Cybernetics

These devices and, in fact, the entire section is designed to compliment the "Cybernetic Implant" Asset presented in Nathan's "New Traits", available at the 'Waves in the Black' Cargo Hold (http://home.comcast.net/~wavesintheblack/wavescargohold.htm).

The "Cybernetic Implant" Asset is fairly open-ended and allows the player to determine what kind of cybernetic device their characters has had implanted as well as determining what specific effects it has. I happen to prefer this approach over detailing (and thus limiting) what specific kinds of cybernetics are available. Nevertheless, I've included a few off-the-cuff examples here in the hopes that it might inspire others in developing implants for their character(s).

I haven't included prices in the description for two reasons: 1) these cybernetics aren't really intended as a equipment list, I'm more just tossing out some ideas; 2) cybernetics can very easily turn a Serenity campaign into a Cyberenity campaign and I doubt most GM's would want that. The second reason being the most pertinent I've included a new Complication (CIRS) below for use in limiting cybernetics use. You may also noticed that I completely avoided Cyberjacks and Skillsofts for the same reason.

GM's should also bear in mind that most cybernetics would very limited commercial market value and thus would typically very hard to find, not to mention finding someone reliable to implant the things would also likely be very difficult. Bear in mind also that in the Serenity 'verse "cyberpunk" implants are not at all common. While prosthetics are readily available and perfectly acceptable for someone maimed in some industrial accident, having an internal air tank or retractable claws implanted would strike most folk as completely bizarre. For this reason in my campaigns I typically keep the cybernetics limited to starting Traits (assuming an appropriate background reason for their existence) and make getting such implants during the course of the campaign very difficult (and costly).

Some (Minor) Cybernetic Implants:

Low Light Eye
When activated this system eliminates any penalties from low-light conditions by amplifying the ambient light. Some amount of light must be present to amplify, of course, even if it is exceedingly dim. Further, the system can easily be temporarily overloaded with bright light (from a flashlight, flash of lightning or similar) though the wearer is immune to the residual blindness and "after image" effects from such overexposure. (Note: any cybernetic eye that projects the images it captures directly into the optic nerve is assumed to provide similar protection by automatically limiting the "signal" to a level the body's natural systems can tolerate.)

Eye Capture
This cybernetic eye functions like any standard replacement eye with additional convenience of a built-in photo/video capture. The internal capture can store up to four hours of standard video and can be downloaded to any appropriate device easily.

Microscopic Vision
This cybernetic eye provides it's wearer with the ability to magnify vision up to x1000 vision. An internal computer monitors and controls "drift", zoom and resolution.

Low/High-frequency Ear Implant
This ear replacement simply extends the wearer's hearing into either the low or high frequency range. As a Major Asset it might do both. (Note: like the cybernetic eyes above it assumed that any cybernetic ear automatically protects from sounds that might otherwise cause damage by automatically limiting the input to safe levels.)

Ear Recorder
Similar to the Eye Capture above, this implant has it's own built-on audio recorder that, when activated, can record up to 12 hours of material. Furthermore, sound recordings made by the implant are capable of far more precision and detail than the input which the wearer normally

receives.

"Smartgun" System
Sensors on the weapon and a direct "tap" into the user's optic nerve allow targeting crosshairs and other indicators to appear within the user's field of vision, enhancing targeting in much the same way as a simple laser sight. While it require the use of a specially designed weapon (at least newtechx2) this implant system allows increased performance in the use of that weapon (+1 skill step). Furthermore a newtechx4 version of the weapon would include a high resolution video camera installed along the weapon sights, projected directly into the wielder's sensorium when activated and allowing the user to fire around corners or from behind cover using only the video image to aim. While this allows the user to remain under full cover while firing on targets, it is somewhat inferior to direct line of sight and the system's +1 step bonus is negated.

Internal Library
Quite simply, an implanted standard or professional grade data library. Requires a 25cr monthly renewal fee to keep it up to date and can be upgraded via cortex like any other data library. Control and display through sub-vocal commands and either optic nerve interface or internal audio (or, heck, why not both?)

Adrenal Booster
An alternative to boosting one's Strength and Agility with cyber-limbs or artificial muscles, this is a computer controlled implant attached directly into the adrenal glands. When activated it provides the wearer with a +1 step bonus to Strength and Agility for about one minute (or the duration of one combat, as the GM determines). [Alternately the Adrenal Booster could provide an optional +2 step bonus to both Attributes for a limited duration, at the GM discretion. This increased bonus would, however, come at the cost of imposing one Stun point per turn one the wearer for the duration of the boost.]

Sub-dermal Armor
Mesh armor or it's equivalent implanted sub-dermally on the wearer's torso. Can be combined with standard, worn armor and is completely concealed (at least from visual inspection).

Internal Air Supply
A thirty minutes air supply stored in an internal tank. When activated it provides much the same effect as an old scuba gear breathing apparatus. The internal tank must be maintained, however, a requires at least a yearly inspection if not a bit of minor surgery to "top off" the tank and maintain the seals.

Concealed Compartment
This one is actually not all that uncommon. Many Alliance Operatives and minor agents use this minor body alteration and it was relatively popular with Independent spies during the war. A simple pocket built into the body just about anywhere room can be found allows up to one pound or six cubic inches of material to be stored out of sight. The concealed compartment is completely invisible to casual inspection but can be easily seen by standard x-rays, scans and other security devices (but, again, a newtech version could get around some or all of these security measures).

Lung Filters
More or less a built in NBC mask but limiting it's protection only to inhalants. Tear gas, nerve agents and other such weapons are not hindered from contact with skin, eyes, mucus membranes, etc. Still, a fairly handy alteration.

Spotter Eyes
This cybernetic implant replaces the eyes a standard eye replacement with the added benefit of built-in Spotter Contacts (see Newtech Goodies).

Pain Dampener

This cybernetic system slightly reduces pain signals in the body providing the wearer with "natural" 1S armor (reducing stun damage by one).

Some (Major) Cybernetic Implants:

Pain Threshold
This delightful little cybernetic system provides what every player wishes their character had: another Second Wind per day. By dampening and/or imposing a maximum threshold on pain signals it effectively allows the wearer to shake off some of that pesky Stun damage.

Pain Control
This cybernetic system gives the wearer control over pain signals from specific parts of the body. Unfortunately this control is limited and does not allow complete shut down of all pain signals (something inherently dangerous to begin with). It does, however, allow the wearer to consciously reduce pain signals from specific wounds and areas of the body, effectively negating the wound penalty from serious wounds (see p. 157 of the rulebook).

Weapon System
This more advanced version of the "Smartgun" system does not require a specially designed projectile weapon for use. Precision tuned to the wearer's body, this system is able to monitor, coordinate and refine the wearer's hand-eye coordination in order to improve combat ability. The system can either provide an overall +2 step bonus to any combat skill specialty (handguns, knives, thrown weapon, boxing, etc) or a +3 step bonus to any overall weapon type (ranged weapon, guns, heavy weapons, etc). This is definitely one that the GM will have to approve.

Implanted Blade
These weapons come in a variety of shapes and locations. Most wearers typically sport retractable claws (either from the forearm or under the fingernails), though any retractable knife-like blade can be implanted anywhere on the body, at the GM's discretion and common sense. For example, you can't get a 4' blade implanted in your arm unless your arm is at least 4' long and you're willing to never bend it again. An implanted blade has whatever stats it would have if wielded and the cost of the blade itself is figured directly into the cost of the implant. Mastery of such a weapon, however, requires it's own skill specialty (example: Melee Weapon Combat/Nail blades) though the general skill level itself would otherwise apply.
Implanted blades are hidden from plain sight but not necessarily protected from detection by metal detectors or other sensors. On the other hand there is nothing especially preventing the character from submitting a newtech version of such to the GM for approval.

Body Gun
Similarly to Implanted Blades above, a Body Gun is simply a retractable gun implanted some where within the body. Naturally, the choice of location is somewhat more limited than a blade (consider recoil and discharge before implanting a derringer in your groin, guys) and loading and unloading must be taken into account as well. Nevertheless a cleverly designed Body Gun can prove extraordinarily handy in many situations.

Monofilament Spool
Typically implanted in a finger, the wrist or palm, a monofilament spool makes for a handy garrote whenever such a thing might be required. Like the Implanted Blade and Body Gun examples above, a modicum of common sense is required in determining the location.

Eidetic Memory Chip
Provides a +2 step bonus to Memorize and Recall of specific information. While this device does not boost Memorize or Recall generally it can provide for storage of specific memories the wearer indicates. That is, only those memories or information the player specifies are being routed via the Chip receive the benefit of the implant's Memorize and Recall bonus.

Dermal Delivery System
This nasty little implant allows the wearer to store up to three doses of any contact drug or poison for delivery by touch. The device must be activated to use (naturally, you don't want it active all the time). The delivery point is typically in the palm or fingertips but can be anywhere the wearer prefers.

Internal Automed
An implanted, miniature version of a personal automed. Monitors the wearer's vital signs, provides limited life saving intervention and aids in recovery. Requires yearly maintenance and may need to be "re-supplied" after First Aid interventions. The Internal Automed provides a +2 step bonus to Second Wind rolls, reduces difficulty of Recovery rolls by one and automatically provide First Aid (at d12+d2 skill level) after the first Dying check (see p. 157 of the rule book). It should be noted that a standard Internal Automed contains only enough supplies for three First Aid checks before it requires re-supply.

New Trait: CIRS ("The Curse"), Major Complication
Cybernetic Implantation Rejection Syndrome is a psychotic disorder associated with over stimulation of the central nervous system stemming from an excessive amount of neural interface devices and other cybernetics. Symptoms of the syndrome include uncontrolled trembling in extremities, extreme irritability and mild to severe psychosis.
A victim of CIRS suffers a -1 step penalty to all actions requiring physical precision (firing a handgun, threading a needle, etc.) as well as a -2 step penalty to all social interactions due to their irritability and odd behavior. Having one or more cybernetic implants removed to "ease the load" on one's central nervous system won't help, the syndrome runs far deeper than that. Removal of some implants, psychiatric counseling and probably medication (not to mention a heap of Plot Points to buy off the complication) are required to manage the symptoms.
(This complication is identical to the one in the New Traits section and repeated here only for convenience.)

Using CIRS to limit implant abuse by players:
The chance of any particular character developing CIRS as a result of cybernetic implantations depends on the number and type of prostheses/implants they currently "wear" and the character's Willpower score. Willpower effectively sets a decent upper limit of what kind and how many Cybernetic implants a starting character may have (6 for a D6 Willpower score, 10 for a D10 Willpower, etc.). While CIRS can result from further implants received after character creation it is assumed that those the character starts out with haven't caused a CIRS reaction (unless, of course, the player chooses it as a starting Complication).
For each further implantation received during the course of play, however, there does exist a chance of developing CIRS. For each additional implant the character later receives total up the implants he/she currents has, as well as the new additions (individually), in this manner: For each Minor Asset cybernetic implant count 2 points, for each Major Asset implant count 4. Take the total as Difficulty for a Willpower check to determine whether or not CIRS will later develop. As stated above, Willpower sets the maximum threshold before the CIRS automatically takes effect (for example: a character with Willpower d10 can have a maximum of two major and one minor implants without automatically suffering CIRS). It is up to you whether you inform the player immediately or keep the results secret to spring them on the character later.