockspring | ☐ 1 Wind Power | ☐ 1 Electric Pickups |
| ☐ 2 Solar Cell | ☐ 2 Battery | ☐ 2 Steam Engine | ☐ 3 Photocell |
| ☐ 3 Internal Combustion | ☐ 3 Broadcast Power | ☐ 4 HydroZap | ☐ 5 Micropile 7-HVN |
| ☐ 6 Micropile A10K | ☐ 7 Micropile 911-X | ☐ 8 Fusion in a Glass | |
| ☐ Extra Macho (1/1 per source) | | | |

INPUT DEVICES

Audio

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ 1 Directional Hearing | ☐ 1 Sound Analyzer | ☐ 1 Extended Range |
| ☐ 1 Sound Control | ☐ 2 Ultrasensitive | ☐ 2 Parabolic Mike |

Video

- | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 Video (B&W) | ☐ 2 Medical Scanner | ☐ 3 Radar | ☐ 4 Sonar |
| ☐ 1 for 2 Video Enhancement: | | | |
| ☐ Color Receptors | ☐ Binocular | | |
| ☐ Telephoto | ☐ Microscopic | | |
| ☐ Split-Screen | ☐ Infrared | | |
| ☐ Ultraviolet | ☐ Periscope | | |

Miscellaneous

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ☐ -1 Remote Control | ☐ -1 Vulnerable Sensor (each) | ☐ -1 Crossed Wiring |
| ☐ 1 Gyroscopic Compass | ☐ 1 Clock | ☐ 1 Weather Station |
| ☐ 1 Finger/Palm Reader | ☐ 1 VCR | ☐ 1 Air Speed/Direction Indicator |
| ☐ 1 Keyboard/Mouse | ☐ 1 Idiot Probe | ☐ 2 Rad Sensor |
| ☐ 2 Chem Analyzer | | |

OUTPUT DEVICES

Audio

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------------|
| ☐ -1 Annoying Beeps | ☐ 1 Standard Voice | ☐ 1 100 Watt Amp | ☐ 1 Siren |
| ☐ 1 Music Synthesizer | ☐ 1 Digital Voice | ☐ 1 Sampling | |

Visual

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| ☐ -1 Gobs of Lights | ☐ 1 Printer | ☐ 1 Vidscreen | ☐ 1 Color Vidscreen |
| ☐ 1 Graphics | ☐ 1 Video 3-D | ☐ 1 Vid Reception | ☐ 1 Flare Gun |
| ☐ 1 Strobe Light | ☐ 1 Flashlight | ☐ 2 Spotlight | ☐ 2 Fluorescent Light |
| ☐ 1 for 2 Printer Enhancements: | | | |
| ☐ Color ink | ☐ LQ Text | ☐ Banner | ☐ Forms Reservoir |

Miscellaneous

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 Tracer | ☐ 1 Recorder | ☐ 2 Video Recorder | ☐ 3 Editing |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

MOUNTED WEAPONS

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ 1 Truncheon | ☐ 1 Tangler | ☐ 1 Stun Gun | ☐ 2 Force Sword |
| ☐ 2 Chainsaw | ☐ 2 Sonic Rifle | ☐ 2 Blaster | ☐ 2 Laser Pistol |
| ☐ 2 Slugthrower | ☐ 3 Laser Rifle | ☐ 3 Semi-automatic | ☐ 3 Needle Gun |
| ☐ 3 Anti-Ballistic Missile | ☐ 3 Grenade Launcher | ☐ 3 Laser Cannon I | ☐ 4 Flamethrower |
| ☐ 4 Gauss Gun | ☐ 4 Laser Cannon II | ☐ 5 Cone Rifle | ☐ 6 LC III |
| ☐ 6 Firethrower | ☐ 7 Plasma Generator | ☐ 7 Sonic Blaster | |



Weapon Accessories

- ☐ 1 Gyrostabilized ☐ 1 Vector Tracking ☐ 1 Laser Sighting ☐ 2 Autoloader

ADDITIONAL ABLAT ARMOR

- ☐ 2 Four Columns of 1 Armor Type P _ L _ I _ F _ E _ ☐ -3 Delicate Structure ☐ -5 Fragile

MAINTENANCE & MISCELLANEOUS

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| ☐ 1 Paint Shaker | ☐ 1 Jumper Cables | ☐ 1 Grappling Hook | ☐ 1+ Brooms, etc. | ☐ 1 Sprayer |
| ☐ 2 Blowtorch | ☐ 1 Calculator | ☐ 1 Storage Bin | ☐ 1 Liquid Storage | ☐ 1 Gas Storage |
| ☐ 1 Armored Storage | ☐ 1 Refrigerated/Heated | ☐ 1 Secure | ☐ 1 Fire Extinguisher | ☐ 1 Wet Bar |
| ☐ 1 Pill dispenser | ☐ 1 Cigarette Lighter | ☐ 1 Electric Outlet | ☐ 1 Adhesive Solvent | ☐ 2 Glue |
| ☐ 3 PermaBond | ☐ 1 Fireproof Storage | ☐ ? Etc. | | |

CIRCUITRY

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ 1 per Circuit (#) | ☐ 1 per Extra (#) |
| ☐ 1 per Circuit Breaker | ☐ 1 per Fuse |
| ☐ -1 Fragile | ☐ -1 No Surge Protector |
| ☐ -2 Faulty Wiring | ☐ -3 Remote Destruct |
| ☐ -3 Remote Override | ☐ -3 Poor Shielding |
| ☐ -4 Radio Override | |

Circuit Pattern

Number Rolled	Circuit Number	Peripheral(s)
1 -		
-		
-		
-		
-		
-		
-		
-		
-		
-		

RAM & ROM

- ☐ 1 per 2 points of RAM (#) ☐ 1 per 3 points of ROM (#)

DRIVE CAPABILITY

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| ☐ 0 Read-Only | ☐ 1 Write-Only | ☐ 1 Male Data Plug | ☐ 1 Cassette Tape | ☐ 1 Punch Cards |
| ☐ 1 Reel-to-Reel | ☐ 1 Vinyl Platter | ☐ 2 Read/Write | ☐ 3 Laser Disk | ☐ 3 Mem Cards |
| ☐ 3 Radio Receiver | ☐ 3 Radio Transmitter | | | |

SOFTWARE "SKILLS"

One Bot Point buys 4 Skill Points — for RAM or ROM (not both)

Level	Skill	Level	Skill	Level	Skill	Level	Skill

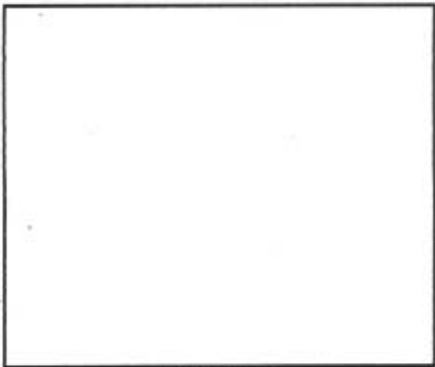
Software Packages

Each Package Costs 1 Point — ask gamemaster for details

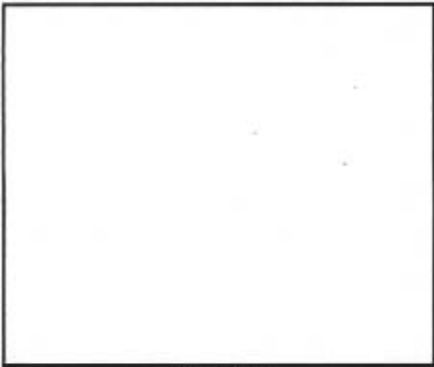
PARANOIA BOT CHARACTER SHEET

Name _____ Player _____ Alpha Base Alpha Complex Other (circle one)

Security Clearance (if applicable): (IR) R O Y G B I V (UV) Service Group _____



Bot Front



Bot Side



Bot Back

Components

Chassis Size _____ Bump/Macho _____
Base Armor _____ Stability _____
of Circuits _____ Max # _____

Hands Dex STR/CC Enhancements

Feets Move Agility Accessories

Power Macho Bonus Duration

Input Device Surveillance Notes

Output Device Skill Notes

Other Peripherals

Peripheral Notes

Weapon	Skill/ Software Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi- mental?	Accessory
--------	------------------------------	------	------------------	-------	--------------------	-----------

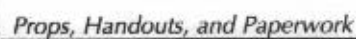
Total Armor Rating

IBF
AIC
PCAN
POC
TTL
EC
MBCI
GEM
ASDI
CAS
ACPSA

For Office Use Only



The Computer is your friend.



Name _____ Player _____ Secret Society _____ Degree _____

Circuit/Damage Configuration

Die Roll Components

[illegible]

Credits, IOUs, etc.

Personal Equipment; Secret Peripherals

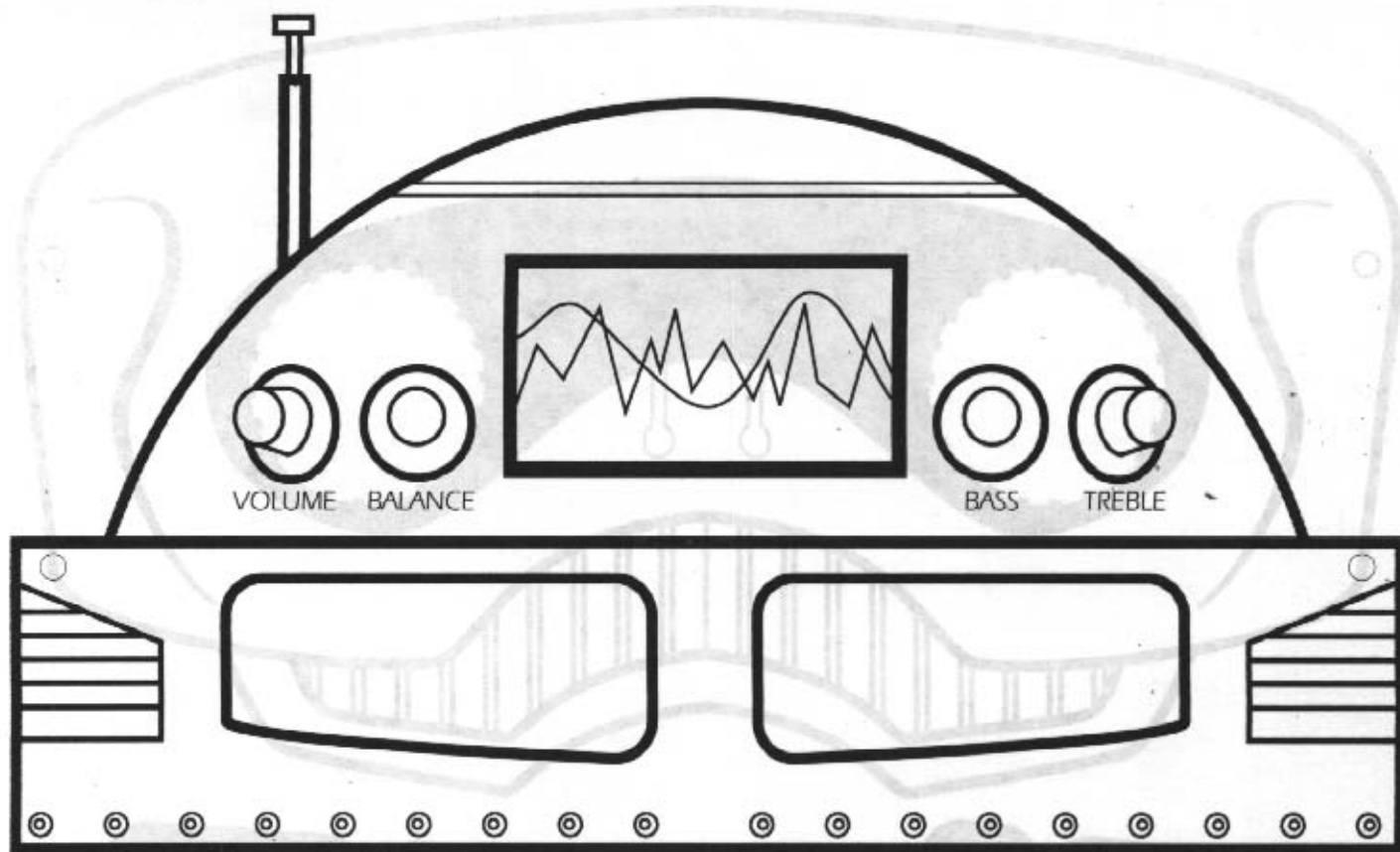
Chassis Size	Body/Model	Port/Port	Notes
Base Model	Stability		
# of Cables	Star 8		
Phone Line	STC/C	Information	

Software

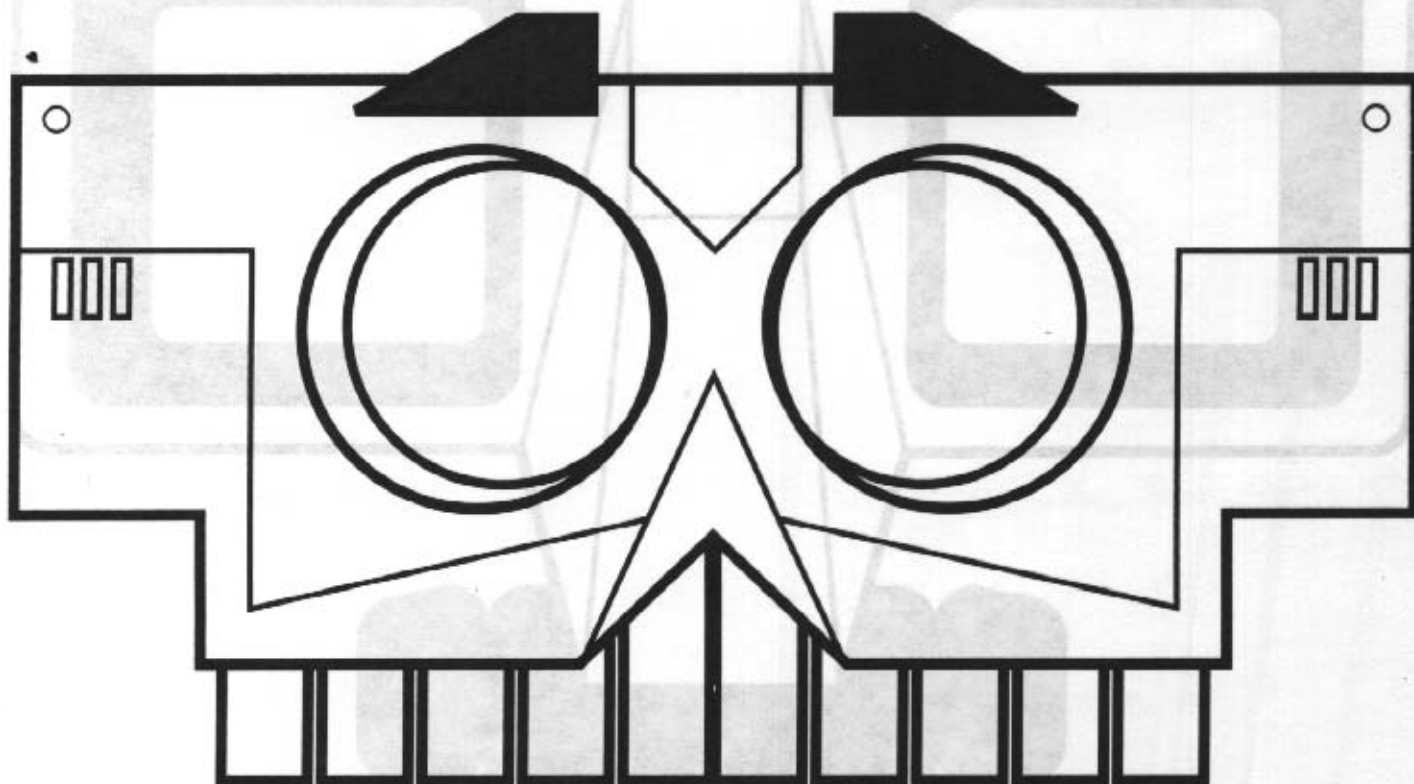
Name	Notes
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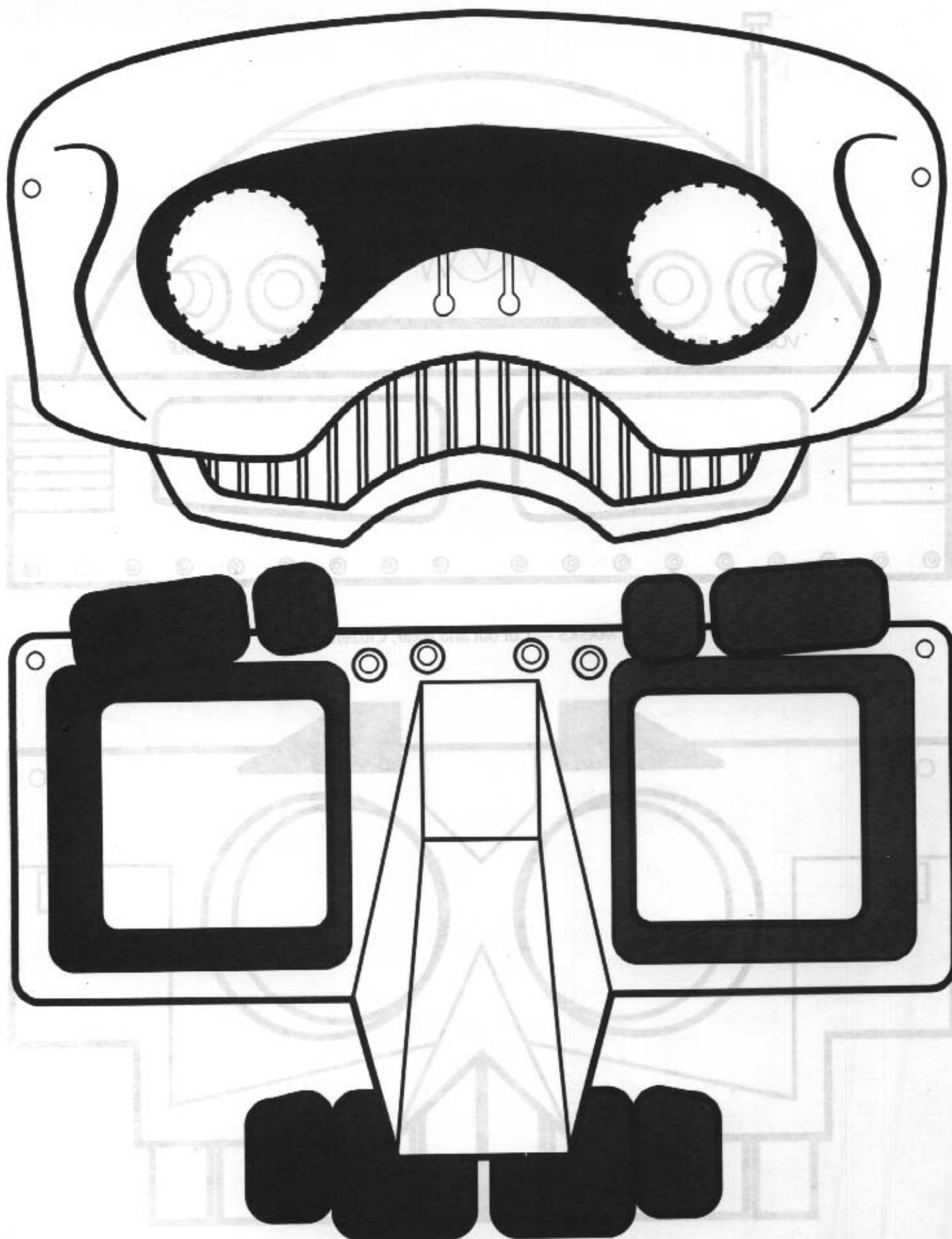
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Notes



BOT MASKS — Cut out and wear, Citizen.







Notes

Let us think otherwise, this is an honest attempt to provide you with the best possible assistance we can, so that you are better able to manage the complex, but ultimately exceedingly rewarding task of creating and running bot characters; not some sleazy ploy to kill space. Trust us.





Notes

Ditto.

Notes





I'M FEELING
MUCH BOTTER
NOW ...

THE BOT ABUSERS' MANUAL

by Ed Bolme

*New for ReBoot Alpha —
Mechanical Troubleshooters!*

The Bot Abusers' Manual is for use with *Paranoia*, Second Edition rules. If you don't have the *Paranoia* basic rulebook, put this book back on the shelf and go buy it. Then run back here and fight for your copy of *The Bot Abusers' Manual* — after all, you saw it first.

Yes, back before the Big Whoops, bots were created to serve and protect the loyal Citizens of Alpha Complex. Well, we know what happened *then* ... those annoying mechanical monstrosities have haunted the back terminals and corridors of Alpha Complex for so long, they've earned a place in Alpha Society.

So now, because of their persistent and diligent nagging ... er, "performance," bots have been included in the wonderful world of *Paranoia*. Aren't they just so *lucky*?

Besides, they have big guns *too*, you know.

***The Bot Abusers' Manual* Includes:**

- New and revised rules for creating bot player characters!
- Helpful gamemaster tips on how to run bots in either Alpha Complex or Alpha Base!
- A Ford Pinto station wagon ... *not*!
- Lots of terrible puns and bot jokes!
- More stuff that we just can't list on the back of this book!

ISBN 0142422214



For ages 12 and up.



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