

LIFE IN THE 23RD CENTURY

A brief guide to everyday life in the 23rd century. Devised and researched by John Ossoway June 2004

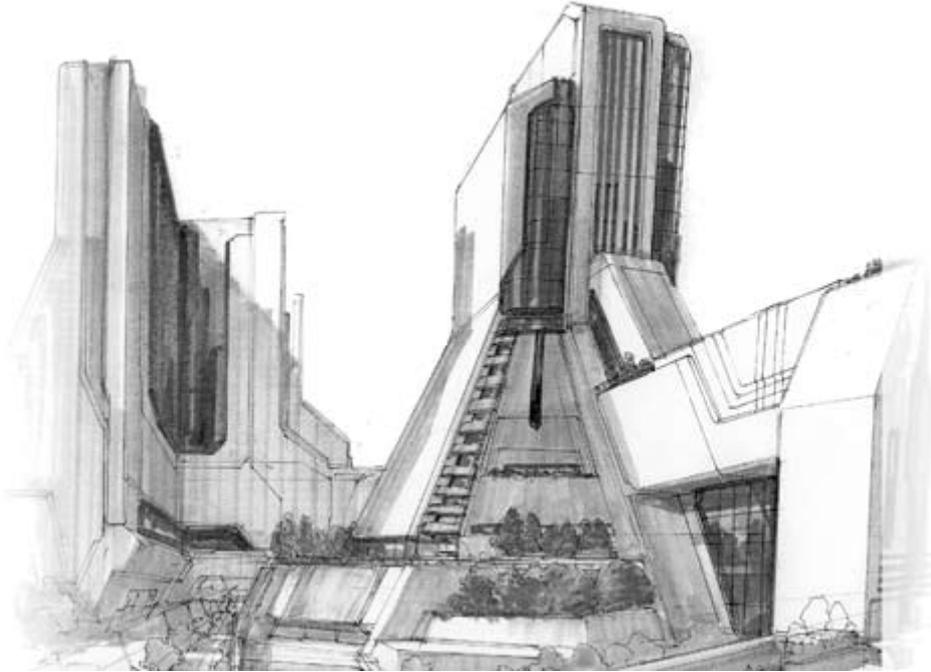


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INTRODUCTION:

This document intends to provide a brief overview of human society in the late 23rd century. It is not meant as an authoritative source, merely to provide a 'flavour' for Keepers to base their scenarios and campaigns on.

COLONISTS:

Interstellar immigration/emigration is tightly controlled by the ICA and the ITC. Despite hundreds of millions of people now living offworld in the colonies, Earth in the late 23rd Century is still home to almost 10 billion people and is woefully overcrowded. To compound matters, those wishing to live in the colonies must apply for Colonist Status from the ICA. This involves a series of rigorous background checks, physical, mental and psychological examinations.

CRIME:

Despite advances in crime detection and prevention, crime is as present as ever in the 23rd century. The Federal Public Records Database contains unique information about all Federation citizens, allowing police to identify any suspect within a matter of hours. With identification procedures now incorporating retinal scanning, DNA matching, identity fraud has become a lucrative (and expensive) business.

Street crime still exists, but by far the biggest problem in the 23rd century is organised crime. Despite the best efforts of FLEA and the ICM, several large crime syndicates have a stranglehold on drugs trafficking, piracy, pornography and prostitution in the colonies.

Data crime (or 'cyber crime' as it used to be called) is also big business.

EDUCATION:

In the Core Systems, children are required by Federal Law to attend school until the age of 18. At 18, a student has the choice of attending a University, or three years of Federal Service.

In the Colonies, students begin what is known as 'Obligation' at the age of 16. This involves performing minor duties for the colony for a maximum of 4 hours per day.

ENTERTAINMENT:

The Federal Network, or FedNet, is the collective term for the technology behind the wirelessly-networked, ubiquitously-connected urban environment of the 23rd century. FedNet provides entertainment in the form of over a

thousand digital television and radio channels, information in the form of the Interstellar Web (ISW), communications access for Personal ComLinks etc. Every tax-paying citizen of the United Earth Federation has at least the basic FedNet package. Extra services can be 'bolted on' for a higher subscription fee.

FEDERAL SERVICE:

Students completing their education but not wanting to continue to a University are required by Federal Law to take the Federal Orientation Test and complete three years of Federal Service. This involves working for the Federal Government in one of its many branches, including the United Earth Armed Forces, the Federal Health Service, the Federal Transportation Network, and the Federal Labourforce. The pay isn't great, and choice of career path is limited depending on the results of the FOT, but completion of Federal Service usually gives an individual the option of staying on in their chosen profession with a salary increase.

HEALTHCARE:

By the latter half of the 23rd Century, medicine has advanced in all fields to levels unparalleled. Infant mortality rates on Alpha Status worlds is the lowest ever recorded, and life expectancy has increased to the point where it is quite commonplace for people to live well into their 90s. Cloning technologies now enable hospitals to grow new organs for patients needing transplant surgery, thus eliminating the spectre of organ rejection. Micro-surgery has reached a point where the rebuilding and/or attachment of severed limbs has a success rate of over 92%.

Although many forms of disease have been defeated, many more still exist. Two of the biggest killers in the 23rd century are heart disease, especially with almost 14% of the population clinically obese, and respiratory disease, caused by atmospheric pollution.

All citizens of the Federation are entitled to free health care via the Federal Health Service (FHS), although waiting lists for expensive treatments and therapies can be up to 6 months long. As a result, private healthcare organisations, such as Medtech, provide an

expensive way to get immediate access to treatments.

LAW:

Policing in the 23rd Century is handled by the Federal Law Enforcement Authority. From their headquarters on Earth, and via many local stations throughout the Federal Colonies, Federal police officers have the unenviable task of tackling crime over interstellar distances. In the Sol System, FLEA is split in to 'Districts', with each Administrative District supported by local police officers or (in the colonies) Colonial Administration Security troops.

Punishments vary from incarceration in prison, being 'chipped' and placed under curfew at home, to exile to a penal colony. Although no death penalty exists, it is common knowledge that FLEA officers have a 'shoot to kill' policy with dangerous suspects.

MONEY:

Though most nations still retain their own currencies for domestic use, virtually all international trade is conducted using the Euro-Dollar as the base, an amalgam of the two strongest 21st Century currencies before the collapse of the global economy in 2084.

PROPERTY:

On 23rd Century Earth, there is a premium on real estate, with the government and corporations owning most available property. Renting is the norm, with owning one's own house reserved for the rich and famous.

RELIGION:

As long as humanity needs answers to the unanswerable, there will be religion. All the major religions of the 21st century are still going strong, with a few notable additions. One of the fastest growing religions in the 23rd century is Chrislam – an amalgamation of Christianity and Islam that occurred during the Second Exodus (2166-96) from Earth. Chrislam is a very popular religion in the colonies, though it has made little headway on Earth.

SEX, BIRTH CONTROL AND CHILDREN:

With a population over 10 billion, and colonial populations pushing the economy to it's limits, people in the Core Systems and especially on

Earth are encouraged to have small families, with incentives like tax cuts, free education etc for those who do. Every birth must be authorized by the Federal Health Service, and the health status of parents must be verified.

In the Outer Colonies, birth control is mandatory. Small families are encouraged for different reasons, the main one being to maximise the gene exchange between the colony. Extra DNA material is kept in the colony science labs to increase the gene richness should the colony have to survive long term without a new influx of colonists from elsewhere.

TRANSPORT:

Ever since the global economy collapsed in 2084, public service industries such as transport, water & power and health were globalised. Most citizens use the integrated public transport systems, which include MagLev trains and passenger scramjets. With scramjet technology now commonplace, travel time between continents has been cut dramatically. A commercial flight between London and New York now takes just less than an hour. Cars are controlled by intelligent traffic control computer systems on major intercity routes, but manual control is still allowed on local road networks.

Interplanetary and interstellar travel is still an expensive business. Most people who travel are either company employees, military personnel or government staff. There are no commercial passenger services out beyond the Core Systems. Travellers must negotiate their own ticket prices.

VICE:

Drugs are as ubiquitous as ever, with several new types being imported from the colonies.

Prostitution is now legal in designated 'Red Light Zones', but this hasn't stopped the illegal trafficking of immigrant workers into a life of forced prostitution in the lawless Outer Rim Territories.

Pornography laws are relaxed, but there are obvious exceptions to this rule.

YOUTH CULTURE:

As ever, youth culture continues to confound adults, with its ever-changing styles and fads.