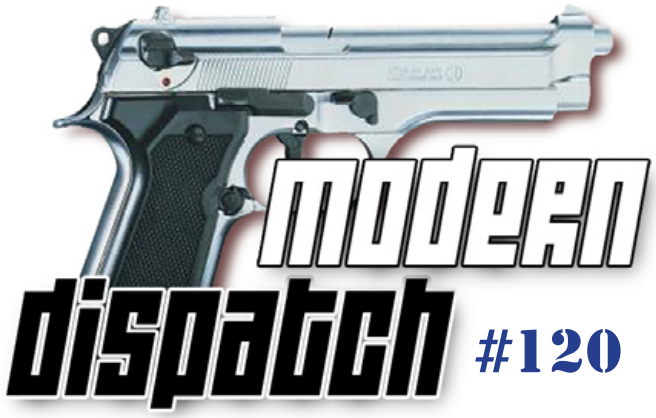
CYBER-STATE AVATAR TOOLKIT



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Though his face never betrayed it, Nex knew fear. Before him loomed something out of a nightmare--tentacles, teeth and claws, backed by a hatred as palpable as all three. Not a monster, but a man hid behind that image. Still, what an image. Nex's mouth had gone dry. Rationally, he knew he didn't face a monster, it was a facade and only that. Those animal instincts buried deep in his psyche didn't do rational. Scared or not, Nex had no choice but to bury this thing, and maybe its host.

"You best stand-down, Gash." Nex offered a smile for effect. Fashionable sunglasses hid his eyes. "That's pretty, but just like your skull, it's empty."

What is the Cyber-state?

It ain't nothing but a name. In most near-future, dystopian settings, the network we now know as the Internet or the World Wide Web has become an all-encompassing virtual reality leading into every computer and electronic device on the planet. Upon entering such a network, an individual can travel into all types of devices and attempt to take control of them. One might wish to steal information from a database or disable a security device. Such a network has many names and many more incarnations. Let's just call ours the cyber-state or the CS for ease of use.

What is an Avatar?

The Avatar is an individual's representation in the CS. While this may simply be a doppelganger of the actual individual, it may be something completely different. The Avatar may be better looking, may be fitter, and may have a better fashion sense. All of this is possible. In fact, the Avatar might not even be Human. Think of all the characters one might play or encounter in a video game and you have an idea regarding the variety of Avatar's available.

If one can imagine it and represent it, one can have it as one's Avatar.
But none of this has any mechanical game effect. No matter what the Avatar's appearance, the character's Charisma score does not increase, nor does the character gain bonuses to Intimidate. So really, the appearance of the Avatar is simply a matter of style.

Everyone in the CS is aware that Avatar's represent nothing, save perhaps creativity and artistic talent.

Why a Toolkit?

There are multiple styles and concepts provided here in regards to building the Avatar. We're calling this approach a toolkit because just like a toolkit, it provides you with a variety of tools (styles) that may serve different functions in different situations. We're not telling you how to create an Avatar, we are providing you with the tools you need to do that.

The Host

Other than a critically acclaimed Korean horror movie which the author has not yet seen, the Host refers to the individual controlling the Avatar. The Host is the character, while the Avatar is the character's character, if you follow that. The Host exists *outside* the CS while the Avatar exists *inside* the CS. Other than that, they are essentially the same individual.

Avatar Qualities

There are many ways to deal with the Avatar within game mechanics. We'll call these our styles, and they can be mixed, matched, ignored or modified as the GM sees fit. The basic premise is that the Avatar is not the Host. Due to the fact that the Avatar is a translation of the Host, and can be modified through technology or skill, the Avatar may be superior or inferior to the Host.

Avatar Qualities can be assigned at different times within the game, either before entering the CS or while immersed in it. However, some styles do not lend themselves for assignment while in the CS, and these will be noted in their individual entries. If a style indicates that the qualities must be assigned before entering the CS, it cannot be used once the Host has entered the CS and become the Avatar.

Abilities
The Avatar may be different from the Host on a basic level. Abilities refer to the general mechanical building blocks of Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. There are three general styles to deduce the abilities of an Avatar compared to the Host.

All **Abilities** must be assigned before entry into the CS. No style from the **Abilities** section can be applied while in the CS.

WSIWYG
What you see is what you get. The Avatar is no different than the host. The technology that connects the Host to the CS builds the Avatar based on the Host, including the Hosts physical abilities. In such a case, the character does not change when entering the CS, merely projects into it, maintaining the same abilities.

This is certainly the easiest way of dealing with the CS. It basically makes the CS the extension of the setting, in which no changes or required. However, the technology to draw accurate physical data in such a way may shatter the players' willing suspension of disbelief.

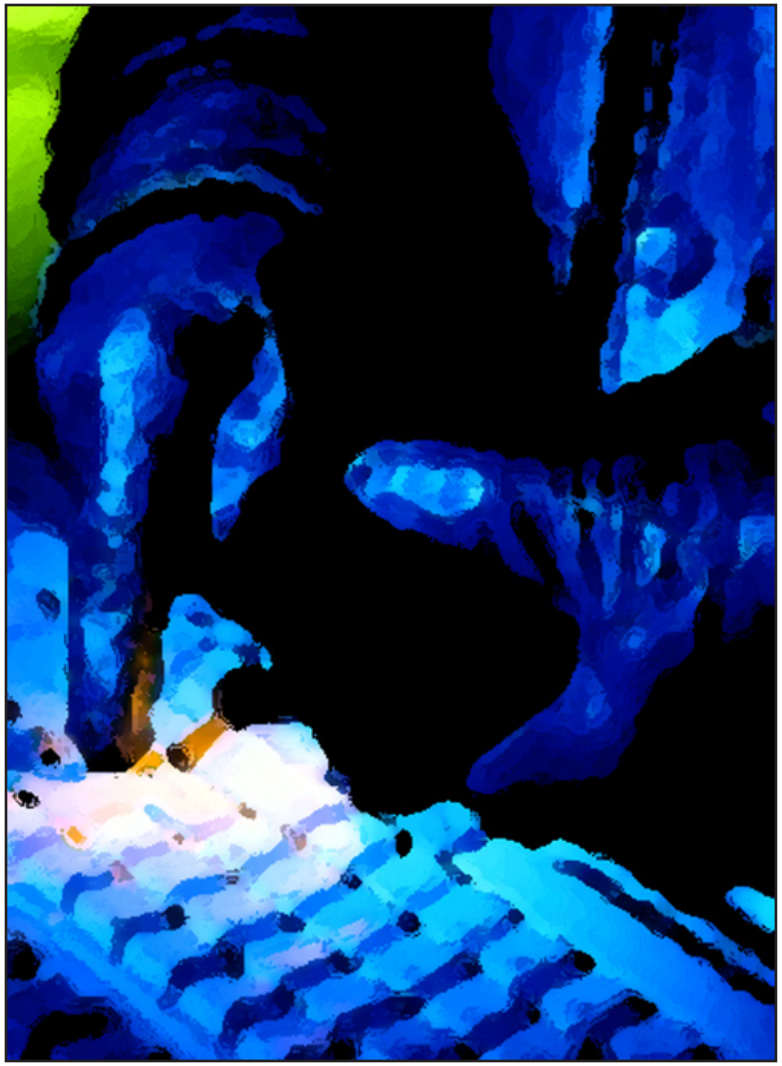
It's All In the Mind
The Host's non-physical abilities do double duty, and those who might have been school-yard wimps suddenly become the brawny barbarians of the CS. The Host's non-physical abilities are represented in the CS as the Avatar's physical abilities. Further, those non-physical abilities remain as the Avatar's non-physical abilities. There is no way for the technology to modify the Host's smarts or willpower, and we will assume that one's personality is the deciding factor for attraction or persuasion.

The drawback of *It's All In the Mind* is that it overpowers characters with high non-physical abilities and puts characters with poor non-physical abilities at a great disadvantage. This will lead to unbalanced play within the CS and may lead certain players to avoid operating in the CS altogether, as the environment provides them with no enjoyment.

If one is using this style, the Host's Intelligence is used for the Avatar's Dexterity and Intelligence scores; the Wisdom is used for the Strength and Wisdom scores; and the Charisma is used for the Constitution and Charisma score.

Sweet Rig
The Host's non-physical abilities become the Avatar's physical abilities while the Avatar's non-physical abilities are based on the technology used to enter the CS. In such a case, while the Avatar of an intelligent or charismatic Host might have physical power, the intelligence of the Avatar would be based on the Host's equipment.

With this style, the Host's Intelligence becomes the Avatar's Dexterity score, the Wisdom becomes the Strength, and the Charisma becomes the Constitution. The equipment, whatever its game designation (cyber-deck, implanted Net-chip, etc.) includes ratings for Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma of the Avatar. Those ratings can be static or variable, depending on the desires of the GM. The equipment's total points is equal to one half its purchase DC. Therefore, equipment with a purchase DC of 40 would provide 20 points with which to designate non-physical ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma).



All scores default to 8. Scores from 9 to 11 cost 1 point; 12 and 13 cost 2; 14 and 15 cost 3; 16 and 17 cost 4; and 18 costs 5 points. A cost is paid for each score increase, therefore to gain a score of 12, one must pay to increase from 8 to 9 (1 point), 9 to 10 (1 point), 10 to 11 (1 point), and 11 to 12 (2 points), for a total of 5 points.

The points from the equipments purchase DC that are used toward Abilities, may also be used for **Class and Level**, if *Sweet Rig* is used for **Class and Level**, but cannot be then used for **Skills and Feats**. This is further explained in the *Sweet Rig* paragraph under **Class and Levels**.

Skilled Abilities
As the Avatar's actions are based to a certain degree on the skill of the Host, those skills can also be used as the basis for the Avatar's abilities. After all, the Avatar is the embodiment of the commands the Host is inputting into a computer or similar electronic device. Using *Skilled Abilities*, the Host's ranks in a certain skill becomes the Avatar's ability. Thus, if a Host has 10 ranks in a particular skill, the Avatar has a 10 in the linked ability.

The greatest difficulty in using *Skilled Abilities* for an Avatar is deciding what skill decides which ability. Unless extra skills are added, only the mental abilities should be based on skills. With this method, *Skilled Abilities* adapts *Sweet Rig* to apply to the physical abilities. Therefore, as with *Sweet Rig*, the equipment would have ratings for Strength, Dexterity and Constitution. These ratings would be based on a form of point-buy, as discussed in *Sweet Rig* above.

Extra skills might be adopted in order to cover all the abilities, physical and non-physical, but this should only be done with great care. Extra skills may unbalance the game as it lessens the capability to reach a certain level of proficiency with skills at a given level due to a greater number of skills over which to spend skill points. This supplement does discuss one new skill, Cyber Savvy, but the addition of one new skill should not unbalance the game. The addition of four, however, likely would.

On the assumption that the GM adopts Cyber Savvy as a skill for the campaign, the skills linked to non-physical abilities would be as follows, ranks in Computer Use would be used for the Avatar's Intelligence score; ranks in Cyber Savvy would be used for the Wisdom score; and Knowledge (technology) would be used for the Charisma score.

Possible skills for use with physical skills without creating new technology skills could be Intimidate for Strength, Diplomacy for Dexterity, and Craft (electronics) for Constitution. The linkage between these skills and Avatar abilities within the CS are tenuous and there may be difficulties providing narrative explanations.

Class and Level
Depending on the flavor of the campaign, an Avatar may be a template of certain of the Host's features, such as those represented by class and level. Things such as hit points, base attack bonus, and savings throws of the Avatar, may vary from that of the Host or might match them completely.

WYSIWYG
What you see is what you get. In this style, the experiences that accumulate to provide for class advancement are as much mental as physical, and thus when the technology translates the Host to the Avatar, the Host's class and class features are provided for the Avatar. This means that the class, level, base attack bonus, etc. are the same between the Host and the Avatar.

The Avatar Qualities based on this style must be assigned before entry into the CS. This style cannot be applied while in the CS.

The Same, But Different
For this style, the Avatar advances in classes with the corresponding class features just as the Host does, except the Avatar's class and level is based on experience within the CS. In order to track this consistently, the Avatar would require a separate character sheet for use inside the CS. When in the real world, the Host would not have access to the class features of the Avatar's class, and inside the CS, the Avatar would not have access to the Host's class features.

Basically, while the Avatar is the representative of the Host, two characters would exist in the rules, one for use inside the CS and one for use outside the CS.

The Avatar Qualities based on this style must be assigned before entry into the CS. This style cannot be applied while in the CS.

Sweet Rig
The *Sweet Rig* referenced is the equipment used by the Host to enter the CS. Whatever that equipment might be, it includes modules or components that control the class and level of the Avatar. In such a case, should a Host require a stealthy Avatar, a specific component would be included in the Host's equipment to provide the Avatar with the specific classes and levels for use in the CS.

The number of class levels available to be provided by equipment is a function of the cost of the equipment. For each 10 Purchase DC, the equipment provides 1 level in 1 class. Therefore, if the equipment has a

purchase DC of 40, it provides 4 total levels, perhaps 2 in Fast Hero, 1 in Strong Hero and 1 in Tough Hero. The assignment of levels in a class automatically includes assignment of class skills, talents, class features, and/or bonus feats.

The points from the equipment's purchase DC that are used toward **Class and Level**, may also be used for **Abilities**, if *Sweet Rig* is used for **Abilities.** However, while class skills, talents and bonus feats are determined by class, skills and number of feats are assigned separately, as per *Sweet Rig* in **Skills and Feats**. The points used for **Class and Level** may not also be used for **Skills and Feats**. Therefore, if the equipment has a purchase DC of 40, that translates into 20 points of abilities (as per *Sweet Rig* in **Abilities**) and 4 class levels, the purchase DC would not translate into any skills or feats per the **Skills and Feats** section.

Should the Avatar not have points remaining with which to purchase skills, all skills are at 0 ranks, and the Avatar may only use those skills which may be used untrained.

Skills and Feats

In many representations of an Avatar in the CS, the skills possessed by the Avatar are greater or otherwise different than those of the Host. The Avatar may know kung-fu while the Host is merely a spindly programmer. The Avatar may be a smooth and smug player while the Host is shy and withdrawn. Then again, perhaps there is no discernable difference.

WYSIWYG

What you see is what you get. The skills and feats the Host character has available remain available to that Host's Avatar. This style assumes that skills and feats are as much mental as physical, that while the environment inside the CS may not be real, the Host's knowledge regarding how to bluff another or the Host's strong kung-fu translate directly.

The Avatar Qualities based on this style must be assigned before entry into the CS. This style cannot be applied while in the CS.

The Same, But Different

This follows the style of the same name regarding **Class and Level**. The skills and feats available to the Avatar are based on that Avatar's class and level. If using this style, the Avatar may have completely different skills and feats than the Host. These skills and feats would only be available to the Host when operating as the Avatar inside the CS. The Host could not use these skills or feats outside the CS.

In this method, the skills and feats are different than those possessed by the Host, but the choice of skills and feats are dependent on the class and level of the Avatar. It is important that the rules for skill and feat selection are maintained, including the different costs for class and cross-class skills, and are based on the class and level of the Avatar.

The Avatar Qualities based on this style must be assigned before entry into the CS. This style cannot be applied while in the CS.

Sweet Rig

The skills and feats available to the Avatar are based on the equipment used by the Host to enter the CS. The Host does not actually have the skill or feat provided, and could not perform as such outside of the CS, but the equipment allows him to mimic this skill or feat through the Avatar.

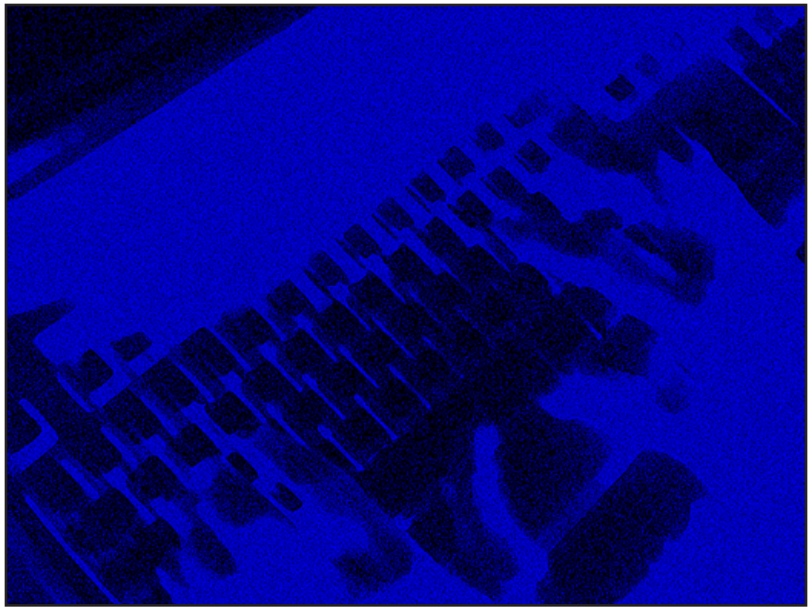
The number of skill points and the number of feats are based on the purchase DC of the equipment. The equipment provides a number of skill points equal to its purchase DC. To select a skill as a *class skill*--meaning that 1 skill point purchases 1 rank--costs 4 skill points. If a skill is not purchased as a class skill, it is considered a *cross-class skill* and it costs 2 skill points to purchase 1 rank in the skill. Feats can be taken on a ratio of 1 feat per 4 skill points.

Therefore, if the purchase DC of the equipment is 40, the Avatar may have 5 class skills and 2 feats, with 27 skill points remaining with which to purchase skills. If the Host spends those skill points on the 5 class skills, the Avatar would have a total of 27 ranks in those 5 skills.

Swap Out

In this case, the Avatar may know different skills and have different feats than the Host, but everything is based on what the Host possesses. By "swapping out," the Host purchases new skill ranks in different skills by removing existing skill ranks in existing skills. For example, if the Host had 5 ranks in Ride, the Host could swap those ranks out so that the Avatar could have 5 ranks in Tumble, or perhaps Bluff. The skill ranks and feats are swapped out at a rate of 1 to 1. The class skills and cross class skills do not change unless the Host's equipment allows the Host to do so.

As the above indicates, the swap is done through technology. The purchase DC of the equipment used to access the CS, whatever that equipment might be. The Host can swap out 1 skill rank per 1 purchase DC. The Host can only swap out as many skill ranks as he possesses, no matter what the purchase DC of the equipment might be. To change a cross class skill to a class skill costs 2 skill ranks. If the Host changes a cross class skill to a class skill, a class skill must then be changed to a cross class skill. The cost for doing both remains 2 skill ranks.



Feats can be swapped at 1 per 4 skill ranks. Like skill ranks, the Host cannot swap out more feats than he possesses.

Therefore, if the purchase DC of the equipment is 40, if the Host could swap 2 feats (as per 8 skill ranks), change Tumble to a class skill and Ride to a cross class skill (as per 2 skill ranks) and swap a total of 30 skill ranks. The points from the equipment's purchase DC that are used toward *Swap Out* may not be used for any other purpose. This includes **Abilities** and **Class and Level**, but also includes other styles, such as *Sweet Rig*, presented in **Skills and Feats**. It also includes skill and feat memory modules, as discussed below.

Assigning the Avatar Qualities

The assigning of the various Avatar qualities may occur at any time, except for **Abilities** which must be assigned before entering the CS. Some styles indicate that the Avatar Qualities based on it must be assigned before entry into the CS. Such styles also cannot be applied while in the CS.

Should the Avatar encounter a skill check, combat, or saving throw situation, certain aspects of the Avatar Qualities would require addressing. For example, if *Sweet Rig* is used for both **Class and Level** and **Skills and Feats**, then both would need to be addressed in any challenge or encounter that requires mechanics to decide. That would include any skill use, combat, feat use, or saves.

Not everything needs to be done at the same time. If the *Swap Out* style in **Skills and Feats** is used, a certain number of skills might be swapped out to meet a given situation, leaving a percentage of available skill or feat swaps available for later in the adventure. The equipment recycles after every exit from the CS, so during a single entry into the CS, the equipment's rating is used up to its maximum. If it can provide 20 skill points, those 20 can be used at different times and in different situation, but until the Host exits the CS, those 20 are all with which he has to work.

If the **Avatar Qualities** are decided before the dive into the CS, there is no real issue regarding time or storage of information. It is simply decided and done. If the **Avatar Qualities** are assigned during time in the CS, some restrictions must apply. Any assignment within the CS requires that either the equipment has memory modules dedicated to maintaining *Avatar Quality Data* (AQD), or that an outside Operator is involved who can call up and download the requested data.

Assignment By Equipment

If the assignment is being done based on the equipment's memory modules, those modules also need to be rated. The rating, as with most aspects so far covered, is based on the purchase DC. The costs are mostly outlined above in the various sections, however the difference is that when using the equipment to store AQD, the rating cannot be shared between tasks. The costs are as follows:

Quality	Purchase DC per 1
Class	6
Skill	4
Feat	4

Those qualities held as AQD in the equipment have no limits in ranks or levels. The AQD for a class includes all its levels, just as the AQD for a skill had no maximum rank attainable. The costs and factors provided in the various styles define the further usage. This cost is merely to have the AQD available in the equipment. Further, the purchase DC applied to maintain AQD cannot be used for any other purpose. Therefore, for equipment with a purchase DC of 40, if it maintained data on 4 skills and 1 feat, it would have 20 skill points remaining to use for assigning skills and feats.

The triggering of Avatar Quality assignment is a full round action. If the Avatar or Host is disturbed in any way during the assignment, the Avatar must make a Concentration skill check against a DC equal to 10 + the total number of points being used, based on Purchase DC cost. Therefore, if the Avatar was "swapping out" the Host's 5 ranks of Ride for 5 ranks of Tumble, replacing Ride with Tumble as a class skill, and swapping the Host's Cautious feat for the Brawl feat, the total number of points would be 11 (5 skill ranks swapped + 2 points for swapping a class

skill + 4 points for swapping a feat). If the Avatar or Host was then successfully attacked during the round the swap is taking place, the Avatar would need to make a Concentration skill check against DC 21 (10 + 11 points).

As a further example, let us say the Host is assigning the Avatar's class, levels, and skills. The Host is assigning 3 levels of Charismatic Hero, 4 ranks in Bluff, 4 ranks in Tumble (remember, Bluff is a class skill for Charismatic Hero but Tumble is not) and the feat Acrobatic. The total point cost for this would be 46--30 (3 levels in a class) + 4 (4 ranks in a class skill) + 8 (4 ranks in a cross-class skill) + 4 (1 feat). The Concentration skill check DC would be 56 (10+46 points).

Assignment by Operator

If an Operator is involved, the assignment itself is instantaneous, however, the operator is required to locate the required skill or feat and then download it to the Avatar. The Operator is required to make two skill checks in order to successfully download the swapped out skills.

First, the Operator must make a Computer Use check to locate the required information. The base DC for locating such information is 5. This assumes that the Operator's system has all the data on the required AQD. Such a search takes 1 round per point spent (calculated as per the Concentration skill check for disturbed assignment, as above in **Assignment by Equipment**). To complete the search in 1/2 of the time, rounded up, increases the DC to 10. To complete the search in 1/3 of the time, rounded up, is a DC15 check. To complete the search in 1/4 of the time, rounded up, is a DC 20 check. To complete the search in 1/10 of the time, rounded up, is a DC 25 check. And to complete the search in 1/20 of the time, rounded up, is a DC 30 check.

If the calculation indicates 1/2 of a round or less, the time required is an attack action. To complete the search as a free action, which indicates that the information is all but prepared for download and the Operator is lightning fast, the DC is 35.

The Operator is not required to determine what speed she is attempting, rather the result of the Computer Use skill check is compared to the various DCs to see how fast the search is completed.

As an example, if the Avatar requested to "swap out" the Host's 5 ranks of Ride for 5 ranks of Tumble, replace Ride with Tumble as a class skill, and swap the Host's Cautious feat for the Brawl feat, the total number of points would be 11 (as per example above). The time required for the search would be 11 rounds. If the Operator makes a Computer Use skill check at 21, she has completed the search in 1/4 the time required, or 3 rounds (2.75 rounded up), as she met that DC but did not meet the higher DC for 1/10 the time.

Secondly, the Operator must make a Cyber Savvy skill check to successfully download the information to the Avatar. The DC against which the check must be made is equal to the total number of points being swapped (calculated as per the Concentration skill check for disturbed assignment, as above in **Assignment by Equipment**).

For example, should the Host wish to assign 3 levels of Charismatic Hero, 4 ranks in Bluff, 4 ranks in Tumble (remember, Bluff is a class skill for Charismatic Hero but Tumble is not) and the feat Acrobatic, the total point cost for this would be 46 (as per example above). The DC for the Operator's Cyber Savvy skill check would be 46.

A failure on either of these skill checks means the swap was unsuccessful. An unsuccessful swap does not require any resources from the equipment, and therefore may be tried again immediately and for as many times as is necessary. The time component, though, may mean that the skills and/or feat are no longer required by the time the Operator gets it right. Each successive attempt, though, provides the Operator with a + 5 miscellaneous modifier to the initial Computer Use check, though not to the Cyber Savvy check.

New Skills and Feats

The new environment of the cyber-state brings with it new skills and feats. The following are useful only if playing in a setting that has some kind of immersive, virtual-reality network in the place of our modern Internet.

Cyber-savvy (Int)

Use this skill when operating within the cyber-state, find locations, or affect change in the nodes of the CS.

Check: Accessing the CS does not require a check. Cyber Savvy does replace the use of other skills within the cyber-state, and when attempting an action that would require a skill check with those skills, the character would make a Cyber Savvy check

The skills that Cyber Savvy replaces in the CS include: Computer Use, Navigate, and Survival.

Computer Use: In situations in which the character is attempting to Find File, Defeat Computer Security, or Computer Hacking from within the CS, Cyber Savvy would be used rather than Computer Use. Depending on the setting, these actions could likely also be attempted through non-CS immersive, regular computer means, which would thereby require the Computer Use skill.

Navigate: When attempting to find a specific area, node, IP, etc in the CS, a character would make a Cyber Savvy skill check rather than a Navigate check.

If the character has no knowledge of the target location and where it may be found in the CS, an initial Cyber Savvy skill check is required to find it. The DC to find such a location is based on the level of security applied in order to hide it.

Once a character has located the area, or if the character is aware of the location of the target, a skill check is required to acquire the destination. This is also based on the quality of the security applied to protect access to the location. If a character acquires a location, the character has arrived at the correct location, but may not necessarily have access to any system or device at that location.

The average home computer would have a DC of 5, as there is no attempt to hide its existence, and avenues would lead back to it from all the areas in the network to which it connects through regular use. A home user with a store-bought security suite might have a DC of 10. A business would likely have a DC of 15, as some attempt as been made to secure it, but likely not by an individual of measurable skill. A corporation would likely have a DC of 20, while a bank or other secure institution, like a commercial software security developer, would have a DC of 25. Military and intelligence organizations could require a DC of 30 or more.

Survival: While one does not hunt or forage in the cyber-state, there may be particular threats or conditions of which one should be cautious. In such a case, Cyber Savvy would be used rather than Survival.

Further, an attempt to track another through the CS, if a character has the Track feat, would be based on the Cyber Savvy skill, rather than Survival.

Quality of Security	DC to Find/Acquire
Poor	5
Mediocre	10
Adequate	15
Good	20
Exceptional	25
Extraordinary	30+

Special: A character can take 10 when using the Cyber Savvy skill, but not in those that involve a penalty for failure. (A character cannot take 10 to defeat computer security or defend security.) A character cannot take 20.

A character with the Cyber-naut feat gets a +2 bonus on all Computer Use checks.

Time: Cyber Savvy requires at least a full-round action. The GM may determine that some tasks require several rounds, a few minutes, or longer, while other actions may be free actions. This greatly depends on the concept of the CS in the setting.

Cyber-naut
You live the cyber-state like it's the real world. Some say you'd be happy to disappear into the CS and never exit. Whatever the case, you operate with extreme ease within the cyber-state environment.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Cyber Savvy checks and Craft (electronics), Knowledge (technology), and Repair checks when applied to the equipment used to enter the CS.

CS Equipment Example

Below is an example of the kind of equipment that can be used to enter the CS. In this example, the device is quite small yet relatively powerful. As a way to replicate the increased capacity of a more expensive device, the weight and size can be based on the Purchase DC, as the Purchase DC is used to rate the device's performance in the various styles presented above. As such, the device could weight 0.5 per 20 Purchase DC. Therefore, a device with a Purchase DC of 60 would weight 1.5. Any device weighing 2 - 3, would be Small. Under 2 would be Tiny, while over 2 would be Medium.

Further, for an extra 10 Purchase DC, the weight of the device could be lowered by 0.5. So using the Sweet Rig below as an example, at a Purchase DC of 50, the weight of the device could be reduced to 0.5.

Sweet Rig
Size: Tiny
Weight: 1
Purchase DC: 40
Restriction: --

Sweet Rig is the nickname given to the Mitsumono CSA1227 Cyber-State Interface and Actualizer. The Sweet Rig allows an individual to enter the cyber-state and interact with the icons and representations found in it. Standard on the CSA1227 is Mitsumono's patented bio-crystal memory cards which can allow the user to customize the Avatar projected into the CS.

Connection to the Sweet Rig requires the adherence of three bio-sensors, one on each temple and one at the base of the skull. When immersed in the CS, the individual's motor functions will be suppressed, so physical actions taken by the Avatar are not mimicked by the Host.

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