

# Project Iris: The Broken World

## World Design Document

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## OVERVIEW

*With the Earth edging closer to extinction thanks to corporate greed, one human discovers a secret about themselves that could heal some of the divides of a broken world, or destroy it forever.*

Project Iris takes place on Earth in 2206, during an era of great turmoil and societal turbulence. The world has been rebuilt and **synthetic biology** and **bioengineering** are now at the forefront of human evolution. Biological modification has become an important theme in present-day life on Earth.

After the global conflict of 2140 which the Ascensiona Cult spearheaded, the world was left to rebuild itself from the ashes of a near-armageddon. Pre-existing governmental, religious and monarchical structures were eradicated in the uprising, leaving Earth without any form of sociopolitical order for many years. From the chaos that remained, many privately owned companies tried to capitalise on the world's remaining resources, but only three succeeded in monopolising them thus creating a New World Order.

Although the conflict had devastating consequences for humanity, it was able to rebuild a more sophisticated, technologically advanced version of society in a few specific locations based on the resources that remained. Infrastructure was concentrated in the new metropolis-like city of **New Tripoli**, which was re-engineered at speed over the last 45 years.

The world is now owned by these three feuding global conglomerates known collectively as the '**MegaCorps**', who have monopolised the planet's resources and used the biotechnology revolution to their advantage. Earth has come to be known as 'the broken world'. Society exists under a three-tier totalitarian regime run by each of these MegaCorps. People have been forced to align themselves with one of these corporations or be forced to live as social outcasts in the wastelands.

As these MegaCorps control resources on Earth, people struggle to survive without being beholden to one of them. For this reason, the wastelands are a dangerous free-for-all, where people's sole aim is survival. There's a huge disparity between the elite and the poor, and social structure has dissolved into a range of factions divided by those bound into MegaCorps' allegiances and several wasteland clans.

New Tripoli is one of the last remaining cities on Earth, with its surrounding wastelands being barely habitable, but made viable due to a mass of underground bunkers and cannibalised settlements developed from what remains of 21st-century life. The city of New Tripoli is a huge, futuristic, sprawling environment made up of a complex mixture of high-tech skyscrapers, neon-lit

towers and palatial residences, to deep underground tunnels and subways, interspersed with steampunk-esque architectural remnants and run-down ghetto zones. **The city is home to millions and has little sympathy for those condemned to live as outcasts in the wastelands.**

The three MegaCorps have been working on ways to escape Earth and/or preserve and evolve human life but have so far been unsuccessful. There are rumours of the top-secret space project within **Stratek** (MC1), however, members of this corporation plan to restrict access only to themselves and of course, **those who can afford to join them on their escape expedition.** This leaves little hope for 'lesser' members of society to survive in the event of global collapse.

**Spelling Corp** (MC2) lags somewhat in the technological advancements made by their rival conglomerates, but what they so far lack in research and progress, they make up for in **resource management and people power.** Spelling Corp is expanding rapidly thanks to its near-total ownership of those classed as the lowest members of society. They rule with a combination of intimidation, bribery and mob mentality. The other two MCs regard Spelling Corp as a problematic and growing threat.

**Borganon** (MC3) has also been carrying out highly classified biotechnology-based **research into ways to preserve and rapidly evolve the human race** in the event of near-total planetary resource exhaustion. They've made some progress in genetically modifying human cells to repair and regenerate themselves to prolong life expectancy and lay the foundations for immortality. However, very few people know of this project outside of the ruling elite within Borganon's secretive high-ranking officials.

## WORLD MAPS & TIMELINE

1. High-level world overview
2. City of New Tripoli, Earth, 2066
3. The Wastelands, Earth, 2066

This timeline documents how Earth has reached its starting point at the beginning of our story. It spans the Earth's past 200 years and impacts the potential plot points for the ongoing narrative.

\*Diagrams to follow

## CULTURE

### City Dwellers

New Tripoli is home to a vast multicultural mix of human beings, many of whom still bear scars from the global conflict of 2140 and the years following it. The city is segregated into districts and

is ruled fractiously in an ongoing power struggle between the three MegaCorps, all of whom have city-based headquarters. **The gap between the elite and the poor is huge.**

Those who live in the ramshackle **Sobrante Districts** of the city rarely have the chance to venture beyond the limits of the district quarters. These are the poorest members of New Tripoli and are forced to live in a warren of underground tunnels, which provide shelter and safety despite their oppressive, dark and cramped living conditions. Overground, the buildings of the Sobrante are run-down and poorly maintained, used primarily as heavily guarded storage units, waste-recycling plants and housing for power generators.

Those who do live above ground in the Sobrante do so at their own risk, for the **brutal criminality of the streets** is managed only by the guards who patrol the areas of interest to the MegaCorps. Some areas of the Sobrante have been adapted to support those who live there; orphanages, flea markets and ill-equipped medical centres are a few of the district's special attractions. The dwellers of the Sobrante live predominantly in poverty and squalor, the security of life inside the city walls being their only barrier from social exile to the Wastelands. They perform menial tasks as well as criminal activities to survive. Survival is the only thing that many of these dwellers can strive for unless they can find the inner strength and resources to earn their way into the next district.

In the more civilised (but not exactly wealthy) **Utilis Districts** of New Tripoli lives a class of blue-collar workers who do most of the city's necessary manual labour, maintenance and construction work. Typically home to builders, security guards, sanitation workers and warehouse operatives, this mediocre tier of New Tripoli **sits in the middle of the social status quo**. It's enormous, home to the largest cross-section of the 'useful but dispensable' class of city dwellers. Its inhabitants know they're never far from falling down the ladder and finding themselves in the slumlike market districts if they don't maintain productivity.

Further afield, in the elevated hills of New Tripoli's **Vitalis District**, the city's **white and gold-collar workers, doctors and technologists** reside. Revered by many, these people have worked their way up through the ranks of their respective allegiances (to MC1, 2 or 3) and have the property to show for it. Their district is so large and well-gated that they rarely encounter dwellers from other parts of New Tripoli. They have access to their own hospital, university and laboratories, which often carry out lower clearance-level research tasks for the Borganon or Stratek initiatives.

The **Arcadis Complex** is home to the **upper echelons of New Tripoli's ruling elite** and is almost inaccessible to those outside it. Arcadis is set out over a glittering array of sky towers and mountainside mansions. It is guarded by a secure holodome that renders its inhabitants unreachable by those classed as lesser members of society. Only those permitted to live in Arcadis may venture beyond the holodome's barriers via an elite monorail or sky-cab

transportation network. The Arcadis Complex is also the location of each main headquarters of the MegaCorps.

## Wasteland Outcasts

Exiles who live outside the walls of New Tripoli in its surrounding wastelands. These people have either been exiled for failing to affiliate with one of the MegaCorps' or have shunned the option of trading the safety of life within New Tripoli in exchange for their allegiance to one of the MCs. Instead, these outcasts survive by scavenging, raiding and attempting to farm what remains of Earth's post-war depleted landscape.

Settlements and ramshackle townships exist in varying locations around the wastelands, many of which have been rebuilt around former (pre-war) structures. The outcasts are fiercely protective of what they've managed to build and resources are scarce. **Survival is all that counts in the wastelands** and as a result, there's lawlessness to the volatile social structures that exist there. The outcasts have no love for the city dwellers and vice versa. The outcasts are fiercely defensive of their settlements and will do anything to protect what they've established to survive another day.

## LOCATIONS

### New Tripoli City

A sprawling, expansive cityscape that's home to the majority of what remains of the human race. One of the last remaining viable cities on the planet. It is a segregated city, but there are ways in and out besides that of the main gates. Few attempt to leave and those that do aren't usually welcomed back unless they know how to come and go freely.

Movement between the city's districts is strictly controlled, and many never leave their assigned areas. The consequences for free movement are harsh; those found attempting to access a district above their assigned clearance level may be exiled to the wastelands or worse.

### **Arcadis Complex:**

The highest tier of society in New Tripoli, secured by a Holodome. Home to the elite members of the city and the location of the three main headquarters of the MegaCorps.

### **Stratek HQ**

Ultra-modern headquarters of Stratek, a company driven by technological advancement. They are researching many future possibilities to improve Earth's existing and new technology. There

are rumours that they've successfully created a small-scale teleportation tech, so their city base includes a state-of-the-art science/tech laboratory, which is impressive, despite not quite matching the scale of their competitors at Borganon. Their president, Mrs L, is a rich, over-ambitious maniac with no problems using unorthodox and unethical methods for her research.

Stratek has access to a pre-war era space shuttle base, located in a crater far to the southeast coast of New Tripoli. Isolated from the city and geographically estranged from the rest of the Wastelands, Stratek does its most secretive research and testing here to locate a way to escape Earth and build a new civilisation on another planet.

### **Spelling Corp HQ**

An infamous private company run by the Spelling family. Their base is less modernised than Stratek's, focusing instead on material luxuries and intricate/palatial designs. It is a company that loves to show off its material assets and uses its influence over the people to its advantage. Spelling Corp owns no properties outside the city but maintains links with a faction of wasteland outcasts who they call upon to enforce raids and taxes on any external settlements they learn about. Spelling Corp remains a corrupt force to be reckoned with but is more focused on controlling the existing population rather than considering the future of the Earth.

### **Borganon HQ**

A large-scale, highly secure scientific laboratory base situated in one of the most inaccessible areas of New Tripoli. There are rumours that Borganon's history lies in hushed connections with the remnants of the Ascensiona Cult of 60 years earlier, but the nature of its work on modern-day Earth provides a strong cover for that idea, if true. Borganon's base is vast and secretive, and much more focused on biological and genetic engineering than that of progress through technology as at Stratek.

They have access to a secret area north of New Tripoli that only its top-level directorship knows of. This area is dedicated to the study of planetary preservation and used to be known as the 'Arcology project' back in 2125. These projects were presumed abandoned after the war, but Borganon has been developing the zone in secret since the turn of 2155. Borganon also has large-scale control over the city's main hydroponics dome just outside the city limits. This means they control most of the city's plant-based food resources.

### **Vitalis District**

Second-highest tier of society in New Tripoli. Home to white and gold-collar workers. Laboratories, hospitals, universities, schools; high-level earners who live well-resourced, comfortable lifestyles.

## **Utilis District**

Mid-level tier of society in New Tripoli. Home to blue-collar workers, and manual/semi-skilled professionals such as those in construction, security, maintenance and engineering. Home to those classed as 'useful but dispensable'.

## **Sobrante District**

Lowest-level tier of society in New Tripoli. Home to the poorest members of the city who exist in a state of near-poverty and criminality. A haven for those who've made it in from the wastelands and live day-to-day hoping they'll never be exiled back to them.

## **Factions (New Tripoli)**

### **Club Six**

A faction made up of security and maintenance professionals who work to keep the citizens of New Tripoli under control and prevent public criminal activity. Split into different city districts, they enforce the rules and regulations that come with life in New Tripoli and enjoy modest benefits from the Stratek and Borganon Corporations as a result of maintaining the status quo. As a member of Club Six, one can live comfortably in exchange for their service to the MegaCorps.

### **Pact**

A secret faction of undercover rogues and bandits who carry out the underhand/criminal activities of the Spelling Corps and whoever else is willing to pay for their services. For the right price and other benefits, they're unafraid to dispose of problematic citizens on behalf of their backers. These are the city's secret mercenaries and the thorns in the side of Club Six.

### **Networkers**

A faction encompassing multiple districts and whose membership is the only link many of New Tripoli's citizens have to one another. Communication occurs between Networkers in secret, through set terminal points across different parts of the city. The Networkers aim to one day rise against the MegaCorps and reclaim New Tripoli as a free city, a goal currently unattainable due to the strict controls imposed upon everyday life.

## **The Wastelands**

A large expanse of deserted land, leading into the rocky mountains to the northwest of New Tripoli, including various abandoned/derelict building remnants and ramshackle rebuilt townships. The wastelands' landscapes range from sandblasted desert areas to the leftovers of industrial

ruins, with varying degrees of blasted landscape in between. The wastelands begin on exiting the main gates of New Tripoli, where the arid badlands of the Esho Valley begin.

## **Esho Valley**

This vast area of arid and desolate land spans the distance between the main gates of New Tripoli and the next accessible settlement area of **Rior**. Once home to a free-flowing river that sustained the land and surrounding rocky mountains, Esho Valley has dwindled to a barren, sun-baked expanse with only a few remaining water sources pooling at various points through its old riverbed. These water sources are in constant danger of pollution and contamination and must be purified/decontaminated if they are to be used for human consumption.

Esho Valley is home to several dangers, both natural and human. It is not a place to wander unprotected and provides little shelter to those unfortunate enough to venture into its relentless heat. With that said, there may be some surprising treasures and resources to be scavenged from the blasted landscapes of Esho Valley, especially if you're capable enough to take down some of its predatory occupants.

## **Grave**

A small settlement to the southwest of **New Tripoli**, **Grave** is the first accessible town in the Esho Valley. It sits at the foot of the Eshona mountain range and is often a contested territory as one of the first places many exiles reach on their journey from New Tripoli. The inhabitants of Grave may change frequently due to this; those who are new aren't always welcomed as resources are scarce and shelter isn't secure.

Grave could be established as a larger base with the right kind of leadership and some form of rules, but it's often under attack from newcomers who are desperate to find a new place to call home. As a result, it's also home to a mass body pit on the other side of a nearby ravine, thereby earning the ramshackle settlement the name Grave.

## **Rior**

One of the main accessible human settlements outside of **New Tripoli**, but the furthest away from the city, far to its northwest. Rior is home to many of the wasteland outcasts who managed to survive their journey through **Esho Valley**, and many other outcasts whose home origins are unknown. Many of the inhabitants of Rior have been exiled, although some have chosen the life of the outcasts in direct opposition to the sociopolitical restructuring of humanity in New Tripoli.

As a result of living in the wastelands, some of these outcasts have developed **environmental mutations**, not all of which are negative. They have adapted to their surroundings in unexpected ways and have much to teach those who dare to visit the Freetown of Rior. Whether or not they will share their knowledge with strangers is another matter. The settlement resembles an old-era



human shanty town, with structures created from scavenged resources and the natural geography of the area.

Rior is located at the far end of the Eshona mountain range and makes additional use of a network of caves that are situated there. It is positioned with survival as its main intent, a short distance from one of the remaining water sources in the drying riverbed. Sourcing power and water remains a constant priority for the outcasts of Rior, as does food production.

## **New Need**

Hidden deep in the Eshona Mountains to the south of **Rior** and accessible only to those that inhabit the mountain settlements, **New Need** is the main trading hub of The Wastelands. Those who've been able to scavenge materials and resources from the Esho Valley (and perhaps beyond) can bring their findings here to trade, barter and upgrade their equipment (gear and weapons) and other resources (crafting/biological modifiers). New items and materials are traded daily, as many of the New Need 'Fetchers' scour and loot the discarded bodies of bandits, outcasts, creatures and crates that scatter the Wastelands each day.

## **Eshona Mountains**

The wasteland mountain range to the west and northwest of New Tripoli is home to the Esho Valley and some of its outcast-inhabited settlements. One of the few natural landmarks that have yet to give way to the effects of global erosion and climate change over the last 200 years, the mountains provide shelter from the sun's onslaught to those in the valley below. They also house a range of caves and precipices that can be traversed, although this is risky due to the unknown structural stability of many of the mountains.

## **Factions (The Wastelands)**

### **Remnants**

A faction of wasteland outcasts that consider themselves as 'what remains' of those cast out or isolated from New Tripoli. **The Remnants** have banded together to form settlements across the wastelands and are the founding faction of life outside the city. They plan to rebuild their civilisation, free of the tyranny of the city's MegaCorps.

### **Jackal Clan**

A more brutal faction of wasteland outcasts who thrive on the lawlessness their deserted landscape provides. Members of the **Jackal Clan** have little to no moral code and think nothing of attacking whatever settlements they find on their raids across the wasteland. They're hostile to anyone who hasn't made it into their ranks, and not much friendlier to those who have either.

## **Exodites**

A nomadic faction of wasteland outcasts that haven't settled in one place but prefer to wander the land outside of New Tripoli, setting up temporary campsites and shelters as they explore. **The Exodites** believe they'll find a fertile new land of promise if they wander for long enough. They're open and welcoming, if a little unhinged in their methods.

## **Other Locations Of Interest**

### **Borganon Arcodome**

Located to the far north of New Tripoli and undiscovered by/inaccessible to anyone outside the inner circle of Borganon's top-tier directors, the **Arcodome** is a top-secret planetary preservation project. The Arcodome has been developed covertly for the past 50 years and is the sole revisioning of the pre-war era's work on 'arcology projects'.

### **Tripolian Hydroponics**

Situated just outside the city boundary of New Tripoli, to the north of the Arcadis Complex and accessible via Borganon's underground laboratory tunnels. **Tripolian Hydroponics** is the city's main production source of soil-free crops for food and various other genetically modified plants. It is owned by Borganon, who use its supply and production line to control much of the city's food stock.

### **Stratek Crater**

To the far southeast of New Tripoli in an area that's geographically isolated from the main city and most of the Wastelands is **Stratek Crater**. Built into a modified rocket embedded into a freestanding rock formation in the centre of the crater, this top-secret tech lab is owned by Stratek. It is where a large base of Stratek's scientists, astrophysicists and other technicians live and work in the pursuit of developing the corporation's extraplanetary interests. It is accessible only by air (airship/jet) from Stratek HQ, and cannot be escaped from, due to its natural crater formation.