Hacking the Hacking

A Matrix supplement for The Sprawl
Version 1.0
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These rules are a replacement of the official rules for hacking in "The Sprawl", a ptbA-based tabletop roleplaying system for the Cyberpunk genre. The descriptions from the chapter of the rules of "The Sprawl" still apply, but the rules are completely replaced.

Neither these rules nor the author are in any way affiliated to "The Sprawl" or it's author. "The Sprawl" is created by Hamish Cameron.

General

In these rules a "system" is meant not a single computer, but a network of multiple computers. The Matrix at a Zaibatsus facility usually has one system. Only if certain computers or networks need to be separated or strongly protected, they may be individual systems. A system always has a security rating.

Blue: low protection, usually has no really interesting data or subsystems. i.e. public information portals or Zaibatsu systems responsible for publically known purposes
Red: moderate security, may have interesting data or subsystems, that may be of definite use, i.e. average Zaibatsu or government systems.
Black: high security, that process sensitive and highly valuable data or control dangerous subsystems, i.e. secret research systems or systems for upper management

A subsystem is a computer or device connected to a system. It is not a data processing unit, but capable of doing other things, like a weapon, a door lock, a security control system, which raises alarms.

Moves

Hacking the matrix works with the following moves.

Gain Access (Mind)

Allows a hacker to gain access to a system. Sometimes the hacker might directly be within the right system, i.e. when the hacker is jacked in inside a compound and wants to control the video camera within the next room. But if the hacker is entering the Matrix farther away, he might gain access to several systems until he reaches his destination.

10+: You can access the system.
7-9: Choose one:
- You triggered an alarm (forward the relevant clock).
- You triggered ICE of the systems level.
- You have restricted access and need to search the database to find connected systems or subsystems (even if they are not hidden).
- You have to struggle not to be kicked from the system, take -1 forward.
- You are being traced. Once the relevant clock shows 0:00 they know exactly where you are
- physically. After 21:00 they may be able to narrow it down.

Search Database (Mind)

A hacker can search the system, he has currently access to. He may use this move to search for specific data, hidden subsystems or secretly connected systems.

10+: You find what you were searching for. If it is data, you may now transfer it to your deck.
7-9: Choose one:
- You triggered an alarm (forward the relevant clock).
- You triggered ICE of the systems level.
- The data of information is corrupted and thus inaccurate, take -1 forward when acting on the information or manipulating the data.
- The data of information is encrypted. You first need to decrypt it to read it.
- You are being traced. Once the mission clock shows 0:00 they know exactly where you are
- physically. After 21:00 they may be able to narrow it down.

You may search again at any time, but only for different things.

Control Subsystem (Mind)

Lets the hacker take control over a connected subsystem.
10+: Hold 3
7-9: Hold 1. You may choose up to two more hold now, but for each choose one:
- You triggered an alarm (forward the relevant clock).
- You triggered ICE of the systems level.
- You have to struggle to maintain control, you or the controlled device take -1 forward.

- You just have a small time frame to execute your actions before your control is lost.
- You are being traced. Once the mission clock shows 0:00 they know exactly where you are
- physically. After 21:00 they may be able to narrow it down.

You can use your hold to let the subsystem perform actions within its capabilities. One hold let's it perform one action, like shut it down, attack a target, raise or prevent an alarm. You may try to control it again gaining more hold. But once you roll your first miss for this subsystem, you lose control and thereby all remaining hold and may not try again until you have logged out.

Jack Out (Cool)

After triggering black ICE, you can't simply log out. You need to focus and rip that damn cable out of your data Jack - or at least press the disconnect hardware button on your deck.

10+: You logout and apart from being covered in sweat nothing bad happens.
7-9: Choose two:
- You take harm as by the ICE's description
- They know your location. Better get out - FAST!
- Your deck is fried, but at least you're not. And maybe you can recover its memory.
- You lost the memory of your deck, it is physically defect.

Optional: May be rolled with Synth in settings with wireless connections.

Logout (no roll)

You cleanly logout of the Matrix. Nothing bad happens (at least nothing caused by this move). You may not perform this move after triggering black ICE.

System Security Ratings and ICE

The security rating of a system defines its ICE and what happens once it's triggered.

Blue: It tries to destroy the programs on your deck. The MC will tell you to reduce one deck stat by 1 until you have time to reprogram it.
Red: It attacks your deck's hardware. Reduce its rating by 1. You may need to reduce a stat accordingly, if the sum of all stats exceeds the reduced rating.
Black: It attacks your brain (1-harm +AP).

Enemy Hackers

Enemy hackers may be called to action by an increasing mission clock. If an alarm was raised or ICE triggered in their system, they may locate the causing hacker immediately. Or they may locate him once he raises an alarm or triggers ICE later. Otherwise they need to search for him. Resolve any fight between two hackers in the Matrix by the "real world" basic moves and maybe additional playbook moves if they apply.

Cyberdecks

A Cyberdeck hast a few stats. If a move in the matrix fits a stat, it grants its value as a bonus. Only one stat may grant a bonus at a time. Stats may not be higher than 1 of not noted otherwise.

Scan rating: helps finding things
Hardening: provides protection from attacks
Probe rating: helps to intrude
Port rating: helps to maintain connection and control things
Harm: How much damage it does when attacking things, max 2

Each deck has a general rating, which is the number of points to be distributed to the stats, from 1 to 6. A deck costs rating plus three creds.