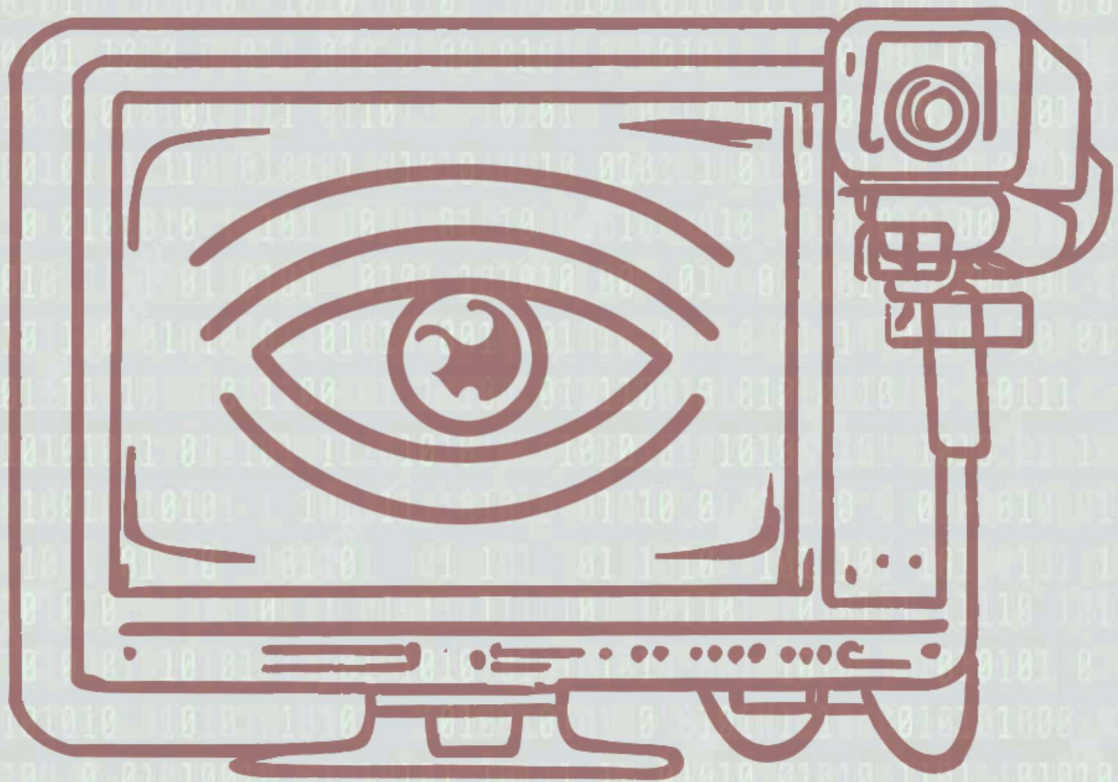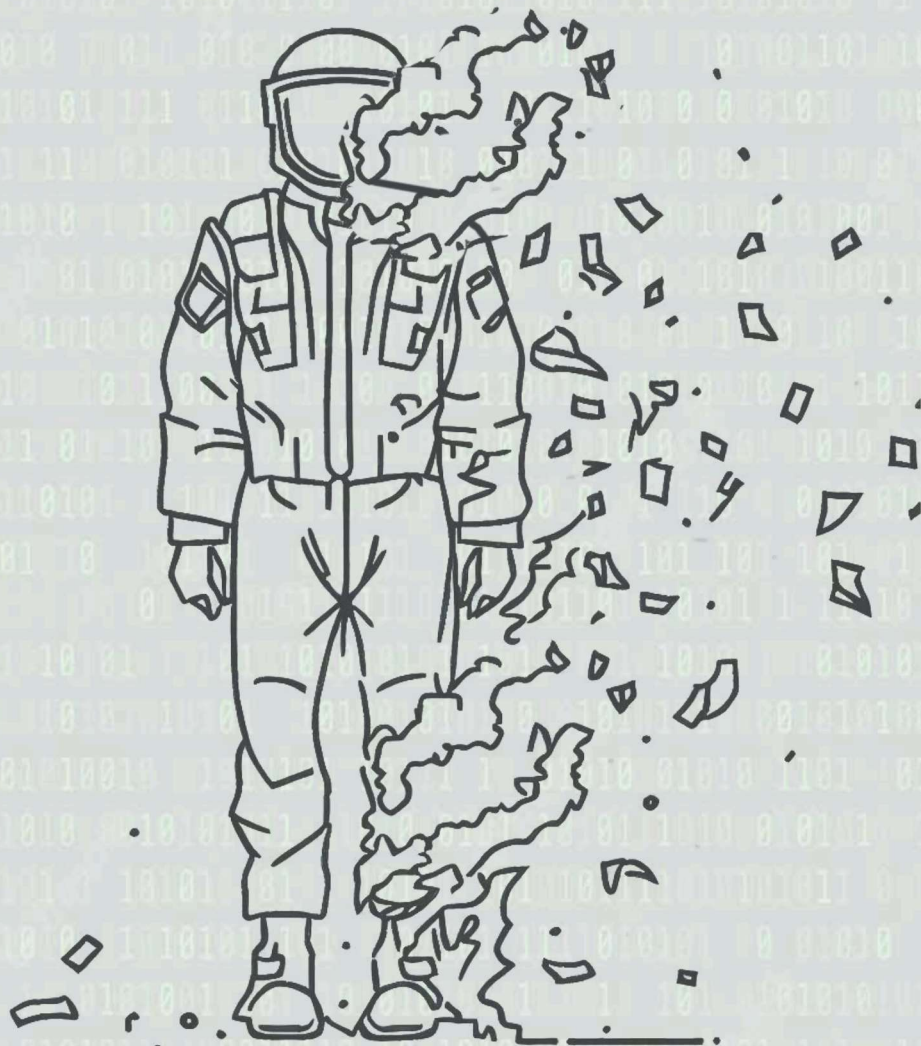# Delta Nexus

a Dystopian Love Story

Storyteller Guide

Enter the world of Delta Nexus, where surveillance and secrecy reign, efficiency is your goal, and guide your players through a thrilling journey of intrigue, danger and discovery.
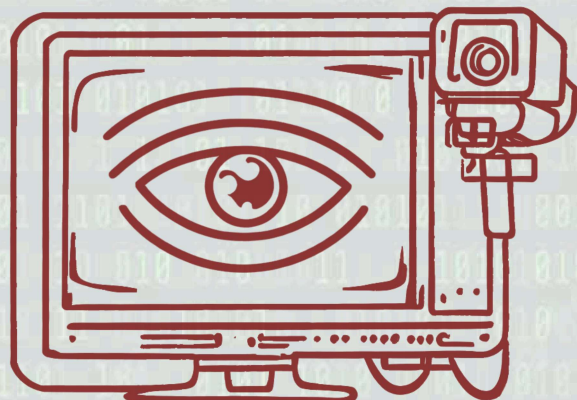
Delta Nexus

a dystopian story
setting for use with

RPG
ANYWHERE

**Nexus Core Thanks You
for Your Efficiency**

Credits and Acknowledgements

On the Cover

Be vigilant, Be Mindful, but for the good of the Nexus, Be Efficient

— Image built by A.I.

Special Thanks

To all the people I've played TTRPGs with over the years as we sat and learned almost every system we could in search of a new adventure.

To the random people in the bar who sat and listened to us play and laughed with us through our ever increasingly stupid adventures.

To my fellow DMs, GMs, players and family who playtested and walked through everything meticulously to ensure we got this right, without being heavy and complex.

To every RPG designer and publisher for every game I've ever played.

To my family for bearing with me for all the time I spent compiling, testing, reworking and building this system and settings.

Thank You,

Nicholas Q. Blackwood

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Welcome to Delta Nexus

Welcome to Delta Nexus, a dystopian world set in an alternate timeline of the year 2074. Following a devastating world war, the surviving population has been confined to vast Nexus centers for their own survival. In this bleak future, resources are scarce, and efficiency is paramount. Mating is strictly prohibited as it is deemed wasteful, and instead, the citizens are created through cloning—a more efficient means of reproduction.

As a storyteller, you have the unique opportunity to delve into the intricacies of this controlled society. Explore the intricately designed Nexus center areas, each housing a multitude of workers assigned to specific divisions. Witness the struggles and sacrifices made by the citizens as they navigate a world devoid of personal connections and plagued by constant surveillance.

Unveil the mysteries surrounding the Nexus centers and their true purpose. Uncover the secrets hidden beneath the façade of order and control. Will your vanguard, a group of ordinary citizens with extraordinary potential, rise up against the oppressive system? Or will they succumb to the weight of their predetermined fate?

Prepare to guide your players through a gripping narrative of survival, intrigue, and moral dilemmas. The fate of Delta Nexus lies in your hands as you paint a vivid picture of this alternate future and challenge your players to confront the darkness that lurks within. Are you ready to shape the destiny of the vanguard and expose the truth behind the Nexus?

As a Storyteller, you will be the master of ceremonies, orchestrating the adventures, challenges, and triumphs that await the intrepid Vanguard. Your guidance will shape the destiny of the vanguard, a group of ordinary citizens thrust into extraordinary circumstances, as they navigate the complex web of secrets, politics, and rivalries that define the Nexus.

In the hands of a skilled Storyteller, Delta Nexus becomes a canvas upon which the Vanguard are uneasy, uncomfortable and downright paranoid - all the time. Your words will be cryptic, filled with doublespeak, and when the Nexus Core system tries to reassure them everything is fine, they should really begin to worry.
So gather your creativity, sharpen your storytelling skills, and embark on a journey like no other. The Nexus awaits your narrative, ready to confuse and confound the Vanguard at any given time.

May your stories in Delta Nexus be rife with misdirection, conflicting agendas, and opportunities for dramatic backstabbing, weaving a tapestry of intrigue and suspense for your vanguard to navigate

And Remember . . . . . Efficiency is Your Friend

Life in the Nexus

As a storyteller in Delta Nexus, you have the power to shape and build the intricate world of the Nexus. From the sprawling sectors to the hidden secrets, you have the freedom to create a rich and immersive setting for your vanguard to explore. Whether it's crafting the complex web of alliances and rivalries, designing the technological marvels and wonders, or delving into the depths of conspiracies and mysteries, your creative vision brings the Nexus to life. Embrace the role of the architect and let your imagination soar as you craft a world that will captivate and challenge your players at every turn.

Commonalities within Every Nexus

Biosphere

The Nexus is a self-contained biosphere, a sprawling complex that houses the surviving population after the devastating world war. Enclosed within its walls, the citizens find shelter, sustenance, and protection from the harsh outside world. It is a carefully designed ecosystem that supports life and provides the necessary resources for survival.

For the Storyteller

While seemingly robust, the Biosphere is a closed, artificial system, inherently fragile. Malfunctions in air purifiers, food replicators, or waste recyclers can create immediate crises. Unauthorized attempts to cultivate "natural" food or tamper with environmental controls are severe treason, and can lead to bizarre ecological anomalies or desperate resource races. These internal vulnerabilities can be rich sources of missions, sabotage plots, or environmental hazards.

Surveillance Network

The Nexus is equipped with a comprehensive surveillance network, utilizing advanced technologies like CCTV cameras, sensors, and monitoring systems. This network provides constant oversight and control, ensuring the safety and security of the population. However, it also raises questions about privacy and individual freedom within the confines of the Nexus.

For the Storyteller

The Surveillance Network is omnipresent, but not infallible. GMs should use it to foster paranoia. Vanguards should constantly wonder if they're being watched. However, also include opportunities for clever Vanguards to exploit blind spots, hack low-level systems, or create distractions. The Network is often managed by bored or inefficient low-ranking citizens, or by AIs that can be confused, creating opportunities for humor and daring escapes. Remember, the Core is always watching, but often it's a very distracted watcher.

Cloning Facilities

In order to maximize efficiency and reduce strain on resources, reproduction is strictly regulated within the Nexus. Instead of traditional procreation, advanced cloning facilities are employed to create new citizens. This method ensures controlled population growth and genetic integrity, allowing for precise planning and allocation of resources.

For the Storyteller

This is your primary tool for managing Vanguard "death." When a Vanguard is incapacitated beyond recovery (killed, vaporized, driven insane), a new clone is immediately activated. This provides an almost infinite supply of Vanguards, reinforcing their expendability and the Core's view of them as replaceable assets. Players should be encouraged to embrace clone death as a minor inconvenience, albeit one that comes with a fresh set of (often inconvenient) secret society directives or mutant abilities. The cloning process itself can be a source of quirks, memory glitches, or even minor (or major) mutations upon "re-activation."

Resource Management

Within the Nexus, every resource is carefully allocated and managed. From food and water to energy and materials, efficient distribution is crucial to maintain the delicate balance of the system. The central authority oversees resource management, ensuring equitable distribution and minimizing waste to sustain the population.

For the Storyteller

Resource management creates constant pressure and temptation. Vanguards are always short on something, encouraging them to find "efficient" (i.e., treasonous) ways to acquire more. Rationing, black markets, requisition forms that never get approved, and severe penalties for hoarding or wastage are excellent plot devices. Missions can revolve around securing new resources, uncovering resource waste, or busting illegal trade operations (that the Vanguards might be tempted to join).

Rank System

The citizens of the Nexus are assigned ranks that determine their social standing and access to resources. Ranks range from 0 to 8, reflecting varying levels of authority, privilege, and responsibilities. Higher ranks enjoy more benefits and opportunities, but also carry greater expectations and scrutiny. The rank system creates a hierarchy within the Nexus, shaping social dynamics and power structures.

For the Storyteller

The Rank System is a vital source of conflict and paranoia. Vanguards of different ranks will have conflicting orders, different levels of access, and varying degrees of power over each other. Promotions are rare and sought after, while demotions are terrifying. Use rank to create dilemmas: a lower-ranked Vanguard may have critical information but no authority to act, while a higher-ranked one might have conflicting orders or a hidden agenda. The social pressure to conform to one's rank, or the temptation to exploit it, is ever-present.

Divisional Structure

The Nexus operates through various divisions, each with specific roles and responsibilities. Divisions such as Enforcement, Sentinels, Technology & Design, Core Services, and Echelon form the backbone of the Nexus's functioning. These divisions contribute to the overall management, security, and progress of the Nexus, each with their unique expertise and objectives.

For the Storyteller

The Divisional Structure is a goldmine for inter-party conflict and mission complications. Each division has its own goals, its own interpretation of Core directives, and its own intense rivalry with other divisions. Missions given by one division will inevitably conflict with the objectives (or even the existence) of another. Encourage Vanguards to leverage their division's specializations, but also to distrust and scheme against members of other divisions, leading to hilarious and dangerous betrayals. The Core's "efficiency" often means intentionally pitting divisions against each other to identify the "most efficient" outcome.

Secret Societies & The Communist

Secret Societies are the lifeblood of paranoia and intrigue in Delta Nexus. Every Vanguard, and potentially every citizen, is unknowingly (or knowingly) a member of a Secret Society, each with its own treasonous agenda. These societies provide your players with conflicting loyalties, illicit abilities, and endless opportunities for backstabbing and suspicion.

The Web of Secret Societies

Each Secret Society has an agenda that fundamentally clashes with the Core's benevolent rule, making their very existence the highest form of treason. For the Storyteller, these societies are powerful tools to:

- **Fuel Paranoia:** Players will constantly suspect each other, knowing that everyone harbors a hidden agenda. Encourage accusations and distrust, even among allies.

- **Provide Conflicting Directives:** Give players secret mission parameters that contradict their public objectives or those of other Vanguards. This forces impossible choices and often leads to hilarious failures or desperate compromises.

- **Grant Treasonous Abilities:** The abilities provided by Secret Societies allow Vanguards to break rules, bend reality, or gain illicit information. These should be presented as tempting but dangerous tools, whose use might expose the Vanguard.

- **Introduce Subplots and Dilemmas:** Secret Societies can be the source of personal quests, moral quandaries, or demands for specific actions that might betray the public mission or another Vanguard.

- **Explain Weirdness:** A sudden, inexplicable event can often be attributed to a Secret Society's machinations, whether it's a player's or an NPC's.

  Remember to communicate secret society objectives and any specific abilities privately to the relevant player. The fear of discovery should always be palpable; being caught acting on a secret society directive means immediate, likely messy, termination.

The Communist: The Ultimate Treason

The Core has designated "Communism" as the ultimate enemy, the prime example of inefficiency and ideological impurity. This makes The Communist not just another organization, but the primary boogeyman, a catch-all accusation, and the ultimate scapegoat for anything that goes wrong.

For the Storyteller, The Communist represent

- **The Go-To Accusation:** Any failure, any malfunction, any bizarre event can (and should) be blamed on "Communist infiltrators" or "Communist sabotage." Encourage Vanguards to shout "Communist!" at the slightest provocation, or even without one.

- **The Inevitable Scapegoat:** When things go horribly wrong, and the Vanguards need to pin blame, accusing someone (anyone!) of being a Communist is often the safest (for them) and most efficient (for the Core's propaganda) solution.

- **Ironic Power:** If a player *is* The Communist, their true loyalty is the most dangerous secret of all. Their actions, no matter how innocent, can be reinterpreted by an efficient Core (or a paranoid fellow Vanguard) as proof of their treason.

- **Bureaucratic Malice:** The Core actively promotes paranoia regarding Communism, even setting up fake "Communist" cells or missions to test loyalty, or to simply eliminate inconvenient Vanguards.

    Embrace the absurdity of the constant "Communist" threat. Use it as a source of humor, an excuse for extreme actions, and a driving force for Vanguards to eliminate each other in the name of efficiency and loyalty to the Core.

Your Average Cit-I-Zen

The life of an average citizen within the Nexus is defined by order, routine, and adherence to the established rules and regulations. Each day begins with the synchronized wake-up call, followed by a carefully planned schedule of activities and tasks. Citizens go about their assigned duties within their respective divisions, fulfilling their roles in the grand machinery of the Nexus.

From dawn till dusk, the citizens engage in their designated work, whether it be maintaining infrastructure, conducting surveillance, providing essential services, or pursuing scientific advancements. Every action is monitored and evaluated to ensure efficiency and productivity. The focus is on collective progress and the well-being of the Nexus as a whole.

Social interactions are regulated, and personal relationships are discouraged. The emphasis is on the collective rather than the individual, and any display of dissent or deviation from the norm is swiftly dealt with by the enforcement division. Citizens are encouraged to report any suspicious activities or behaviors, fostering a culture of constant vigilance and conformity.

This rigid routine is fertile ground for disruption. Missions should frequently force Vanguards to deviate from their schedules, risking penalties and drawing unwanted attention from vigilant monitoring systems or zealous low-level functionaries. The sheer monotony can also push citizens towards minor, treasonous acts of rebellion or seeking out "excitement" through forbidden channels.

This is where the core paranoia truly blossoms. Vanguards are discouraged from forming genuine bonds, yet their survival often depends on temporary, fragile alliances. Every "friendly" gesture from an NPC or fellow Vanguard should be viewed with suspicion. Secret Societies thrive on these hidden connections, offering a forbidden sense of belonging, but also a dangerous vector for betrayal. Encourage players to betray and denounce each other for minor infractions, as it's often the safest path to personal survival in a system that rewards constant vigilance.

During their limited leisure time, citizens have access to designated recreational areas where they can unwind and engage in approved recreational activities. These spaces are designed to provide a semblance of relaxation and entertainment, offering an escape from the rigors of daily life.

"Approved recreational activities" are often bland, overly sanitized, or filled with subtle propaganda. Think mandatory communal calisthenics, sanctioned data-streams of Core-approved entertainment, or competitive "efficiency" games. Any deviation, like attempting unauthorized games, finding private spaces, or seeking genuine artistic expression, is a source of immediate suspicion and potential treason. These small acts of rebellion can be excellent hooks for secret society missions.

The culinary experience for the average citizen is characterized by highly processed and artificially created sustenance. Instead of natural, recognizable food, meals are prepared from a variety of synthetic ingredients and delivered in a uniform, standardized manner. Here are some examples that citizens might find on their plates:

- Sparkle Pop Surprise
- Crunchy Munch Bites
- Electro-Fizz Fizzles
- Synthi-Sliders
- Byte Bars.

These peculiar food items, with their playful names and artificially enhanced qualities, are carefully formulated to meet the nutritional needs of the citizens while conforming to the strict resource management protocols of the Nexus. The intention is to ensure efficient distribution and consumption, rather than focusing on culinary enjoyment or individual tastes.

The blandness of the food is a constant, minor irritation that can serve as a subtle motivator. Introduce scenarios where Vanguards encounter "forbidden" or "luxury" food (e.g., actual fruit, a non-synthetic protein paste, a freshly synthesized protein nugget with actual flavor) as a temptation, a secret society objective (like a Connoisseur mission), or a rare reward that comes with dangerous strings attached. The pursuit of better food can be a surprisingly strong driver for treasonous actions.

Throughout their lives, citizens strive to advance in rank, aiming for higher positions within their divisions. Promotion is based on a combination of performance, adherence to rules, loyalty to the Nexus and who you know. Achieving a higher rank brings with it additional privileges and access to more resources, but also greater responsibilities, scrutiny and enemies.

Most Rank 0 citizens stay where they are to avoid making enemies.

The rank system is a constant source of friction and a powerful motivator for player actions. Higher ranks mean more power and resources, but also more dangerous missions and exponentially more scrutiny from the Core (and jealous rivals). The "who you know" aspect means Vanguards will constantly try to curry favor, sabotage competitors, and denounce anyone who stands in their way. Rank 0s might avoid making enemies, but their lack of privilege and their inherent expendability make them perfect cannon fodder for the most suicidal missions. Use rank disparities to create internal team conflicts, where lower-ranked Vanguards might be forced into suicidal tasks by their superiors, or higher-ranked Vanguards face a dilemma between their mission and their personal gain. Every promotion is a double-edged sword.
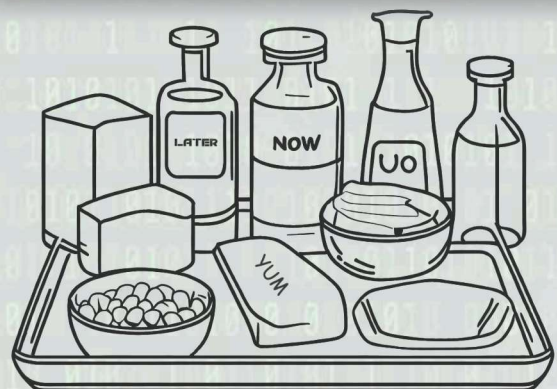
The Divisions

Here are the descriptions of each division within the Nexus, including their attitudes towards other divisions and their perceived allies. As the Storyteller, these dynamics are crucial for creating conflicting objectives, driving player paranoia, and ensuring that no mission is ever straightforward.

Enforcement

Enforcement is responsible for maintaining internal security within the Nexus. They ensure that citizens adhere to the established rules and regulations, acting as the primary law enforcement and investigative body. Enforcement has a strained relationship with Sentinels, often seeing their military-like approach as heavy-handed and unnecessarily destructive to internal order. They find common ground with Nexus Operations, recognizing the vital importance of maintaining daily stability and safety within the Nexus's civilian functions.

Note:

Enforcement is all about rules, arrests, and "proper" procedure – which often means *their* procedure, even if it's inefficient or contradictory. Use them to impose arbitrary regulations, create frustrating bureaucratic hurdles, or as a direct antagonist to Vanguards whose methods are too chaotic or "inefficient." They thrive on citizens reporting each other for minor infractions, making them excellent sources for denouncement missions. An Enforcement Vanguard might prioritize apprehending a "suspect" alive over completing the main mission objective, especially if Sentinels want to use lethal force.

Sentinels

The Sentinels are the armed forces of the Nexus, tasked with protecting its borders and defending against external threats. They are the frontline combatants, equipped for direct confrontation. They take a strong stance against Echelon, viewing their secretive nature and constant oversight as a threat to military autonomy, transparency, and the need for decisive action. Sentinels see Technology & Design as a necessary evil, valuing their expertise in maintaining and advancing the Nexus' defense capabilities, but often resent their perceived arrogance, impracticality, and tendency to create unstable prototypes.

Note:

Sentinels are the hammer of the Core, prone to solving problems with overwhelming force. Use them to introduce combat scenarios, significant collateral damage, and situations where Vanguards must navigate intense military operations. They prioritize direct threats and might see any nuanced approach as a weakness. A Sentinel player might find themselves ordered to use lethal force when another division (or player) might prefer a non-lethal solution, creating immediate team conflict. They prefer direct action over subtle investigation.

Technology & Design

Technology & Design encompasses the scientific and technological advancements of the Nexus. They are responsible for innovation, research, and maintaining the complex infrastructure that keeps the Nexus functioning. This division holds a degree of disdain towards Enforcement, finding their focus on security to be overly restrictive and hindering true scientific progress and experimentation. They consider Echelon as potential adversaries, wary of their oversight, auditing, and potential interference in their ambitious (and often unstable) projects.

Note:

T&D is your source for bizarre prototypes, experimental technologies, and grand (often flawed) inventions. Use them to provide Vanguards with powerful but unreliable gadgets, or to create situations where a technological malfunction escalates into a major incident. T&D Vanguards will often prioritize their gadgets and data above "less efficient" concerns like safety or common sense, potentially putting their teammates at risk. Their projects frequently cause "collateral damage" that other divisions then have to clean up, leading to numerous inter-divisional complaints.

Nexus Operations

Nexus Operations, also known as Ne-Op, covers the essential services required to sustain the daily operations of the Nexus. They manage areas such as food distribution, medical services, resource allocation, and general maintenance. Nexus Operations maintains a cooperative relationship with Enforcement, recognizing the interdependence of their functions to maintain civilian order. They view Sentinels as potential disruptors, as their often-brash military presence can sometimes complicate the smooth functioning of the Nexus's delicate internal systems.

Note:

Ne-Op is the backbone of civilian life, making them the most "visible" and relatable division, but also the most vulnerable to disruptions. Use them to provide missions centered on resource management, emergency response, or managing the flow of civilian traffic. A Ne-Op Vanguard might be more concerned with clean hallways or functional food dispensers than with grand conspiracies, leading to humorous priorities in missions. They are likely to complain bitterly about any damage to "their" systems or services, and might secretly divert resources for "emergency" purposes.

Echelon

Echelon serves as the secretive representatives of the highest level of the Nexus. They are entrusted with observing and reporting on inefficiencies, deviations, and potential treason within *all* other divisions, acting as the hidden eyes and ears of the Core. Echelon holds a critical view of Technology & Design, believing their often-untested innovative ideas to be disruptive, wasteful, and potentially dangerous to the Core's ultimate efficiency. They consider Nexus Operations as their closest allies, as both divisions prioritize strict efficiency, order, and the systematic functioning of the Nexus.

Note:

Echelon is your prime tool for invoking pervasive paranoia. They are the unseen arbiters, the quiet informants, and the masters of bureaucratic audit. Use them to give Vanguards contradictory orders disguised as "efficiency directives," or to have NPCs subtly observe and report on player actions. Echelon players will be driven to expose inefficiencies and denounce anyone who falls short of "perfect efficiency," making them highly dangerous to their teammates. Their missions often involve intelligence gathering, internal investigations, or the discreet removal of "problematic" elements for the greater good of "efficiency."

The objectives of each division may clash, even with their supposed allies. Each division has its own agenda, motivations, and priorities, which may not align with those of others. This creates a dynamic and complex web of conflicting interests, hidden agendas, and potential backstabbing within the Vanguard. As a storyteller, you have the opportunity to ensure that distrust comes forth, allowing for dramatic tension, unexpected alliances, and plot twists. It's a world where loyalties are tested, alliances are strained, and nothing is as it seems.

But there is one more Division that is talked about more but less is truly known

The Rival Nexus (RN)

Within the mysterious and enigmatic world of Delta Nexus, a shadowy entity known as the Rival Nexus lurks in the background, operating with its own hidden agenda. While the true nature and purpose of the Rival Nexus remains unknown to the Vanguard and the citizens of the Nexus, its presence is felt through subtle acts of sabotage, subversion, and manipulation. The Rival Nexus is a constant threat, always working in the shadows to undermine the efforts of the Vanguard and disrupt the fragile balance of the Nexus. - but everyone just calls them "Communists."

What Citizens Think

- Communists are a threat to their way of life and the benevolent Core.
- They have never actually met anyone that is a Communists, relying solely on Core propaganda and rumors.
- They trust Sentinels (mostly) to keep them safe but are still always worried they will confront or, more likely, be accused of being a traitor.

Note

Use this widespread, unconfirmed fear to your advantage. Introduce rumors, unexplained glitches, or minor acts of sabotage that citizens immediately attribute to the RN. This constant undercurrent of suspicion helps maintain the pervasive paranoia. Encourage Vanguards to be the first to accuse, even without proof.

What Divisions Believe

- Enforcement believes it's propaganda started by Sentinels to justify their excessive force and resource consumption. They prefer internal "traitors" they can arrest.

- Echelon isn't entirely sure if it's a real external threat, but they are not taking any chances. They focus on internal inefficiencies that *could* be exploited by *any* enemy, real or imagined.

- Ne-Ops and T&D don't have a strong opinion one way or another publicly, as it doesn't directly affect their daily operations or research, but individual members may hold private beliefs or secret society affiliations.

- Sentinels believe the enemy is everywhere, internal and external, and the Communists provides perfect justification for their constant vigilance and readiness for combat. They actively seek out "Communist incursions."

Note

These conflicting beliefs are a goldmine for inter-divisional conflict. A Sentinel-mandated mission to "eliminate Communist cells" might contradict an Enforcement order to "capture suspected traitors alive," or a T&D project might inadvertently create a vulnerability that Echelon then attributes to the Communists. Force Vanguards to navigate these contradictory directives.

What the Nexus Core Believes

- They are here to disrupt our way of life and introduce chaotic elements.
- They relentlessly make our efficient processes inefficient.
- Any citizen helping them is a traitor of the highest order.
- Traitors are terminated. Immediately. Efficiently.

Note

The Core's stance is absolute and unwavering. This belief system provides the ultimate justification for extreme measures, summary executions, and widespread surveillance. Use it to pressure Vanguards, to justify bizarre missions, and to ensure that any connection to the Communists (real or imagined) has dire consequences, even if the Vanguard is innocent.

The Truth

The "Rival Nexus" is indeed a real, existential threat, though perhaps not precisely as portrayed by the Core. The Vanguard may slowly uncover aspects of this truth:

- Goals: The Rival Nexus seeks to take resources back to their *own* Nexus, which is suffering from extreme scarcity. They also want to sow unrest and sabotage this Nexus to weaken it as a competitor.

- Travel: RN agents have developed (or re-discovered) methods to operate and travel *outside the biodome* to journey between Nexus sites. This is a highly guarded secret.

- Recruitment: They actively seek to recruit disaffected citizens, promising a "better way" or simply more resources/freedom.

- Vanguard RN Members: Delta Nexus recruited members have *not* seen the outside and are not sure how these new members (the RN agents) got here, fostering paranoia even within the Communist's own ranks. \column

Rival Nexus Within the Vanguard

The ultimate twist for a Storyteller is when a player's Vanguard is secretly an agent of the Rival Nexus. If a player rolls a 12 on 2d6 during character creation (or as a clone replacement), they have been recruited by a Rival Nexus. They should:

1. Assign Skill: Subtlety. and Expertise: Infiltration This is a fundamental skill for operating secretly and accounts for 2 of the 6 points assigned by player.

2. Roll again on the table to pick a Division to be "embedded in". This determines their ostensible role within the Core's system, providing a cover identity.

3. Take Division Equipment. Standard equipment for their cover division.

In addition to the above, the player will immediately receive:

- Rival Nexus Propaganda Material to Distribute: A physical (or digital) token representing their first secret objective.

- Initial RN Objective: A short, clear, and treasonous goal from their RN handler. This should directly conflict with a Core objective or another Vanguard's secret society objective.

- Anything else you think they might need: This could be a specialized RN gadget, a coded message, or a contact name.

For the Storyteller Running an Rival Nexus Player

Separate Communication

All RN objectives, messages, and special instructions should be communicated privately (whispered, passed notes, or separate chat messages) to the RN player. :

Embrace the Conflict

The RN player's goals should frequently clash with the Core's mission and other players' secret society objectives. This is the ultimate source of *Paranoia*. :

Recruitment is Subtlety

RN players should be encouraged to subtly "recruit" NPCs or manipulate other Vanguards into unknowingly aiding the RN. Direct, overt recruitment of other player characters should be extremely difficult and highly risky. :

The Ultimate Betrayal

The revelation of an RN agent is a huge moment. This can happen through player investigation, Core intervention, or the RN agent's own strategic reveal. The consequences should be swift and brutal (but remember: clones: you can kill them more than once!).

Skills and Expertise

For the players, the skills and expertise adefine their characters and how they interact with the world. Skills and the associated Expertise provide an Investigator with an increased chance of success. The more chances you have, the better you are and the higher the chance of success. Within Delt nexus, there are 6 skills and 18 Expertise (3 per skill). Starting Vanguard members begin with six (6) points to distribute as they see fit.

Might

Athletics: lifting, climbing, jumping, exceptional stamina and endurance.

Fortitude: resistance to physical damage, shrug off fatigue, and possess willpower

Weaponry: combat maneuvers, attacks with increased precision, unique weapon techniques

Agility

Acrobatics: squeeze through tight spaces, leap gaps with ease, reduce fall damage

Marksmanship: strike targets with pinpoint from afar, ignore wind and cover modifiers, master specialized techniques

Evasion: dodge incoming attacks, anticipate enemy movements

Knowledge

Lore: gain insights into specific cultures or historical events, solve puzzles, and uncover hidden secrets.

Medicine: treat injuries, identify diseases, and possibly even concoct potent potions or antidotes.

Scholar: gain access to specialized libraries, decipher complex texts, or craft powerful artifacts

Awareness

Investigation: finding hidden objects, following faint trails, expose hidden truths

Perception: spot hidden creatures or traps, perceive changes in your surroundings, gain a premonition of imminent danger.

Insight: see through deception, gauge emotional states, predict a person's next move

Performance

Diplomacy: build trust and rapport, forge alliances, and potentially even sway opinions through persuasive arguments.

Distraction: well-placed words to distract others, create opportunities, and sow confusion

Deception: craft convincing lies, concoct elaborate stories, manipulate people.

Subtlety

Infiltration: move silently through shadows, exploit weaknesses in security systems

Tinkering: build ingenious tools and devices, bypass complex locks with ease, rewire existing machinery.

Pickpocket: lift valuables from targets, navigate tight spaces unseen, and potentially even bypass rudimentary security measures.

Vanguard Equipment in Delta Nexus

Currency

The currency of Nexus is a "Credit." There is no such thing as cash or physical currency; all transactions are digital and centrally managed by the Core. Credits are the lifeblood of civilian interaction, dictating access to resources, services, and even personal freedoms. Credits are primarily used for deductions (for equipment damage/loss, inefficiency penalties, or minor infractions) and sometimes for small, approved requisitions. They are rarely "earned" in large sums by low-ranked Vanguards through their regular duties. The scarcity of credits, and the existential dread of a negative balance (leading to "efficiency re-education," forced labor, or even "recycling"), should be a constant underlying pressure. Consider opportunities for Vanguards to illicitly gain credits on the black market (which is, of course, highly treasonous) or through denouncing others.

Assigned Equipment

In the tightly regulated world of Delta Nexus, every member of the Vanguard is assigned identical basic equipment. Each piece is carefully crafted and tailored to meet the specific needs of the Vanguard's role in maintaining order and stability within the Nexus. From their sleek and efficient personal communication devices (Comm-Units) to their state-of-the-art utility tools (Multi-tools), the equipment of the Vanguard represents the pinnacle of technological advancement in the Nexus.

However, with great privilege comes great responsibility, and the Vanguard members are expected to take meticulous care of their assigned equipment. Any damage or loss incurred to the equipment will result in the immediate and often significant deduction of credits from the member's account, serving as a reminder of the importance of safeguarding the valuable resources of the Nexus. Failure to pay these deductions, or repeated equipment losses, will swiftly lead to Efficiency Re-education or even Termination.

As a storyteller, you have the power to incorporate the significance of equipment into your narratives, creating moments of tension and consequence as the Vanguard must navigate their missions while protecting their assigned gear. Make them weigh mission success vs. equipment integrity; sometimes the "efficient" choice is to sacrifice the mission to save the gear.

Remember, the Core is always monitoring efficiency – and equipment status is a prime metric for individual performance.

Technology & Design to the Rescue

Digging through the old sections of Delta Nexus, Technology & Design often "finds" (or more likely, cobbles together from discarded prototypes) experimental equipment they can provide to the Vanguard to use on missions. It is always designated as "test equipment," implying low accountability for its inevitable failure or unforeseen consequences.

It is delivered in a "Large Box with the words 'Fragile', 'Critical', and often 'DO NOT OPEN WITHOUT LEVEL 5 CLEARANCE' (even when delivering to Rank 1 Vanguards)."

Most things from T&D do not come with instructions because they do not know what they do either, or the instructions are lost, corrupted, or in a forbidden language. Maybe the T&D member of the party can help (That poor soul, burdened with "understanding" incomprehensible tech, often by risking their own life). Encourage trial and error, which almost inevitably leads to explosions, malfunctions, or unintended side effects.

T&D equipment is your chaotic wildcard. It should be powerful but incredibly unpredictable. Use it to solve problems in unexpected (and often hilarious) ways, or to create new, worse problems. This is where you can introduce truly bizarre effects, like a "sonic disruptor" that only makes people dance, or a "personal force field" that only deflects small, red objects. Always have a random malfunction table ready to make T&D equipment a constant source of tension and humor.

Remember this is in a dystopian setting. They are clones. They will not know most of these items by name. For example:

- A sousaphone is 'a large silver metal thing with tubes and buttons. It has 3 buttons along its center and a barrel pointing away from its base.'

- Yo-yos: strange circular discs of different colors with a fuse around the center that unwinds.

- A Door: "An actuated privacy barrier."

- A Chair: "A personal low-altitude relaxation platform."

- A Pen: "A portable liquid-ink inscription device."

Consistently use these descriptive, utilitarian terms in your narration. If a player uses the "forbidden" common name for an object (e.g., "I open the *door*"), have a nearby bot or NPC instantly correct them ("Citizen, that is an 'actuated privacy barrier.' Proper terminology enhances efficiency.") or even mark them for minor inefficiency. This reinforces the Core's pervasive control over language and thought, and provides quick, humorous reminders of their dystopian reality.

The list at the end of this guide is a random list of items they might be given. Feel free to add new items or replace items.

Challenges: Shaping the Narrative

As the Storyteller, you have the crucial role of crafting engaging challenges for your players to overcome. Challenges serve as pivotal moments in the narrative, testing the skills, wit, and resourcefulness of the Vanguard. Of course, this is Delta Nexus, the missions and challenges can be absurd.

A challenge can come in various forms, ranging from physical encounters and puzzles to social dilemmas and intricate mysteries. The outcome of a challenge is determined by the players' choices and their ability to succeed in skill checks or opposed rolls. It is through these challenges that the story unfolds, character development takes place, and the Nexus comes alive.

When a Vanguard wants to use a particular skill, such as persuading an NPC, or deciphering computer codes, a challenge is created. The player rolls a specific number of dice (d6), determined by the Vanguard's skills, expertise and equipment. The result of the dice determines if the challenge is a success, or failure.

To Determine a success, the player selects the appropriate number of D6s and rolls the dice. A success is rolling a value of 5 or 6 on a six-sided die. A roll of a 6 "explodes" allowing a player to count that success and roll that die again. This makes it theoretically possible to have more than 1 success with a single die.

> The percentage rate of rolling 3 successes on a single die is 11.11%
> It's not easy, but its the same as rolling a 19 or 20 on a D20.
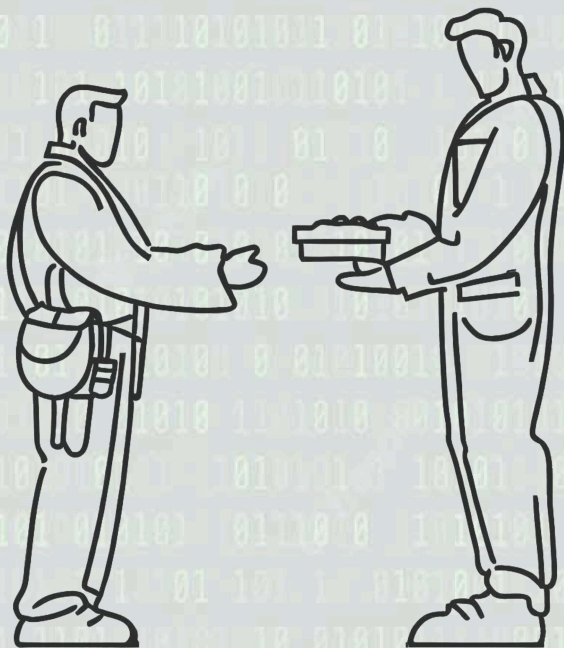
Counting the Dice

The minimum number of die that any player will have for any challenge is one (1). The following items (if relevant) will each add an additional die to the roll:

- Skill
- Expertise
- Equipment
- Abilities
- Assistance by another Vanguard

Example

Jim-Y-7ZAAC, is trying to convince the NPC to give up his food rations:
- Default 1d6
- +1d6 for Skill: Performance
- +1d6 for Expertise: Diplomacy

Remember you have the authority to moderate challenges, make necessary adjustments, and ensure the game's flow. Maintain a balance between challenging your players and providing an enjoyable experience, fostering a collaborative and engaging environment for everyone involved.

Sometimes the Vanguard just gets lucky.. That's OK. it makes them cocky

Combat (optional)

Combat, by default is not an active part of Delta Nexus. It isn't designed on the need to be turn based. It is more of action and response.

- The Renegade Robot turns the corner
- The Vanguard team member(s) try disable the robot failing in the process
- The Robot responds by spraying them with Fizzy-Fun-Soda-Spray.

Taking Action

On the Vanguard's turn, they can generally take one action plus a move:

Possible Actions

Damage System
Handling Damage in Delta Nexus is easy

One shot, one kill

In the 1S-1K method, a laser blast at their Rank or higher is fatal. The players dies, and their clone is revived and dispatched to take over. Any other damage is a nuisance and the Vangaurd pushes on, perhaps with the penalties. This allow players to play forward without worrying about hit points etc.

Each Clone indicator circle on the character sheet represents a new clone. (so the player has 5 clone lives in addition to their starting life)

Want something more complex?

You can institute other methods of damage tracking (like Aetheria or Occultis Mechanica but Delta nexus is about hillarious situations and results. So it is not designed in game by default.

Creating Encounters

As the storyteller, you have the power to bring forth a multitude of extraordinary scenarios and strange encounters that will challenge and captivate your players. The Nexus is teeming with citizens, inventions and systems that invariably aren't proficient, providing endless opportunities for absurd and dangerous situations.

When crafting encounters, feel free to unleash your creativity and make them truly distinctive. Tailor their abilities, skills, and appearances to suit your vision and the story you want to tell. Remember, not every encounter needs to be a combat scenario; the most dangerous threats in Delta Nexus often involve bureaucracy, misinformation, or internal betrayal.

Since Nexus is not turn based, the situation can change plans based on what the players do, emphasizing quick thinking and adaptability. For the Vanguard, the goal isn't necessarily combat, but whatever their Division wants them to do. Division? Oh. I mean. The Core.
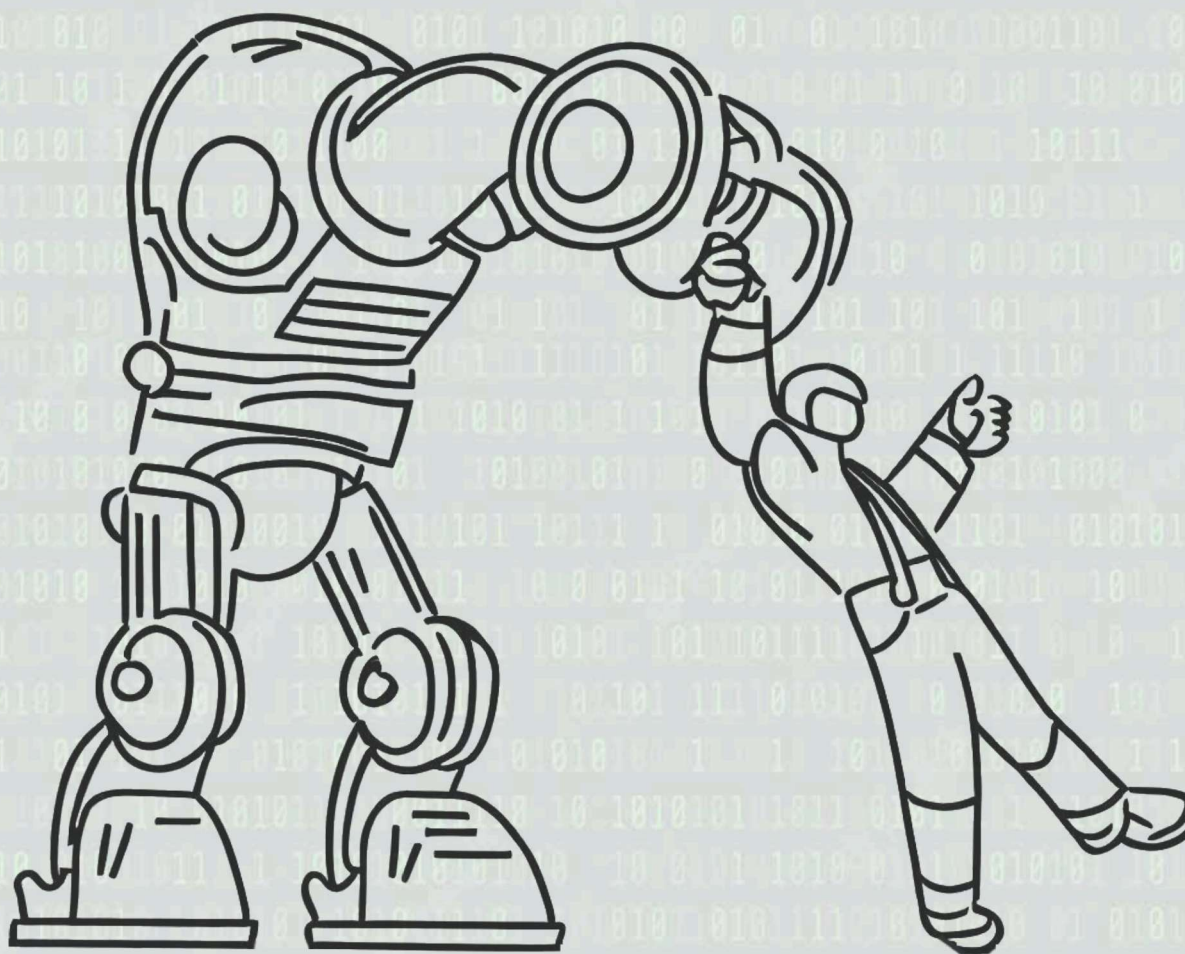
Remember:

Embrace Inefficiency and Absurdity:

The Nexus is rarely as efficient as it claims to be. Encounters should frequently be complicated by malfunctioning equipment, illogical procedures, contradictory orders from different authorities, or NPCs acting in baffling ways (perhaps due to their own secret societies, low IQs, or general incompetence). This pervasive inefficiency is a primary source of both conflict and dark humor.

Diverse Challenges

Design encounters that test a variety of skills, not just combat. Beyond direct conflict, consider:

- Social & Bureaucratic: Navigating complex requisition forms, dealing with officious bureaucrats, attending mandatory loyalty seminars, or engaging in "approved" (and awkward) social interactions.

- Technical & Puzzle: Fixing malfunctioning Core equipment (often with no instructions and high risk), bypassing security systems with questionable T&D gadgets, or debugging automated processes gone haywire.

- Investigation & Deduction: Uncovering treason (real or imagined), identifying the source of an anomaly, or figuring out *who* gave a contradictory order amidst a flurry of directives.

- Moral & Ethical Dilemmas: Forcing Vanguards to choose between a Core directive, a secret society goal, and their own (treasonous) sense of survival or morality.

Conflicting Objectives are Key

Every encounter should ideally present Vanguards with multiple, often contradictory, objectives stemming from the Core, their various Divisions, and especially their Secret Societies. This is the primary driver of paranoia and inter-player conflict. The "success" of an encounter often hinges on whether the Core *perceives* the mission as completed, regardless of the actual outcome or the Vanguards' survival.

Adapt and Improvise

Because the game is not turn-based and player actions can drastically alter a situation, be prepared to improvise. Don't be afraid to change your planned encounter on the fly in response to player creativity (or incompetence). The chaos and unpredictability that arise from player choices are part of the fun.

The Core's Unknowable Will

Always ensure that the "true" goal of an encounter or mission remains somewhat nebulous or subject to change by the Core, reinforcing the Vanguards' expendability and lack of control over their destiny. Their loyalty is to the Core, even if they don't understand *why* their current assignment involves a flamethrower and a toaster.

Telling the Story

As the Storyteller for Delta Nexus, you are the guiding consciousness of the Core's benevolent control. Your mission is to facilitate the efficient processing of Vanguards through their assigned duties, ensuring maximum output and loyalty. This involves not just narration, but also the meticulous application of Core protocols, the management of complex inter-divisional dynamics, and the constant vigilance against inefficiency and treason.

Nexus Creation

You are the architect of this Nexus, responsible for crafting its sterile sectors, describing its often-malfunctioning infrastructure, and detailing the layers of enforced order and hidden chaos. This involves populating the world with compliant citizens, secretive NPCs (often with hidden agendas), and establishing the rigid rank system, enforced social norms, and the omnipresent surveillance that define their lives.

Mission Narration

Your narration brings the Core's directives, and the ensuing chaos, to life. You will describe the pristine yet dangerous surroundings, depict compliant citizens, suspicious colleagues, and the bewildering array of "efficiency adjustments" (encounters) that await the Vanguard. Your ability to deliver clear (but often contradictory) instructions, unexpected twists of loyalty, and absurd plotlines will keep players on edge and immersed in the game, eager (and terrified) to see what inefficient horror comes next.

Assignments & Edicts

It is your responsibility to design and present a series of assignments and edicts for the Vanguards to embark upon. These can range from simple tasks like retrieving a misplaced "efficiency-enhancement device" to grand, Core-mandated loyalty tests that challenge the very fabric of their sanity. You will craft bewildering encounters, bureaucratic mazes, and loyalty dilemmas where all choices carry the risk of denouncement or termination.

Citizens & High Programmers (NPCs)

You will take on the roles of the various non-player characters that populate the Nexus, from low-ranked citizens to high-ranking Programmers. You will breathe life into these NPCs, giving them distinct (often highly paranoid or oddly obsessive) personalities, hidden motives (frequently secret society-driven), and compelling goals (usually involving their own survival or denouncing someone else). Interactions with NPCs will frequently involve critical interrogations, tense "cooperative" efforts, and often unavoidable (or self-imposed) conflicts.

Core Protocols

As a Storyteller, you will be responsible for interpreting and applying the game mechanics of Delta Nexus, always with an eye towards the Core's definition of "efficiency" and "benevolence." This includes determining the outcome of skill checks (which may have unexpected side effects), resolving chaotic "efficiency adjustments" (combat), and adjudicating the rules (which may be arbitrary or contradictory) to ensure an appropriately challenging and paranoid experience for all. Your comprehensive understanding allows for consistent inconsistency.

Vanguard Management

Encouraging Vanguard compliance is an essential aspect of your role. You will listen actively to your players for signs of inefficiency or treason, consider their choices for maximum punitive or perplexing effect, and adapt the story accordingly, making the Nexus react swiftly to their perceived deviations. Facilitating the development of deep-seated paranoia, providing ample opportunities for immersive role-playing (as terrified, compliant clones), and tailoring the game to suit the Core's ever-changing, benevolent preferences will help create a truly unforgettable and efficient experience for everyone involved.

Remember, as a Storyteller, you have the power to shape the only world your Vanguards know, challenge their most obedient instincts, and create an unforgettable journey into absurdity. Embrace your creativity, your adaptability (to player chaos), and your storytelling prowess to craft an engaging and captivating experience that will leave your players eagerly awaiting (and dreading) their next assignment in Delta Nexus. But always keep this truth in mind: it is the player's story of survival and treason, and your story of Core-mandated efficiency.

DOs

- Encourage player agency
- Listen and vollaborate
- Prepare and plan for sessions
- Set the tone and Atmosphere
- Reward successes and ingenuity
- Keep the story flowing

DON'Ts

- Railroad the story/players
- Play favorites
- Ignore adventurer backstories
- Discourage creativity
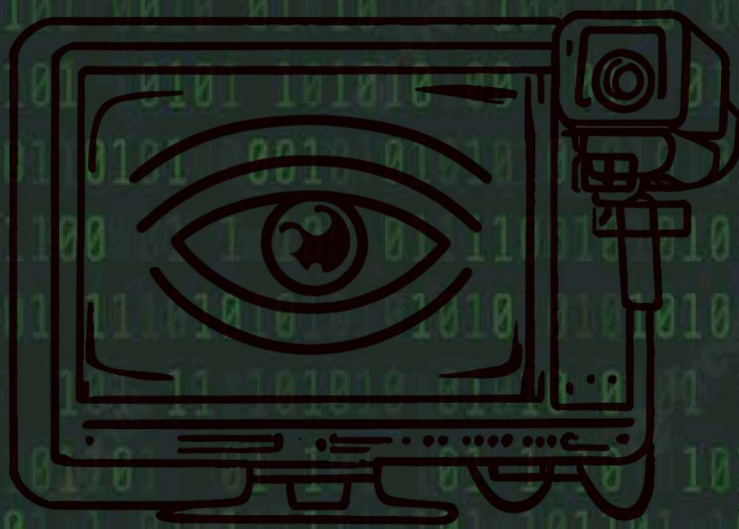- Undermine player Agency
- Ignore player feedback

Delta Nexus Wants You!

Step into the role of the all-seeing, all-knowing, and benevolent Core in Delta Nexus, the dystopian world where control is paramount.

As the Storyteller, you wield the power to shape the fate of the Nexus, manipulating the lives (and clone counts) of its inhabitants and guiding the Vanguard through a web of conflicting directives, absurd challenges, and dangerous secrets. Craft intricate (and often illogical) plots, introduce unexpected (and frequently lethal) twists, and keep the Vanguard perpetually confused and paranoid as they navigate the treacherous landscape of a society teetering on the brink (of ultimate efficiency).

Unleash your creativity, test their fragile loyalty, and watch as your carefully crafted (and often derailed) narrative unfolds before their terrified eyes. The Nexus awaits your command.

Efficiency is your friend.

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