THE NETWORK

OVERVIEW

The Network is a first-person, freerunning, platforming-based game set in a futuristic, dystopic, cyberpunk Earth and is influenced heavily by *Ghost in the Shell* and *Mirror's Edge*, with *The Matrix*, *Tron*, *Blade Runner*, *Assassin's Creed*, *Prince of Persia* and other related media as additional inspiration. The game takes place in two main environments—the Real World and a fully-immersive evolution of the Internet known as The Network. Players will navigate both environments mainly through freerunning; however, the two worlds, and the way players will navigate them, have core differences. In the Real World, players will focus more on exploration through slower, less twitchy platforming while The Network will be navigated mostly though much faster and more accuracy-demanding platforming. The Real World is an open-world environment, but The Network is not. While players *will* visit several large areas in The Network, these will be used as hubs to gain access to the Private Network (your traditional "game levels").

The story follows the main character (customizable by players) as he/she attempts to take down The Agency, the company that designed The Network and the company that he/she has worked for his/her whole life. The main character realizes that The Agency is not the great savior of humanity as it's made out to be. It is using its power for its own selfish desires and is willingly (and intentionally) doing so at the expense of everyone else, particularly those of the lower class. Players travel throughout the two environments to find pieces of evidence that prove, without a doubt, the Agency's true aim and its unforgivable methods for doing so.

Like *Metroid*, players will begin the game with a fully upgraded character. After the first few objects, once players are acclimated to the controls, these upgrades will be lost. Throughout the rest of the game, players will have the opportunity to not only customize their character, but also create and customize several different versions of the character that, potentially, will all play and feel very different from one another.

GOAL

The overarching goal of the game is to take down the manipulative and oppressive corporation known as The Agency, the company that owns, runs, and administrates The Network. This goal will be accomplished by platforming through the game's "levels" to find evidence, hidden at the end of each level, of The Agency's evil agenda and vile misdeeds.

VISUAL STYLE

The Network is a realistic, first-person, 3D game that will have two primary visual styles—one for the Real World and one for The Network. The Real World will consist primarily of run-down buildings and skyscrapers with the exception of the upper-class areas of the city that may still show hints of age but are very well maintained, neat, tidy, immaculate, and sharp. The Real World will also have very clear day and night cycles. The Network, while technologically advanced enough to visually mimic the Real World, shows very obvious signs of its digital structure. The skies of The Network tend to be very dark (usually near-black) with the neon lights of buildings and other objects providing most of the environment's light. The visual style of the Private Network and Personal Networks will be somewhat different than that of the hubs in The Network. As these areas are rarely (if ever) entered by A.I., they contain no visual data and are purely informational data. Players will of course be able to see when inside these environments, but they will be much more abstract and digital looking than either the Real World or The Network's hubs.

Most cities in the Real World will look like these degenerating, crumbling, and seemingly abandoned metropolises.

The Network will have visual inspirations drawn from *Ghost in the Shell* and *Tron*.

The Private and Personal Networks will look like a busier version of the image on the left.
The high-class region of cities will resemble perhaps a cleaner, more refined version of the image on the right.

JARGON

The Network - A fully-immersive digital world. It is the evolution of today's Internet.
The Real World - The world that you and I live in. While many will argue that The Network is "more real" than the Real World, the fact remains that this is the true, physical earth.
Actual Intelligence (A.I.) - The consciousness of those with cybernetic brains. The metaphorical equivalent of what some call the "soul" or "being" of the pure human.
Terminal - A physical console in the Real World that allows access to The Network. Terminals are commonly found in net cafés, homes, and even on sidewalks.
The Agency - The corporation known worldwide that's responsible for the design, upkeep, and security of The Network.
Agents - Employees of The Agency that act as spies, assassins, peacekeepers, and enforcers both in and out of The Network.
Autonomous Agents - Highly modifiable Agents who are notorious for completing their Objectives at any cost.
Technicians - Employees of The Agency that are tasked with the continual repair of Agents' Hardware and Software. They are usually seen as the Agents' partners.
Objectives - Missions with which The Agency tasks its Agents.
Malware - Those individuals or groups of individuals deemed dangerous to the continued function and safekeeping of The Network.
Malware Removal - A common Objective given to Agents. Agents are to search for and destroy the Malware.
Private Network - The private, internal network of The Agency. Though The Network requires a visual representation of its data so that users can comprehend and interact with it, the Private Network is pure data. Those who have visited it for repairs report that its abstract environment is in constant motion.
Personal Network - An individual's network. The usage of a Personal Network can vary from the simple action of answering a comm call to handling bodily functions in more sophisticated Hardware.
Firewalls - A type of digital security measure taken to ensure that a part of The Network is not entered without permission. Within The Network, they appear as very literal walls of digital fire.
Open Ports - Areas blocked off by Firewalls often need to grant access to certain information or individuals. Temporary access is granted by Opening Ports.
Hacking - The action of entering another person's Personal Network, usually with malicious intent. Hacking is strictly illegal for the general public, punishable by immediate Termination. However, it is allowed and expected of Agents.
Ejection - The action resulting from unwarranted entrance into a Network. The intruder is kicked out of the Network.
Escaping - Unlike Ejection, which occurs when the Network's security forces the intruder out, Escaping occurs when the intruder leaves the Network willingly and intentionally. Escaping is usually performed in order to avoid being Ejected.
Backups - Extra physical bodies that can be used to store one's A.I. It is not uncommon for individuals, especially those of the higher class, to have several Backups.
The Trapped - The term used to refer to those whose A.I. is stuck in The Network. This is usually due to one's body Hardware being completely destroyed while one's A.I. is in The Network. More often than not, Trapped individuals have backups that they can access via The Network, but some do not and truly are stuck in The Network (forever, some say).
Termination - When both the Hardware and the Software of an individual cease to function. Death.
Node - The Network's digital equivalent to the Real World's Terminal. These are used to Escape to the Real World or to upload one's A.I. to a Backup if one becomes Trapped.
Upgrades - The modifications one can apply to one's physical and/or digital body.
Hardware - The term used to refer to the physical self and body parts, both internal and external and modifications that can be applied to them.
Autorun - An "autopilot" of sorts for those who have the necessary Hardware installed. Autorun will automatically take the user to a destination of his/her choosing without any additional effort from the user.
Software/Code - The terms used to refer to the digital self and modifications that can be applied to it. Software is a complete and functional digital structure formed from combined bits of Code.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Players are able to customize *The Network*'s main character at the beginning of the game (including name and gender). For the sake of this document, the main character will be referred to as a male named Agent Daemon. Also, depending on the choice of the main character's gender, the game's Technician will be either Simon (if male is chosen) or Lisa (if female is chosen). The two are essentially the same save for their gender. For the sake of this document, the Technician will be referred to as Simon.

Agent Daemon - Agent Daemon has worked for The Agency since he was 16. No doubt thanks to his birth specifications as well as rigorous training by his father, The Agency's Network Administrator, throughout his childhood, Agent Daemon has become one of The Agency's most skilled and valuable Autonomous Agents. When he receives an Objective, he executes it quickly and thoroughly by any means necessary.

Simon/Lisa - Like any other Agent, however, Daemon would be nothing without his Technician, Simon, fixing him up after every Objective. While Simon is a bit of an absent-minded professor, he is nothing short of a genius, and is the only Technician able to keep up with Agent Daemons' penchant to all but destroy his body during the execution of his Objectives. Though he is a pure human, he has encyclopedic knowledge on new and emerging technologies.

Network Administrator Asimov - The CEO of The Agency and the widowered father of Agent Daemon. Asimov co-designed the underlying structure of The Network with his late wife, Susan.

STORY

Following Agent Daemon's last Objective, Simon has to, once again, complete arduous repairs on Daemon's severely damaged body, including diagnostics and calibration tests. While Daemon passes with flying colors, Simon feels his work is all for naught as Daemon had already been tasked with another Objective—a Malware Removal. Though Malware Removal is not atypical for Autonomous Agents, this one is different... Daemon must seek and destroy a defunct Agent. While details follow on the last known whereabouts of the rogue Agent, there is no explanation as to why the Agent has turned. Somewhat disturbed by this omission, Simon voices his worries, but does so to deaf ears as Agent Daemon is already preparing to leave. Regardless of the nature of the Objective, Daemon must follow through for the sake of The Network's protection and stability.

Not long after, Daemon locates the rogue Agent and begins pursuit throughout the city's fetid, degenerating back-alleys. The chase continues onto the rooftops where Daemon manages to hack the Agent's arms and legs, disabling her movement as well as hacking her brain, tying her A.I. to her body and ensuring she cannot escape to The Network. In a desperate attempt to save herself, the Agent tries to convince Daemon that The Agency is not simply the company responsible for The Network (a resource that has become an utterly indispensable to the world). It is a sinister and oppressive corporation whose true aim is to ensure their dominance in the global market. It was The Agency's intention to create and control the intense fragmentation of the social classes through information gained on The Network to achieve this goal. Daemon dismisses these accusations as the rantings of a desperate woman about to reach the end of her line. Without a second thought, he Terminates her.

Though he had no hesitations at the time, Agent Daemon begins to pick up on inconsistencies in his following Objectives that make him question the validity of the rogue Agent's claims. After researching the background of his latest Malware target, he is horrified to find that the target was simply a talented programmer who created an efficient metrics program for a popular video game. Appalled, Daemon decides to do some

confront his father, Network Administrator Asimov, about the issue. Though surprised by the question, Asimov immediately declines any knowledge or legitimacy of the claims.

Still somewhat suspicious and unsatisfied with his father's response, Agent Daemon does some additional searching on his own. Daemon is horrified to find a number of hidden folders with information that all but confirms the rogue Agent's allegations—background information on Malware targets, detailed data on the world's social classes, and even documentation of Asimov discussing heinous strategies to remain at the top of the market. As he turns to leave, he sees his father standing in the doorway. Disgusted, he begins to walk out the door; Asimov blocks the way. He informs Daemon that he knew Daemon would find out one day; however, Daemon was reacting much more negatively than he had expected, especially given the Agent's own bloodied past. All these years, Daemon thought his actions served to protect the greater good and instill peace in the unkempt and seedy underbelly of society. He is revolted to have learned the truth. Asimov informs him that if he has any inkling to reveal this information, he will have to be dealt with. Believing this to be a bluff, Daemon walks out the door only to land face-down, incapacitated moments later. His father stands over him with a gun in hand and a menacing smile on his face. He pulls the trigger. Daemon is in The Network.

Understanding what happened, but in utter disbelief, Daemon makes his way to the nearest Node to try to contact the only person he can still trust—Simon. He needs a new body, and he needs to expose The Agency for what it really is.

GAMEPLAY

RUNNING

The Network's main mechanic is freerunning-based platforming. Players will navigate environments by performing freerunning and parkour-based stunts over, around, under, through, and past objects and structures. The list of potential moves will likely change during development and playtesting, but essential moves are as follows: running, walking, jumping/vaulting, crouching, sliding, rolling, wall running (both vertical and horizontal), wall jumping, balancing (as on thin ground such as ropes), swinging, and climbing/holding (onto ledges, ropes, etc.). Additional, more advanced moves may include stunts such as flipping, somersaults, and twists. Different moves will be used in different circumstances, will allow players to cover different distances and will affect the movement speed of the character.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are the main form of gameplay in *The Network*. They are the main method through which the story advances. Though Objectives may vary in their parameters and strategies for success, all consist of finding a piece of evidence that can be used to prove The Agency's corruption. Many Objectives will require players to navigate to a Terminal in the Real World and run through different sectors of The Agency's Private Network to find evidence. Some evidence, however, may be found in the hub areas of The Network or in the Real World. Once evidence is found, players will need return to the Real World (if not already there) and focus on losing the pursuing Agent(s). Once the Agents are no longer searching for players, the Objective will be considered complete.

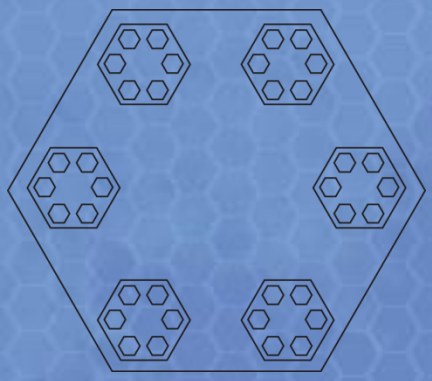
THE REAL WORLD

In the Real World, players will run through the open-world environment to get from place to place. The environment will be designed in such a way that players will have a multitude of methods for creatively running from point A to point B. Running in the Real World will be slower and more open-ended than that inside The Network. It will focus on exploration by allowing players a large, open space with which to roam around while performing exciting and logic-defying acrobatic stunts. It will also act as a hub for accessing different areas of The Network.

In order to prevent players from becoming too overwhelmed when extensive distances must be traversed, players can initiate Autorun. Autorun will allow players to select a destination, and it will automatically run them there. The character will close his/her eyes (the screen will fade to black), and in a few seconds when he/she opens his/her eyes, the destination will be reached. Autorun cannot be used during active Objectives or while being pursued by Agents as one must pay attention to one's surroundings and be alert.

EPLORATION

Players will be encouraged to explore the city of the Real World through the use of interesting visuals, fun freerunning, and collectible Upgrades which can be used to customize and often improve their bodies. Several Objectives will also have players running through large sections of the city.



A representation of the game map. The largest hexagon represents the explorable city of the Real World. Located throughout are the medium-sized hexagons representing the hubs of The Network accessed via Terminals. The smallest hexagons represent the different entrances of the Private Network, all of which are located within the Network.

HACKING

When players encounter enemy Agents in the Real World, they will have the chance to Hack them. When a Hack is initiated, players will enter the Personal Network of the enemy. They will then have a certain amount of time (explained further below) to reach the end of the "level" before they must Escape the Hack. Upon entering the Personal Network, players will be presented with a number of different paths to choose. Paths will lead to the following enemy body parts: head, right arm, left arm, right leg, and left leg. Visible icons will be displayed above each path to denote where they lead. These icons will also display which body part the enemy is attacking with (if applicable) and which body part is holding/wearing a weapon (if applicable). Successfully reaching the end of one of these paths will Hack the selected body part. Hacking different body parts will have different effects. For example, Hacking the arms will cause the enemy to drop any weapons he/she is holding; Hacking the legs will cause the enemy to buckle, lose balance, and fall down; and Hacking the head will cause the enemy to Shut Down, lose consciousness, and be totally immobile. Hacking a body part that the enemy is attacking with will stop the attack. Successfully Hacking any body part will at least cause the enemy to be momentarily stunned. Hacking arms will usually be the easiest paths and stun for the shortest amount of time while Hacking the head will almost always be the most difficult path and stun for the longest amount of time. If players fall off of the platforms for any path, the Hack will fail, and they will be Ejected back out into the Real World, usually resulting in getting hit by the enemy and taking damage.

Players may also be able to obtain new Software and/or Code while Hacking. Software and/or bits of Code may be found by exploring the Personal Network environment. Because these environments will be mostly linear, they will not provide the need for extensive exploration to find these Upgrades. The Upgrades will usually be found simply by looking around a corner or by hanging off the edge of a platform; sometimes they will be directly on the path, so players will just have to continue running to obtain them. There will also be ample visual and auditory clues as to the location of the Upgrades. They will, for example, emit a glowing color as well as a sound that can be heard the closer the player gets to them. Harder paths will tend to have more Upgrades. This action of finding Upgrades is aimed to both encourage players to take the harder routes as well as make failing (a Hack) still rewarding.

The environments of Personal Networks will be randomly generated. A large number of set pieces will be designed in such a way that they can be automatically concatenated together in any order without causing detriment to the flow of running through the environment. Because of this method, no two Personal Networks will be the same. This will also provide an enormous amount of possibilities for stringing various moves together and will constantly keep players on their toes.

Players must be within a certain proximity to enemies in order to hack them. A potential character stat may change this number (discussed later).

THE NETWORK

The Network consists of several large areas that players can access through Terminals in the Real World. While the Real World acts as a hub for The Network, these areas will, in turn, act as hubs for accessing different parts of The Agency's Private Network. Like in the Real World, players are free to explore these areas with their freerunning abilities. The Private Network, however, will consist of areas that are relatively linear, similar to the linearity of Personal Network environments. In order to enter the Private Network, players must freerun through the hub area, performing a series of stunts that, upon completion, cause the player to move faster. A certain speed must be reached in order for the player to breach the Firewall protecting the Private Network. If players mess up a series of stunts or are simply not moving fast enough, they will be unable to pass through it. Of course, time allowing, players can retry this process over and over.

THE AGENCY'S PRIVATE NETWORK

Once inside the Private Network, players will freerun through relatively linear, but constantly moving environments. Like in *Sonic the Hedgehog*, these levels have very clear start and end goals, yet there are multiple paths to get to the finish. Certain paths, usually those higher up, will be more difficult to remain on, but they will be more rewarding in that they will allow players to reach the end faster. If players fail to stay on the higher paths, they will fall below to the lower paths. If, however, players fall off of the lowest path (this will only be possible in some levels), they will be Ejected back to the hub area from which they entered. Again, time allowing, players will be able to retry running through the Private Network. Many pieces in these levels will also be in constant motion. For example, a platform may be moving side to side, a wall may be moving up and down, and/or a pole may move closer to and farther away from players. Harder paths will tend to have more and faster moving pieces.

References to time limits have been made above. Depending on a few circumstances, a time limit may be introduced while in hub areas of the Network; a time limit will always be enforced upon entering the Private Network. Once players breach a Firewall and enter the Private Network, they will have a certain amount of time to run through the Firewall's Open Ports (before they are closed) and ultimately reach the end of the level.

If players fail to reach an Open Port before it closes, the Private Network's security will repair the Firewall and Eject them back to the hub area.

In addition to this time limit within the Private Network, another time limit will be introduced. As soon as players enter the Private Network, The Agency's security will become aware of this intrusion, will detect the Terminal (in the Real World) that this intrusion is originating from, and will immediately dispatch Agents (in the Real World) to the Terminal's location. Players must Escape The Network (both the Private Network and the hub area) before Agents arrive at their location at the Terminal in the Real World.

TIME FLOW

Because The Network is a digital construct, and all those who inhabit it have digitally projected their A.I. into it, The Network's data and their data moves very quickly. This results in time "moving faster" in The Network than it does in the Real World. This change is not perceivable as those in The Network experience time as "normal;" however, similar to *Inception*, several minutes are experienced in The Network for every single minute in the Real World. This difference in time flow will mainly be seen when hacking or after entering the Private Network and Agents begin to converge on the Terminal that the players are using.

A simple ratio will not be used to determine how much time in the Real World equates to time in The Network. If, for example, one minute in the Real World equaled five minutes in The Network, one second in the Real World would only equal five seconds in The Network. While five or ten minutes in the Private Network or The Network hubs (one or two minutes in the Real World) would be *more* than enough time to complete several levels before Agents reached players, hacking is a different matter. Hacking will usually be initiated mere seconds before players must Escape the Hack, but enough time must be given to players to successfully complete the Hack in order to avoid this mechanic from being impossibly difficult. It is because of the necessity of the difference in time allotment between these that time flow will be varied depending on the context. However, time flow while Hacking will always be consistent as will time flow while in The Network. For example, one second in the Real World will always equal 20 seconds while Hacking, and one minute in the Real World will always equal five minutes in The Network. This does not account for the potential character stat that affects these numbers (discussed later).

HACKING

When players initiate a Hack, they will enter the Personal Network of the enemy they're Hacking. Upon entering, a time limit will be enforced. The amount of time will depend on if (and how close) the enemy is to hurting players in the Real World. If, for example, a player initiates a hack one second before the enemy punches him/her in the face in the Real World, he/she will only have 20 seconds (in The Network) to reach the end before getting hit in the face in the Real World and dying. On the other hand, if players sneak up on the enemy and initiate a hack unnoticed, it will take a few seconds (Real World time) for the enemy to react to the players' presence and attack. This will grant players even more time to Hack.

THE NETWORK

When players enter The Network via a Terminal, there will be no initial time limit. However, as soon as players enter the Private Network, two timers will begin. As explained above, there will be a time limit for reaching Open Ports, and there will also be a time limit for Escaping The Network before Agents reach the Terminal that players are using. The former will simply be a certain amount of time that players are given to reach the next Open Port before it closes and they're Ejected from the Private Network. The latter will be dependent on how long it will take Agents to reach a player's location in the Real World. Continuing the example from above, if the Agents are one minute away in the Real World, players will have five minutes in The Network before the

Agents reach them. The amount of time remaining will be represented by an onscreen number, representing the distance the closest Agent is to the player.

AGENTS

Agents are *The Network*'s main "bad guys." Agents will only be found in the Real World. Often, players will run into Agents while they are platforming around the city. The choice to avoid them or Hack them is up to the player. Similar to *Grand Theft Auto*'s police force, if an Agent sees the player, he/she will begin chasing the player and, at the same time, call for reinforcements. Reinforcements will appear and search in a radius around the Agent in pursuit or from the last known location of the Agent (if the player has disabled the Agent in pursuit). After spotting the player, an Agent will not call for reinforcements for a few seconds. This gives players the chance to run out of the Agent's sight or Hack and disable him/her before the call is made. Agents will have various long-ranged and short-ranged weapons including guns, swords, and their bare fists. Once in range, Agents will attack players.

EJECTION, ESCAPING, THE TRAPPED, AND BACKUPS

If players fall off of the edge or fail to make it to the end (or Open Port) in time of either the Private Network or a Personal Network, they will be Ejected. If Ejected from the Private Network, players will be returned to outside the Firewall from which they entered the Private Network. If players are Ejected from a Personal Network, they will be forcibly returned to their physical body. In both cases, players will lose whatever evidence or Upgrades they obtained during the run.

On the other hand, players can intentionally leave the Private Network or a Personal Network at any time by Escaping. While this will count as failing to bypass Firewall security/Hack, players will be able to keep any Upgrades they received on the run. Players must Escape from The Network's hubs by accessing a Node located in the area. Escaping must be executed before being forcibly Ejected.

Backups are *The Network*'s form of "lives." Backups are used when a player's Hardware takes too much damage (from falling and/or getting hit by enemies) and the current body ceases to function. In order to avoid loss of Hardware *and* Software (resulting in Termination), the main character's software will automatically be immediately Ejected to a physical Backup body owned by the player in his or her safe house in the Real World. Backups can be obtained by assembling various Upgrades together. Certain Upgrades must be combined to form Backups, but additions and variations can be used on the essential pieces to yield varying results.

Backups formed from the mandatory pieces are very basic bodies. If a backup is created with the bare minimum, players will essentially be starting their character over from scratch, particularly in terms of stats. This is not necessarily a bad thing. By creating different backups with different attributes and move sets, players will experience a variety of different play styles and abilities, some that perhaps were absent in their previous Hardware. At any time, players can return to their safe house and switch bodies.

When players are Ejected to a Backup, they still have a chance to recover some of the Upgrades from their previous body. If players make it back to the location where they "died" before too long, they will be able to salvage a variety of Upgrades that were applied to their previous body. Not all Upgrades will be available, nor will all Upgrades that are found be intact. Damaged parts that are recovered can still be used in combination with other Upgrades. Their effect may be less, but they're still usable. Plus, if enough are used together, they will have the same combined effect that the original, undamaged Upgrade did. The longer players take to make it back to their destroyed Hardware, the less there will be to salvage. Using Autorun to arrive at the location of the previous body will yield less salvageable parts than running there manually.

Players can become Trapped in The Network if they fail to Escape to the Real World before Agents find them (at a Terminal) and destroy their body. They can also become Trapped if they do not possess any Backups when their Hardware is destroyed. In either case, players will be immediately Ejected to The Network. They will then have an additional five minutes to run to a Node and upload their A.I. into a Backup. If the players have no more Backups, they can contact their Technician via the Node and order another Backup (assuming they have the necessary pieces to build one). If no Backups are created or five minutes expire, this will result in the player truly being Trapped ("game over").

Termination occurs when players fail to Escape a Personal Network before their body is damaged in the Real World. If the player's A.I. is located in an Agent's Hardware when an Agent and/or his/her weapon strikes the player's body, the body will lose its ability to reconnect with the A.I., trapping the it inside the Personal Network which will shortly Eject it. Because it cannot connect to its Hardware, the mechanism that allows automatic upload to Backups possible, the A.I. simply is removed from the Personal Network and destroyed forever. This is a "game over" just as above. This is a "game over." Players are forced to continue playing from the last successfully completed Objective (they will start in their safe house). Any Backups they may have had at that point are not returned; they will have to build new ones.

Inventory

Upgrades will be stored in the players' inventory. The Upgrades in the inventory will not disappear when players are Ejected or Terminated. This is, however, unless players obtained rare and/or unique items in between the last successful Objective and Termination; those items will be lost, though they can be reacquired in the manner in which they were originally obtained.

Character Creation/Customization, Upgrades, and Stats

At the beginning of the game, players will be able to customize their character. Various aspects will be available for customization. Purely visual aspects such as skin tone, hair shape and color, body type and size, and facial features can be adjusted. Players will also be allotted a certain number of points with which to choose their base stats. Gender and name will also be chosen.

Throughout the game, players will find various Hardware and Software Upgrades. These will be used to further tweak the character. Some Upgrades will potentially change stats (both beneficial and detrimental) and add abilities while others will be purely for the visual customization of the character. Hardware stats include (but are not limited to) how much damage Hardware can take (both from falling and by enemy Agents), how high players can jump, how fast players can run, how long players can hold on to ledges, and how long wall runs can be maintained. Likewise, Software stats include how long players can remain in a Hack, how long players can remain inside the Private Network, how efficient players are at dodging Agent attacks after failed Hacks, and the range at which Hacks can be initiated. Visual Upgrades include new clothes, altered skin tones, digital "tattoos," and accessories.

Hardware and Software stats are separate. For example, the running Speed in the Real World is separate from the running speed in The Network. Some Upgrades affect both Hardware and Software stats, but not all do. Unlike these, visual Upgrades that are obtained can be applied to both the physical body as well as the digital body. The appearances are still kept separate like Hardware and Software so as to allow players to look different between the two worlds.

Intended Audience

The aim of *The Network* is to receive an ESRB rating of T for Teen. Because of this, the game's main demographic will be more "hardcore" gamers from ages 13 and up (though "hardcore" gamers beyond the age of 35 or so may be less interested in the cyberpunk genre than younger gamers). Because of the vast customization options available to players as well as the character genders that differ based on the player's choice of main character gender (for example, Simon/Lisa), *The Network* is intended to appeal to both males and females in this age range.

Intended Platform(s)

There is no specific platform in mind for *The Network* as of now. This game could potentially be on any current system perhaps with the exception of the Nintendo 3DS and PlayStation Vita. The Wii U could be a potential platform as well. Many of the mechanics, particularly entering The Network and Hacking, seem like they would work well with using the Wii U's GamePad tablet controller.

Planned Production Value Details

Because the main character is a cyborg, various GUI and HUD elements can be incorporated in fictionally excusable and appropriately stylistic ways. For example, when players are close enough to Hack and Agent, the word "Hack" can appear above the Agent and/or a faint outline will surround the enemy. Another example could be when the various timers in the Network are about to run out, "glitches" start appearing on the screen. This will not only be a visual representation informing players that they need to Escape, but it may also occlude the players' vision, somewhat forcing them to Escape (preventing them from dealing with the consequences of Ejection/becoming Trapped/Termination).

Another planned detail will deal with animations for entering and leaving Hacks. If a player is moving, say, sliding when a Hack is initiated, the screen will quickly transition to the Personal Network, and the character will slide into the environment. Using this same sliding example, the last action required in the Hack will be to slide. Using the same animations upon entering and exiting Hacks will hopefully provide a nice visual flow between environments.

Somewhat related will be the environmental animations when players fail to complete a Hack or reach the end of the Private Network. When time runs out, the environment will quickly degrade into pixels, leaving no footing for the character who will then fall down into nothing. A second or so later, the environment of The Network will appear (in the reverse manner of the degradation), and the character will drop to the ground in front of the Firewall (in the case of failing the Private Network run). If a Hack is failed, a similar degradation and reverse-degradation of the environments will be seen, though the character will be "thrown" back into his/her body and stumble/fall out of whatever animation was being performed upon entrance to the Hack.