

THE FUTURE WAR CONFERENCE • A TRADE SHOW SET IN THE FUTURE

WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY.

A manifesto.

The Future War Conference is a defense trade show for strictly fictional products. Nothing on the floor exists. Everything on the floor could. Every exhibit is a product built — on paper, in public — entirely from ingredients that are real: parts you can order, papers you can cite, systems already fielded. Each booth declares the year it believes its product could exist, and that year is not set dressing; it is a claim, recorded in the open, and graded when it comes due.

It is useful fiction — the discipline the FICINT writers founded, the rules of the real — given a floor plan, a catalog, and a scoreboard.

WHAT IT STANDS FOR

§ 1

Fiction should be declared.

Every arms show already exhibits fiction — renders, mockups, brochures for systems no program has funded — parked beside flying hardware, borrowing its credibility. We do not object to the fiction. We object to the disguise. Here, fiction is the admission criterion: nobody can fake existence in a room where existence is disqualifying.

§ 2

Imagination deserves receipts.

Speculation earns its seriousness the way the genre's footnotes do: by being checkable. The bill of materials is the footnote, in atoms. A concept that cannot name its ingredients is a costume; a concept that can is a proposal.

§ 3

The future is a claim, not a mood.

"Set in 2031" means *could exist by 2031*, said in public by someone willing to be wrong in public. Prediction without accountability is decoration. Every year stated on this floor lives in a ledger until it is settled — existed, slipped, or never — in front of everyone.

§ 4

The floor is open.

A prime's concept shop and a sophomore file the same one-page sheet and are graded by the same rubric, and the sophomore can win. Affiliation is not an argument. The best concepts the industrial base never sees are the ones its org charts cannot produce.

§ 5

An exhibit is an offer.

This is a floor, not a gallery. Behind every booth stands someone prepared — if the right person walks up — to build it, license it, or drop everything and go make it real. The fiction is the medium. The willingness is the exhibit.

§ 6

Some futures get booths so they never get factories.

Useful fiction's original job was warning. The Red Pavilion shows what could be built and argues that it shouldn't be: ingredients cited, recipe withheld, shroud on. A warning with a bill of materials is the only kind that gets taken seriously.

The conference is an engine, not a camera.

We do not pretend to observe the future from a distance. A floor that gathers the feasible, the willing, and the interested in one room does not predict what comes next — it participates in it. We accept that, and we choose our exhibits the way you choose anything you might be responsible for.

We have the technology. What doesn't exist is the room.

This document practices what it declares. Every idea in it is borrowed from something real — the genre, the readiness scale, the open floor, the forecast that gets graded, the catalog that published want before inventory. The conference itself is the one line item marked **DOES NOT EXIST**, and this page is its provenance sheet.

first edition · exhibits set 2028-2040 · graded annually
founding cohort forming · affiliation optional
dehnbostele@gmail.com · usefulshow.com

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