

Network Encounters

Network encounters are optional rules for more detailed hacking mechanics. While a simple opposed Computers check may be good enough for some, Networked Encounters are a welcome addition for any tech-heavy player or setting.

In a network encounter, one or more hackers try to access a system, override its security programs, and then do something in the system. However, sometimes the hacker faces off against a living opponent. This system operator tries to trace the hacker to find out where they are accessing the system from, then attempts to lock them out of the system entirely.

Network encounters use structured gameplay rules similar to that of combat encounters, allowing characters one network maneuver, and one network action on their turn.

Example Systems and Difficulties

EXAMPLE SYSTEM	DIFFICULTY
Unsecured system	Simple (-)
Public terminal, personal computer	Easy (♦)
Small business server	Average (♦ ♦)
Government network, corporate server	Hard (♦ ♦ ♦)
Experienced hacker network, military server	Daunting (♦ ♦ ♦ ♦)
Megacorporation system, intelligence agency server	Formidable (♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦)

Network Actions

Access System

Difficulty: Computers check (Difficulty Varies)

Available To: Hacker





Description: As an action, the hacker may make a Computers check to gain







access to the system. The difficulty of the check is based on the system's security protocols and overall complexity.



Once a hacker has successfully accessed a system, they can move around the system with an attempt access incidental and use the enact command maneuver to make the system do what they want (within the system's limits).

Burn System



Difficulty: Daunting (   ) Computers check

Available To: Hacker, System Operator




Description: As an action, a hacker or system operator may attempt a Daunting (   ) Computers check to damage a system they currently have access to.

If the check is successful, the system is damaged one step, plus one addition step for every additional 2 Success ( ). Damage follows the rules found in the [Gear](#) document. Apply the penalties from the Repairing Gear table to all checks made to do anything within the system.



Break Security

Difficulty: Average ( ) Computers check

Available To: Hacker

Description: Each program has a strength value. To break the security program, the hacker's attempt must generate a strength that exceeds the strength of the security program they are targeting. To determine that strength, the hacker makes an Average ( ) Computers check. If the check succeeds, their strength is equal to the number of Success () generated on the check.

If the hacker is using an appropriate security breaker, they add the security breaker's strength to the strength of their check (*this works similarly to calculating damage with a ranged weapon on a successful combat check*).

If the hacker fails, something happens determined by the security program. If the hacker succeeds, the security program shuts down and cannot be reactivated until the end of the hacker's next turn. Hackers can spend Advantage () or Triumph () to keep a program shut down longer, or to completely disable it.

Trace User

Difficulty: Opposed Computers versus Computers check






Available To: System Operator

Description: The system operator makes an opposed Computers versus Computers check targeting the hacker. If the system operator is successful, they gain one trace.






Trace Information


TRACES	RESULTS
1	The system operator learns what large-body area the hacker is currently in, based on the setting (planet, land, country, celestial body). The system operator reduces the difficulty of the Lockout action once.
2	The system operator learns what region or province the hacker is in within that area. The system operator reduces the difficulty of the Lockout action twice.
3	The system operator learns what location the hacker is in within a 10 kilometer radius. The system operator reduces the difficulty of the Lockout action three times.
4	The system operator learns the exact location of the hacker. The system operator reduces the difficulty of the Lockout action four times.

Lockout



Difficulty: Formidable (    )

Available To: System Operator

Description: Once the system operator is aware of the hacker's presence, the system operator may make a Formidable (    ) Computers check. If the system operator is successful, the hacker loses access to the system. At the GM's discretion, the hacker may be able to attempt the Access System action again. However, if they don't do something to disguise their signal, the difficulty of the Access System action increases by 2.

Reduce the difficulty of the lockout action once for every successful trace against the hacker, to a minimum of Easy ().

Sweep

Difficulty: Hard (  )

Available To: System Operator

Description: Even when the system operator doesn't know if there's an intruder in their system, they can use their own programs to sweep for intruders. If they succeed, they spot one intruder who has access to their system, plus one additional intruder for every additional Success (★).

Network Maneuvers

Enact Command

Available To: Hacker, System Operator

Description: This maneuver is what characters use to do things within a system after accessing it. What they do with this maneuver depends on the capabilities of the system, and could range from looping footage, to opening doors, to downloading data, to resetting a drone's targeting parameters. *(If what your character wants to do is too complex, your GM may require them to spend two or more enact command maneuvers to do it.)*

Activate Program

Available To: Hacker, System Operator

Description: Character use this maneuver to activate *(or to reactivate)* programs.

If a system operator activates or reactivates a program, a hacker can't access *(or can no longer access)* any of the subsystems behind it until they break through the program *(or break through it again)*. If a hacker activates a security breaker, all of their other security breakers automatically deactivate. A hacker may only have one active security breaker at a time.

Programs and Security Breakers

Barrier Programs

Barricade

Program Strength: 8

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system protects.

Additional Rules: During their turn, a system operator may spend a maneuver to reinforce . If they do so, the program increases its program strength to 10 until the end of the system operator's next turn.

Chest

Program Strength: 6

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system(s) Chest protects.

Additional Rules: Up to three sub-systems may be protected by this program.

Firewall

Program Strength: 6


Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system Firewall protects.

HAL

Program Strength: 7

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system protects.

Additional Rules: During their turn, a hacker may spend a maneuver to interact with HAL. If they do so, they decrease AI's program strength by 1 until the end of their next turn.

The hacker must add 1 Threat () for each previous time they have encountered until the end of the encounter.

Wall

Program Strength: 5

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system Ice Wall protects.

Sentry Programs

Cerberus

Program Strength: 9

Effects: If a hacker attempts to break this program and fails, the system of the rig or computer the hacker is using is destroyed (*which also kicks the hacker out of the system*). If the hacker is using a BMI, they suffer an automatic Head Ringer Critical Injury instead, and they must attempt to override Cerberus again during their following turn. If they are already suffering from the Head Ringer Critical Injury, they suffer the At The Brink Critical Injury instead. If they are already suffering from the At The Brink Critical Injury, they suffer The End is Nigh Critical Injury instead.

Additional Rules: For every Threat (👁️) the hacker generates when attempting to break Cerberus, the hacker suffers 2 strain. If the hacker is using a BMI, they suffer 1 strain and 1 wound instead.

Haunt

Program Strength: 3

Effects: If a hacker attempts to break this program and fails, the hacker suffers 6 strain and one of their security breakers is damaged one step. Haunt then moves to protect a different sub-system on the system (*if able*).

Additional Rules: For every Threat (👁️) the hacker generates when attempting to break Haunt, the hacker suffers 2 Strain.

Punisher

Program Strength: 5

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, the system operator or other system admins are immediately notified of the intrusion, and one of the hacker's security breakers is destroyed. Punisher then deactivates until the end of the hacker's next turn.

Additional Rules: If the hacker generates 3 Threat (👁️👁️👁️) when attempting to break Punisher, one of the hacker's security breakers is damaged two steps. If the hacker generates Despair (💀), one of their security breakers is destroyed instead.

Saur0n

Program Strength: 4

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, the system operator or other system admins are immediately notified of the intrusion and Hawk's Eye provides any system operators who access the system during the current encounter one successful trace against the hacker. Hawk's Eye then deactivates until the end of the hacker's next turn.

Additional Rules: If the hacker generates 2 Threat (👁️👁️) when attempting to break Hawk's Eye, Hawk's Eye provides any system operators who access the system during the current encounter once successful trace against the hacker.

Tattle

Program Strength: 3

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, the system operator or other system admins are immediately notified of the intrusion. Sentinel then deactivates until the end of the hacker's next turn.

Code Gate Programs

Authenticator


Program Strength: 3

Effects: If a character attempts to break this program and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.

Barb

Program Strength: 4

Effects: If a hacker attempts to break this program and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.

Additional Rules: For every Threat () the hacker generates when attempting to break Barb, the hacker suffers 1 strain. If the hacker is using a BMI, they suffer 1 wound instead.

Paywall

Program Strength: 3

Effects: If a hacker attempts to break this program and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.

Additional Rules: The hacker may pay a set fee (*usually between 5 and 50 currency*) to automatically succeed on their check to break Paywall.

Pop-Up

Program Strength: 2

Effects: If a hacker attempts to break this program and fails, they suffer 2 strain. Pop-Up then deactivates until the end of the hacker's next turn.

Additional Rules: The hacker may feel a fleeting compulsion to buy a new vehicle, refinance their mortgage, or invest their currency in precious metals.

Rubic

Program Strength: 3

Effects: If a hacker attempts to break this program and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.

Additional Rules: Before breaking Rubic, the hacker must spend a maneuver studying it. If they are unable to do so, they may not attempt to break Rubic.

Stack

Program Strength: 6

Effects: If a hacker attempts to break this program and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.

Additional Rules: If a hacker fails to break Stack, they add 2 Failure (❌❌) to any further attempts to break this program until the end of the encounter.

Security Breaker Programs

.inferno

Able to Affect: Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries

Override Strength: 6

Additional Rules: When .inferno successfully overrides a program, it destroys it. When a hacker uses Sagittarius to break a program, the hacker must spend Advantage (▲) or Triumph (⚙️) to destroy another active program on the system, and the GM must spend Threat (⚡) or Despair (💀) to destroy one other security breaker on the hacker's rig. If there are no other active programs on the system, the hacker must spend Advantage or Triumph to destroy the system, instead. *(This ends the Network encounter).*

Brute-Force

Able to Affect: Barriers

Override Strength: 6

CHARM

Able to Affect: Code Gates, Sentries

Override Strength: 0

Additional Rules: When a hacker uses CHARM to break sentries or code gates, the hacker may spend 3 Advantage (▲▲▲) or 1 Triumph (⚙️) to avoid suffering any of the effects from failing to override the program. *(This does not apply to anything that might happen due to the program's additional rules.)*

DoubleAgent

Able to Affect: Sentries

Override Strength: 4

Additional Rules: Once per encounter, when a hacker attempts to break a program while DoubleAgent is active, the hacker may spend one Story Point to succeed without making a check.

Once per encounter, when a hacker attempts to break a program while DoubleAgent is active, the GM may spend on Story Point to add 1 Despair (☒) to the check.

gLass

Able to Affect: Sentries

Override Strength: 5

Additional Rules: After a hacker attempts to break a program while using gLass, gLass deactivates and may not be used again for the rest of the encounter.

Junker

Able to Affect: Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries

Override Strength: 3

Additional Rules: After a hacker uses Junker to break a program, they must spend a maneuver. If they do not, Junker becomes damaged one step. Junker is too large to be used on a PAD, and can only be hosted on a rig or larger (*your GM is the final arbiter of what hardware is too small to host this program*).

Pry

Able to Affect: Code Gates

Override Strength: 1

Additional Rules: While Pry is active, after making a Break Security check the hacker may spend 3 Advantage (▲▲▲) or 1 Triumph (⚙) to override the targeted code gate (*even if the override strength does not exceed the program strength*).

Scout

Able to Affect: Barriers, Code Gates

Override Strength: 5

Additional Rules: While Scout is active, the hacker may spend 2 Advantage (▲▲) to identify one unidentified program on the system. Scout is too large to be used on a PAD, and can only be hosted on a rig or larger (*your GM is the final arbiter of what hardware is too small to host this program*).

Strangl3

Able to Affect: Sentries

Override Strength: 2

Additional Rules: When a hacker uses Strangl3 to break a sentry, the hacker may spend 1

Advantage (▲) to stop the sentry from notifying any system operators or systems administrator about the hacker's existence (*whether or not the hacker successfully breaks the*

program). After attempting to break a program, the hacker may spend 1 Advantage (▲) to add 1 Success (★) to the next Break Security check made targeting the same program during the encounter.

the_power

Able to Affect: Code Gates

Override Strength: 3

Additional Rules: While the_power is active, the hacker may spend 2 Advantage (▲▲) to increase the_power's override strength to 4 until the end of their following turn.

Warlock

Able to Affect: Barriers

Override Strength: 4

Additional Rules: While Warlock is active, the hacker may spend 2 Advantage (▲▲) from a check to break a security program to reduce the strength of the security program by 1 to a minimum of 1 until the end of the encounter.

Warhead















Able to Affect: Code Gates



Override Strength: 9

Additional Rules: The hacker may spend 1 Advantage after successfully breaking a program to stop that program from being reactivated for the remainder of the encounter.

Spending Results in Network Encounters

SYMBOLS	RESULT OPTIONS
▲ or ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Identified: The character finds a useful system exploit. Add 1 Boost (■) to the character's next Computers check in this system. • Thorough Override (Hacker): If the hacker successfully overrode a security program, it cannot be reactivated for one additional round.
▲▲ or ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick Commands: The character may immediately perform an additional Enact Command maneuver as an incidental. • Cover Tracks (Hacker): The hacker hides their presence, adding 1 Setback (■) to the system operators' next Trace User action this encounter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic Code (System Operator): The system operator mods the coding on a security program, adding 1 Setback (■) to all Override Security Program checks targeting it.
   or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trolling: The character takes a few moments to mock their opponent. Inflict 3 strain on one other user in the system. • Permanent Backdoor (Hacker): The hacker sets up a permanent means of accessing the system without needing to deal with its verification protocols. The difficulty of the Access System action becomes Easy (◆) as long as the hacker can access the backdoor. • Successful Trace (System Operator): The system operator successfully traces the hacker once (in addition to the other results of the check).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard Shutdown (Hacker): If the hacker successfully overrode a security program, it is so thoroughly disabled that it cannot be reactivated for the remainder of the encounter. • Blurred Sig (Hacker): The hacker obscures their signature, canceling one successful trace against them. • Scouting Ahead (Hacker): The hacker learns the type, strength, and rules of one un-encountered program on the system. • Backup Firewall (System Operator): The system operator activates their emergency defensive protocols. A system immediately gains an active Ice Wall barrier. • Identified Exploit (System Operator): The system operator spots a backdoor in the system, removing one permanent backdoor of the sysops' choice.
 or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorganized System: The user gets lost in a maze of poorly-named sub-folders. Add 1 Setback (■) to the character's next Computers check in this system. • Online Distractions: The user gets too focused on the online world. Add 2 Setback (■ ■) to any non-Computers checks the user makes next turn.
  or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Access (Hacker): The hacker may only perform one hacking action or one hacking maneuver during their next turn. • I Know You! (Hacker): A system operator on the system recognizes the hacker's style. The next time they successfully use the Trace User action, they successfully trace the hacker one additional time. • Careless Protocols (System Operator): Reduce the strength of one active security program (hacker's choice) by one to a minimum of 1.
   or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Alert (Hacker): All users with access to the system become aware of the presence of an intruder on the network. • Permanent Backdoor (System Operator): As the system operator

	attempts to lock the system down, they leave a portion vulnerable. The hacker gains a means of accessing the system without needing to deal with its verification protocols. The difficulty of the Access System action becomes Easy () as long as the hacker can access the backdoor.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful Trace (Hacker): Sloppy work allows one system operator on the system to successfully trace the hacker once. • Wrong Person (System Operator): As the system operator traces the hacker, they get one crucial element of the hacker's identity completely wrong. This does not remove a successful trace, but it does mean that they may have the wrong name, apartment number, or exact location of the hacker, which guarantees the hacker avoids any real-world retaliation and probably embarrasses the system operator in front of their superiors.

Security Programs

PROGRAM NAME	STRENGTH	PRICE	RARITY
BARRIER PROGRAMS			
Barricade	8	650	5
Chest	6	600	4
Firewall	6	400	3
HAL	7	1,000	6
Wall	5	250	2
SENTRY PROGRAMS			
Cerberus	9	5,000	8
Haunt	3	550	3
Punisher	5	850	5
Saur0n	4	475	4
Tattle	3	100	2
CODE GATE PROGRAMS			
Authenticator	3	300	2
Barb	4	1,000	5

Paywall	3	200	2
Pop-Up	2	25	1
Rubic	3	400	2
Stack	6	1,250	5

Security Breaker Programs

NAME	AFFECTS	STRENGTH	COST	RARITY
.inferno	Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries	6	2,000	8
Brute-Force	Barriers	6	400	5
CHARM	Code Gates, Sentries	0	475	3
DoubleAgent	Sentries	4	1,200	6
gLass	Sentries	5	300	3
Junker	Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries	3	450	5
Pry	Code Gates	1	550	6
Scout	Barriers, Code Gates	5	2,600	7
Strangl3	Sentries	2	225	2
the_power	Code Gates	3	400	4
Warlock	Barriers	4	350	4
Warhead	Code Gates	9	3,000	9