

Pseudopets

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Gamer's Herald Vol 1/Num 1, June/July 1992

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Where would the world be without pets? This question may seem ludicrous, but when you really think about it, almost every great leader has had a pet of some kind. Now, we cannot overlook the importance of pets. They preserve Man's compassion and dedication to something other than himself. All of the world's great leaders who did not have pets were cruel and self-centered. This is not to say that a pet automatically makes you a nice person, but they do help a great deal.

Now enter the world of Cyberpunk, 2013, wherein "the last bird died in 2008" to quote the Cyberpunk Sourcebook. Now what keeps people in check? They've admitted that this was an exaggeration, but when you think about it, most of the world's animals have died out. So, what do the people of Cyberpunk do about pets? Make them.

The world of Cyberpunk is one in which almost everything can be synthesized, so why not animals? Now, we just have to put it into context, and there you have it, PseudoPets!

History

Way back in the 1980's, there were many labs trying to create working robots. They were having trouble getting all the information into a small body, so they had to have huge computers linked through cables to the robot. These were the first primitive robots, predecessors to the wonders of today.

Back in 1991, Stanford's research center developed artificial muscle fibers. This was the true beginning of PseudoPets. By 1998, there had been significant advances in chipware and huge amounts of information could be stored in small microchips,

therefore the robots could be independent of those cables. But in 1998, the drought and famines which gripped the world were killing off the animals of the world. The governments worldwide had to choose between feeding their people or the animals they kept under their protection, so the animals died off. In the year 2000, the wasting plague also hit the animals and that finished off additional scores of species. A few eccentrics paid millions for the surviving animals, kept them and cared for them. There are to sole survivors of several otherwise extinct species.

Around 2002, a robotics research company named PseudoWorks Inc. was established, funded by the Canadian government. While the world was going through hell, the labs of PseudoWorks Inc. were burning the midnight oil. By 2004, to comfort the starving world, K-9, a very crude robotic dog, was invented and then mass produced. It served as a distraction for a starving world who had lost their pets a few years back. The K-9 pets were shown to actually reduce the number of riots in areas where they were distributed. PseudoWorks was given world-wide praise to continue their work.

By 2007, refinements had been made and Pavlov's Pets were introduced. These were electronic pets covered with fake animal skins. They could perform simple commands and required frequent recharging. These were improved upon for the next seven years, and by the end of their development, they were quite efficient and could follow many commands, but they were still obviously mechanical.

In 2012, PseudoWorks took on a new branch, Bio-Research. This new branch investigated cloning. Cloning was nothing new. The first successful human clones had been created in 2006, so they had six years of research to draw upon. By 2014, PseudoWorks decided to drop the Pavlov Pets line in favor of bio-organic pets, PseudoPets. The first ones were very crude, a few thousand copies of one cat, or tens of thousands of copies of one dog. They were also brain-dead, so electronic brains had to be implanted.

In 2017, German labs created the first self-aware clones. This technology was soon copied by PseudoWorks (now and independent corp.), and

the were able to create intelligent PseudoPets. Work over the past three years has improved the PseudoPet's intelligence and other capabilities, but there is still work to be done. There are rumors that an Artificial Intelligence is planned to be put into the head of an animal, thus creating the first fully intelligent animal.

New Rules

PseudoPets are bio-engineered organisms designed to mimic living animals. They are first copied from the existing DNA of a specific animal type and then modified to suit the buyer. The color of the Pet, the size, the intelligence and the attributes of the Pet can be manipulated at this early stage. Then, once the desired pattern has been attained, the Pet's growth is accelerated to adult size and sold. At this time, cybernetics can be attached to the Pet and even the brain can be replaced by an electronic one. There are some standard PseudoPet versions at the end of these rules explaining the generation of a PseudoPet.

Pseudopet Generation

The following rules are for buying a unique Pet.

1) Determine which species you desire. The base cost is \$250 x BOD type. Minimum cost is \$250. There are several modifications to this:

Avian Species: +10% of cost

(any flying bird, not penguins)

Exotic Pet Type: +15% of cost

(Elephant, ostrich, penguin!)

Standard Pet Type: -10% of cost

(Cat, dog, bird, snake, etc...)

Street Copy: -25% of cost

(Cheap version, a few... discrepancies)

Water-breathing: +5% of cost

(fish & animals who breathe water)

2) Specify the alterations to be made while growing. Standard changes:

Extra limbs: \$500 per limb
Eye Color Change: \$25 per eye
Heightened INT: \$500 per +1*
Muscle Increase: \$500 per +1 BOD
(strength only)
Size Decrease: \$500 per -1 BOD
Size Increase: \$1000 per +1 BOD
Color Change: \$50

*note that at least 1 INT must be bought, up to a maximum of 3.

3) Now it is assumed the Pet has been grown to specifications and is at its full size. The animal will typically have a REF of 4-8 and an MA of 4-12. The GM will tell you what the REF and MA are, depending on the animal type. There are some examples at the end of the article. Now cybernetic modifications can be made. Note that a Pet has 0.5 spaces per 3 BOD. It costs \$500 per extra 0.5 space. Here are some standard modifications:

PseudoPet Cybernetics

Adrenal Booster: \$250 per +1
Built-in Pistol: \$500
Built-in SMG: \$1000
Chipware Processor: \$500
CyberSnake: \$1500
LCD Screen Readout: \$100
MonoClaws: \$200 per claw
MonoClaws w/ Poison: \$350 per claw
Strengthened Teeth: \$150
Subdermal Armor: \$100 per 1 SP
CyberBrain: \$2000+\$500 per 1 INT
CyberOptic: \$250 each
- Dartgun: \$150
- Image Enh.: \$200
- Infrared: \$100
- LowLite: \$100
- Teleoptics: \$100
- Ultraviolet: \$150
- Vid Camera: \$200
CyberAudio: \$250
- Amp. Hearing: \$100
- Homing Tracer: \$100
- Radio Link: \$50

Cybernetic Explanations

Adrenal Booster:

Takes 1 Space. Gives +1 REF for 1d6+2 turns, 3X per day. Requires command given by master or specific circumstances.

Built-in 9mm Pistol:

Takes 2 Spaces. 10 rnd 9mm pistol pops out of body. 2 shots per turn. Must have Pistol skill. Reloading is manual. 1 additional Space will allow for an extra 50 rnd clip.

Built-in SMG:

3 Spaces. 30 rnd 9mm submachinegun. ROF of 15. Must have SMG skill. Reloading is manual. 1 additional Space will allow for an extra 50 rnd clip.

Chipware Processor:

Takes 1 Space. Allows Bio PseudoPets to learn skill quickly. Can accept 2 chips per 1 INT.

CyberSnake:

Takes 1 Space. Internal weapon. Makes raking attacks. 1d6 damage.

LCD Screen Readout:

Takes 0.5 Spaces. Shows the Pet's status display. May also display words if Pet has INT over 3. Can be used to communicate.

MonoClaw:

Claws are made of a reinforced monofilament. Pet does double normal claw damage with MonoClaws. \$500 extra for retractable claws.

MonoClaw w/ Poison:

As per MonoClaws (above), but must be retractable. Claws are coated with poison. 10 doses stored, 1 coating lasts 5 turns.

Strengthened Teeth:

Jaw is also strengthened. Does double normal biting damage. Not poison option is available for \$250 extra.

Subdermal Armor:

As normal subdermal armor. After 10 SP, armor is noticeable.

CyberOptic:

Two options allowed per eye. Dartgun and Camera count as 2 options each. Negates any benefits of natural vision. Options are identical to original CP2020 rules.

CyberAudio:

Unlimited Options. Negates any benefits from natural hearing.

CyberBrain:

This involves removal of the organic brain and inserting an electronic brain. This brain has rudimentary programming, and will give the Pet standard behavior for its species. It has a minimum INT of 1 and a maximum INT of 4. See below for the effects of intelligence. Note that ECM shielding costs an extra \$250.

4) Skills are only possible if the Pet has a Chipware processor or if the Pet has an INT of 3 or 4. If it does have an INT of 3 or 4, then it can have 1.5 times that number of points worth of skills. This reflects the long time it takes in training, and not all skills can be learned by a PseudoPet.

5) The combat stats of the Pet must be determined. How many claws or talons does it have? How much damage to they do? Does the Pet have teeth which can do any damage at all? For small animals, typical claw damage is 1d6/3, or just 0-1. Bite damage is the same. Use BOD damage modifiers.

6) The fully outfitted Pet is ready for action. Now you must describe your PseudoPet. Here is the standard format for a PseudoPet description sheet:

Name :
Species :
Owner's Name :

INT : Skills :
REF : Cybernetics :

MA: Alterations:
BOD: Wgt:
Weapons:

Description:

Body Types and Sizes

Here are the various BOD types and the weight associated with it. These are just general guidelines, so feel free to alter the values as needed. You can also find the weights of animals in most encyclopedias and various zoology texts.

BOD 0:	0.1-20 Kg.
BOD 1:	21- 40 Kg.
BOD 2:	41- 60 Kg.
BOD 3:	61- 80 Kg.
BOD 4:	81- 100 Kg.
BOD 5:	101-120 Kg.
BOD 6:	121-140 Kg.
BOD 7:	141-160 Kg.
BOD 8:	161-180 Kg.
BOD 9-10:	181-200 Kg.
BOD 11:	201-225 Kg.
BOD 12:	226-250 Kg.
BOD 13:	251-300 Kg.
BOD 14:	301-400 Kg.
BOD 15:	401-500 Kg.

The Pseudopet

PseudoPets may be state of the art in 2020, but that doesn't mean that they are perfect. There are many subtle problems and limitations to PseudoPets. A PseudoPet cannot speak. It can on make sounds natural to its species. A PseudoPet will have the natural abilities of is species, including its senses. Thus, a PseudoCat will have natural low-light vision, a PseudoBird will have natural telescopic vision, and a PseudoSkunk will be able to excrete a very foul smell.

A PseudoPet will look just like a natural member of its species and act the same way. They are fed Bionutrients costing \$10 a week per 1 BOD. The Pet uses up all of this and does not have to excrete. A Pet will have standard survival instincts, but this

can be overridden on Pets with an INT of 2 or more and programmed for a certain goal. Depending on its intelligence, it will be able to follow certain levels of commands:

INT 1:

The animal will be able to follow one or two simple commands. They are basically the intellectual equivalent of a snake or fish.

INT 2:

This is more on the level of the intelligence of cats or dogs. The Pet can learn to follow eight or nine simple commands, or four or five complex commands. The Pet can also be taught five or six simple tasks. The Pet can make simple judgements based on its will to survive.

INT 3:

This is the ceiling of a BioPet's intelligence. The only natural equivalents would be dolphins and chimpanzees. The Pet can follow any number of simple commands, and over thirty complex commands. It can communicate with sign language or its equivalent and can come to conclusions based on available information. It can also perform complicated tasks.

INT 4:

This is the ceiling for an electronic-brain Pet's intelligence. There are no natural equivalents except perhaps retarded humans. The Pet can communicate using some form of language with a wide vocabulary. It can perform any number of commands, and can perform very complicated tasks. It can come to conclusions and make decisions at approximately the level of a human 8 year old.

Legal Nuances

With every great invention, laws are created to regulate the spread and use of that invention. PseudoPets are no exception. They are very important aspects of life in 2020, therefore many laws have been passed to control their existence. The following are laws which are fairly common worldwide, but may differ slightly from location to location.

1. PseudoPets cannot be armed further than their "natural" weapons. This means MonoClaws and built-in firearms are illegal.
2. All PseudoPets must be registered. If they are to leave the residence, they must have a \$25 license. Fines for failure to license can be as high as \$500.
3. The owner of a PseudoPet is responsible should the PseudoPet cause property damage or personal injury, unless the Pet has been declared "mad". Mad Pets must be immediately treated or destroyed.
4. No PseudoPet may be created in the likeness of any humanoid form under the Genesis Code of 2008. Breaking this law falls under Cloning.
5. A PseudoPet is a living being and is entitled to the rights allotted to a similar natural biological organism. This is amendment 56 of the Genesis Code.

Standard Pseudopets

Here are some of the standard PseudoPets currently mass produced. The only real variations available are skin/fur color.

PSEUDOCAT - \$475

Stats:INT 2, REF 10, MA 7, BOD 0

Combat: 4 x claws: 1d6/3 damage; Bite: 1d6/4 damage.

Notes: natural low-light vision, heightened balance.

PSEUDODOG - \$650

Stats:INT 1, REF 6, MA 7, BOD 1

Combat: 4 x claws; 1d6/3 damage, Bite: 1d6/2 damage.

Notes: +2 Awareness from heightened sense of smell.

PSEUDOFALCON - \$1100

Stats:INT 2, REF 10, MA 12, BOD 1

Combat: 2 x Talons: 1d6/2 damage, Beak: 1d6/4 damage.

Notes: Natural telescopic vision.

Conclusion

PseudoPets are a valuable addition to any Cyberpunk game, as they add the additional dimension of animals. After all, it does add something to the game to have a top Netrunner walk into a nightclub with a Pseudo- Tiger next to her. They can be used for protection and for offensive purposes. A Corporate assassination might take the form of a little tabby cat armed with poisoned MonoClaws, or a wolf with a submachinegun built into its side. The possibilities are endless and with a few simple conversions, you can even use them in another system.