Cold Sim

Cold sim is standard, legal VR. When you are fully immersed in virtual reality you operate at the speed of thought. You've cut yourself off from your flesh, making digital commands via direct neural input. Compared to physical meat speeds, you are lightning fast in the Matrix.

When operating with cold sim full-VR, you use your Matrix Initiative rather than your physical Initiative. Matrix Initiative equals your Response + Intuition, and you receive an extra Initiative Pass (for a total of two).

Hot Sim

A hot sim interface has been modified to bypass the simsense peak levels that protect your nervous system from damaging biofeedback. Whereas cold sim is analogous to a legal sim flick, the signal strength of a hot sim interface is on par with the brain-kicking current a wirehead gets from a BTL chip. The intensity of this input allows you to experience the Matrix in better-than-real conditions. It may seem like sheer madness to redline this way, as even random line noise could potentially be translated into lethal amounts of feedback, but many hackers rely on the boosted signal strength to provide them with the speed they need. Under hot sim, you become hyper-alert, as every sense and every neuron becomes sensitive to the translated machine code streaming through the Matrix. You can literally feel the code of a program running under your fingers, as your persona translates a wider degree of data that simply could not be perceived through the basic senses alone.

When operating with hot sim full-VR, use your Matrix Initiative rather than your physical Initiative. Hot sim Matrix Initiative equals your Response + Intuition + 1, and you receive two extra Initiative Passes (for a total of three). You also receive an exceptional +2 dice pool bonus to *all* Matrix tests while in hot sim mode, due to your hypersensitized state.

To modify a sim module so that it can be run in hot sim mode, you must make a Hardware + Logic (10, 1 hour) Extended Test. Modifying a sim module in this way is illegal in most jurisdictions (as it also allows use of BTLs, see p. 250). Hot sim also makes you vulnerable to the lethal aspects of Black IC (p. 232).

The drawback to hot sim is that it can be as addictive as BTL use (see *Substance Abuse,* p. 247). If the gamemaster feels a character is using hot sim to much, she can call for an Addiction Test.

Switching Modes

It takes a Free Action to switch from augmented reality (or offline mode) to virtual reality, and vice versa. You can also switch between cold and hot sim with a Free Action, if your commlink is properly modified.

Note that if you switch to virtual reality in mid-Combat Turn, you do not receive extra Initiative Passes for going virtual during that Combat Turn. Likewise, if you switch from VR to physical/augmented reality, you immediately lose any extra Initiative Passes from virtual reality that Combat Turn.

Jacking Out

Jacking out of a full VR session (with hot or cold sim) is a jolting experience. The rapid cutoff of the simsense signal can cause the hacker to experience mild disorientation called dump-shock—see *Dumpshock,* p. 231, for effects.

VR MATRIX PERCEPTION

In VR, you become your persona icon. Icons are flexible and easily changed on the fly, so you can essentially look like anything you want. Want to be a purple ogre with eight arms? No problem. How about a cybernetic aphid with jet thrusters? That was last week's top seller. Maybe you want to look and sound like novahot Goblin Rockstar Orxanne? Easy, but if you want her full vocal range and accompanying soundtrack you'll have to splurge for the extra features.

In VR, you "exist" wherever your persona is within the Matrix. You'll start off in the virtual representation of your own commlink/terminal and from there "move" to other nodes. Physical distance is meaningless within the Matrix—it's all a matter of commline connections, available memory, switching systems, and transmission rates, not actual meters and kilometers. Getting to a node on the other side of the world is an instantaneous affair.

The simsense signal from the sim module translates the complex code structures of the actual Matrix into graphical icons and other sensory data (including emotions). Every object you see in full VR is an icon. These icons represent programs, devices, systems, and other users. Everything experienced in full VR is a symbolic representation. Not all icons are what they appear to be—to tell what something really is, you need to analyze it with a Matrix Perception Test (see p. 217).

How "real" is full VR? Most of it looks computer-generated and –drawn. No matter how astounding—even photo-realistic—the level of detail, it is still obviously computer-created. There are some sections of the Matrix that are virtually indistinguishable from the real world—known as *ultraviolet* nodes—but those are rare and dangerous places.

The virtual landscape can be anything the programmer wants it to be. While certain systems usually have their iconography based on a specific metaphor (a medieval castle, for example, where background programs appear as serfs, IC appears as guardian knights, and the email server is represented by a falconer whose raptors send and receive messages), it is also possibly for the user to establish his own "reality filter" and to experience the data in whatever way he sees fit (see *Reality Filter,* p. 226).

Perceiving the VR Matrix in its full glory can be overwhelming to the senses at times. That's why you filter out the unnecessary background processes in a system, reducing the sensory clutter. Other icons may be hidden—they are "there," but you won't see them either because they are inactive or because your programs are not good enough to detect them. IC programs, for example, often hide or portray themselves as innocuous icons—until you trigger them. You can take advantage of this disguise game as well, using Stealth programs to make your persona invisible or disguise it as an authorized program or process.

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