

and everything along with it. Even the Shadow Matrix was not completely immune, though it was able to sever itself from the rest of the Matrix before too much damage had been done. But it was too late for the rest of us, especially in North America.

As you kids say today, it was completely glitched.

IT'S A WIRELESS WORLD

So, that brings us up to 2065 through present-day 2070. Most of you know what happened, having already lived it, but for completeness's sake, I'll lay it out for you so you've got the whole picture. You can't appreciate the puzzle's image until all the pieces are in place, after all.

NEONET AND THE WMI

The first priority was having a system in place to replace the old Matrix; we'd become so dependent on it to run everything that society, for a while, simply fell apart in some places. Here's where two companies, Transys Neuronet and Erika, come on the scene: they'd been developing wireless technology for the Wireless Matrix Initiative since 2058, and had been planning on getting it online in fall of 2064 anyway. With the second Matrix Crash happening in that same timeframe, it was a foregone conclusion to many that this was the answer to our prayers. After Transys Neuronet and Erika merged, Novatech immediately entered negotiations for a merger as well, wanting to take advantage of the additional influx of money it would bring and having the advantage of being a corporation used to dealing with Matrix-related technology. The only problem was that in the minds of many who were aware of what happened the day of the second Crash, Novatech's name was mud. The new combined corp christened itself NeoNET and proceeded to set up the Matrix in its virtual and augmented form as we know it today.

WINNERS AND LOSERS

The years following the Crash saw some significant changes on the Corporate Court landscape, as the megas jockeyed for position and took advantage of each other's weaknesses. The two biggest changes occurred as one mega lost its seat on the Court and another one rose to claim it.

Cross Applied Technologies' troubles began when its CEO, Lucien Cross, died in a plane crash on the day of Crash 2.0. Damien Knight of Ares had always had his eye on CATco, but Cross's death brought him out to declare open warfare, snapping up Cross assets left and right as Cross's son tried desperately to hold the corp together. This, coupled with various other financial difficulties and irregularities, placed CATco's Corporate Court seat in extreme jeopardy.

In the same period, another corporation was making its move, this time in the other direction. Horizon Group, a corp specializing in public relations, entertainment, and marketing, levied its close relationships with several key nations (including Tir Tairngire and Pueblo, among others) along with its exclusive contracts for rebuilding California, into a successful bid to claim CATco's vacated Corp Court seat. They're a new face on the AAA scene and we have yet to see what they'll do with their newfound power, but it should be interesting to say the least.

GENERAL COLLOTON FOR PRESIDENT

The second Matrix Crash also completely screwed up the November 2064 elections, as far as electronic or remote-voting was concerned. In addition, a group calling itself the New Revolution, with the aim of forcefully reuniting the old United States of America, had attempted to stage a coup and failed. Still, they'd succeeded in killing quite a few leaders (President Kyle Haeffner among them) before loyal UCAS troops were able to wrest control back. Under orders from the President pro tem, General Angela Colloton (famed for her work with the Renraku Arcology situation in 2059) declared martial law until the country was brought back under control.

When elections were held again, we had little choice but to elect a President who ended up being nothing but a tool of the corps during his entire term. We'd been through enough at this point that controversy wasn't at all welcome in a candidate. We learned from our mistakes, though, and in 2068 elected General Colloton as President.

NATION (RE)BUILDING

Everyone slowly began picking up the pieces of their lives as soon as they could after the second Crash. In Boston, for example, a memorial was erected to mourn the loss of so many lives, and the ECSE was moved back to New York. The latter city had long since rebuilt from its 2005 earthquake, and had previously hosted the Stock Exchange, so it only made sense.

Meanwhile, the Ute Nation in the NAN, having already been in a slow downward spiral since the early 60s, finally cracked in the aftermath of the Crash. More in need of resources than pride, they grudgingly but gratefully accepted assistance from the newly-wireless Pueblo Corporate Council and were absorbed in 2067. Their sector in Denver followed suit with Ghostwalker's erstwhile blessing. The withdrawal of the megacorporation Mitsuhamma Computer Technologies from Tsimshian territory after it was finished plundering left the territory rather empty; the Salish-Shidhe lost no time in effectively making it a Salish protectorate. This has started some interesting rumbling in the Sovereign Tribal Council, so I'd keep an ear out for more if I were you.

CalFree finally saw the last of Saito, but not the last of its woes. In early 2069, a pair of major earthquakes coming from the San Andreas Fault line and the San Pedro Shelf caused widespread flooding and destruction, killing tens of thousands. Much of Southern California and the Central Valley found themselves dropped below sea level and were inundated with tidal waves. While San Francisco and the Bay Area were mostly spared, waters have flooded most of the Central Valley and Los Angeles (which, if nothing else, had at least fortified their sea walls in the more affluent corporate areas decades ago). They say that the floodwaters may recede after a year or two, but we'll see. Meanwhile if you want to visit, you'll either have to fly or learn to swim.

So what now? Well, you've had your history lesson. Time to go out there and make your own.