

they live in. ARE programs are continuously connected to the user's senses as well as the Matrix, allowing them to react to changes in milliseconds. The experience is only as good as the user's equipment, of course, so a sim module is mandatory for the more sophisticated programs. ARE users are noticeable from the odd (and sometimes dangerous) behavior patterns that come from living in a private world that only they can see, hear, etc. Like simsense, the danger exists that ARE users are in imminent danger of losing oneself to their fictional, illusionary dreamworld—many users in fact run their AREs 24-7, bringing “escapism” to a new level.

**Virtual Surround Music:** This software plays music in a way that mimics an outside source. When the user changes her position and facing, the way in which she perceives the music changes accordingly. Any style and arrangement is possible, from omnipresent background music to the throbbing bassline of surround-sound club-level subwoofers to the front-row of a stadium concert. If you're particularly inventive, you can try out what your favorite song sounds like when played at 10,000 decibels from 20 kilometers away.

**Wall Space:** Choose from a massive library of famous paintings to decorate your walls, so that you and your subscribed guests will have the pleasure of enjoying those classics as if they were really there. Photos, posters, video, and trideo can also be uploaded and projected in customizable sizes (including sounds, smells, and tactile perception like warmth and air movement). Size does not matter—you can plaster the walls of skyscrapers with the likeness of your favorite idoru with a snap of your fingers.

**Virtual Pet:** Simulate your favorite pet without having to feed or otherwise care for it (of course, if you enjoy the experience, you can enable a special option that lets the pet react to the amount of care you spend on it). Virtual pets include limited tactile experience (you can't grab it, but stroking is possible and you can feel its weight when carrying it on your shoulders), and you can have it with you at all times without worrying that it will run away or get run over by a car. All kinds of animals, critters, and fantastic creatures are possible in any sizes and numbers. You want a swarm of little pink flying elephants? No problem.

**Virtual Person:** Simulate your favorite person! Whether it's your ex-boyfriend or your favorite sim starlet, just access or upload their personal data, modify it as you see fit, and project the person into your life just like the real deal. This program only simulates one person at a time, and the realism in behavior depends on the amount of data given

as well as the processing power of your commlink—best results are achieved with a growing assortment of downloadable sim-persons (including sim stars like Tracy Monroe and Neko-Katz).

**Virtual Weather:** Don't like the weather? Change it! Move the clouds or make them disappear, block out the sun or put it exactly where you want it. Change temperature to suit your needs (at your own risk, as the actual temperature doesn't change, just your perception of it). Make the rain go away or have it pour down on your miserable self whenever you want it. The program even allows limited alterations of the ambient brightness—you can always turn day into night, but in order to turn night into day, special equipment like low-light vision is required.

**Miracle Shooter™:** This multiplayer online roleplaying game from Ares Games takes place in reality. When you log in, the features of your chosen character are overlaid on your personal appearance, visible to all the other characters in the game. Shoot monsters to gain experience points plus cash to buy new guns and upgrades, or become the member of a faction in order to challenge players of other factions to battles. This game has already led to a number of freak accidents (for example, one player jumped from a footbridge right in front of a moving train); meanwhile, other software companies are rolling out their competing releases.

## ID AND CREDSTICKS

ID and Credsticks are discussed in *Identification, Please*, p. 258.

**Certified Credstick:** The modern version of cash or bearer bonds, certified credsticks are not registered to any specific person—the electronic funds encoded on it belongs to whomever hold it. Certified cred requires no ID or authorization to transfer or use. These items are popular among those who prefer to leave no papertrail. The maximum amount of funds that can be carried on a credstick is determined by its type (see the Certified Credstick Table, p. 260).

**Credit Account:** A credit account is an online banking account that can be accessed at any time via your commlink. Transactions require verification such as a passcode, a correct originating access ID (see p. 216), and/or biometric authorization. All transactions are encrypted (Rating 6+). Each account must be registered to a particular SIN, unless the account is handled via an underworld banking service or anonymous “offshore” bank (each with their own risks), and has a monthly fee (included in a character's lifestyle costs).

ID/Credsticks	Availability	Cost
Certified Credstick	—	25¥
Fake License (Rating 1–6)	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 100¥
Fake SIN (Rating 1–6)	(Rating x 4)F	Rating x 1,000¥

  

Tools	Availability	Cost
Kit	—	500¥
Shop	8	5,000¥
Facility	12	100,000¥