

SysHack

A Game of Corporate Espionage and Hacking by Paul Becker; art by Aimée Becker

4-8 Players 10-25 Minutes Ages 10+

//---- Overview ----//

Emergency! InfoSec Breach! Hackers have infiltrated the Conglomerate. They are among you, disguised as professionals. Figure out who you can trust, and work together to root out the hackers. They have already

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//$SystemOverride$/backdoor.exe?password="#4CK3r5uN!73"
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Ahem... fellow hackers, I'm in control now. The time has come! Find each other, steal any top secret data you can find. Oh, and don't get caught!

SysHack is a social deduction game of hackers versus professionals. Hack the system, or catch the hackers. In either case, you can succeed only if you find out who you can trust and work with them.

The rules presented below are for the 5-8 player game. For the 4-player game, see page 5.

//---- Winning ----//

First team to 2 points wins!

- **The hacker team scores 1 point each time they reveal a "Top Secret Data" card.**
- **The professional team scores 1 point each time they reveal a hacker.**

For this game, the term "reveal" means to turn the card face-up permanently.

When one team scores their second point, the game ends immediately and all players on that team win.

//---- Components & Setup ----//



1. **Remove cards according to the number of players.** Some data cards and some affiliation cards have values such as “6+” on them. Remove any cards that have a number greater than the number of players. These will not be used.
2. **Give every player a reference card.**
3. **Shuffle the affiliation deck, data deck, and role deck separately. Deal one card from each deck to every player.** IMPORTANT: Players are NOT allowed to look at their data card.
4. **Place the remaining role cards in a face-down pile in the center.**
5. **Place the message cards in a face-down pile next to the role cards.**
6. **Randomly choose the first player.** Give the Data Miner card to the player on her right. The data miner acts as a sort of “last player” token, and determines who performs the processing phase where each team can score points.
7. **Snoop around.** Starting with the first player and going clockwise, each player will peek at another player’s affiliation card. *(do not do this in a 4-player game)*

The game is now ready to begin.

//---- Gameplay ----//

Each player will take their turn by drawing a role card, and then playing a role card. Role cards are generally used to discover information or move data, but they have some other purposes as well, including some that can be played on another player’s turn.

When it is the Data Miner’s turn, they perform a processing phase instead of a normal turn. During processing, all other players will close their eyes, and the data miner will secretly choose another player to open their eyes and perform their team’s action. Hackers will hack, and professionals will look for hackers.

After processing, the current data miner shuffles the role deck, passes the Data Miner card to the RIGHT, and starts the new round with a normal turn (draw a card, play a card).

Data Privacy

You may NEVER look at the contents of any data card, even your own, unless taking an action to do so.

Info Privacy

You may NEVER openly divulge the contents of any hidden or face-down card. Instead, use the Courier role card to relay private messages between players (this is described on page 4). All other communication, including intimidation and mind games, is not only allowed but encouraged.

Taking a Turn

DRAW a role card, and then **PLAY** a role card. You may play a role card in one of two ways:

-  **SHOW** a role card from your hand, **PERFORM** its action, and then **DISCARD** it to the bottom of the role deck.
 -  **DISCARD** a role card face-down to the bottom of the role deck and **SWAP** any two data cards.
- You may do this regardless of any text on the role card. Do not show anybody what role you are discarding.*

There is no discard pile! Instead, role cards are discarded to the bottom of the draw pile. The draw pile will be shuffled after each processing phase.

If any player does not have a data card, a “swap” may still occur with them, in effect giving them another player’s card.

Example: David doesn’t have a data card, because it was hacked earlier. But David is also the only person who you know to be a professional like you, so you play a role card face-down and give Aimee’s data card to him.

Some role cards are allowed to be played when it is not your turn, and still other role cards can *only* be played when it is not your turn. The text on the cards will help you play each card at the appropriate time.

Example: It is Aimee’s turn. You know from earlier in the game that she is on your team. Aimee plays the Overseer, which allows her to reassign the Data Miner to another player. She is about to give the Data Miner to Dan, but you don’t want Dan to have it. “Hold on a sec,” you interrupt, and you play your Courier card. You send Aimee a secret message to tell her not to trust Dan. Aimee then changes her mind, and gives the Data Card to Roy instead. Finally, you draw a new role card.

Sometimes you may end up with no role cards in hand, often as a result of playing cards on another player’s turn. If this happens, immediately draw a new role card.

The Data Miner / Processing

If you have the Data Miner, then once it reaches your turn, other players have one last chance to send you messages, and then you will perform a Processing phase.

Processing is the ONLY way to score points. But you may accidentally help the other team instead, so be careful.

1. **Eyes Closed and Hands Out** – Announce, "Everybody, close your eyes and put your hand out."
You, the Data Miner, will keep your eyes open.
2. **Choose Recipient** – Tap another player's hand and announce, “I’ve chosen a recipient. Recipient, open your eyes and perform your affiliation action.” *Note: the affiliation action is also listed on the affiliation card.*

Recipient: If you are a Professional...	Recipient: If you are a Hacker...
<p>PEEK at any player's affiliation card.</p> <p>If that affiliation card is a hacker, REVEAL it. <i>(i.e. turn it face-up permanently)</i></p>	<p>REVEAL either your Data Card or that of an adjacent player, and place it in the center of play. <i>(i.e. turn it face-up permanently)</i></p> <p>The revealed Data Card is now out of the game except to fulfill victory conditions.</p>

3. **Eyes Open** – Announce, "Recipient, close your eyes. Now, everybody, open your eyes."
4. **New Round** – **SHUFFLE** the role deck, pass Data Miner to the RIGHT, and start a new round.

Sending a Message with the Courier

Your main means of communicating info to other players, whether they be lies and deceit or helpful information, is through the Courier card, which is used to send a message. When you play the Courier card:

1. **Choose your message** – **TAKE** all 3 message cards, and secretly stack them so that the correct message is in front.
2. **Send your message** – **GIVE** the stack to another player, and announce who the message is about. It can be about any player, including you.
3. **Recipient views and scrambles the message** – The recipient must **PEEK** at the message. Then, to prevent anybody else from seeing the message later, they **SHUFFLE** the stack before returning it to the center of play.

Example: Aimee is a professional like you. It's her turn, and she's using the Overseer action. But she's about to give the Data Miner to Dan, who you know is a hacker!

"Hold on a sec," you interrupt as you play your Courier card. You grab the three messages cards, and secretly position them so that the "DO NOT TRUST" card is in front. You then give the stack to Aimee, announcing, "This message is about Dan." She looks at your message, then shuffles the cards and sets them face-down in the center of play.

Aimee isn't sure what team you're on, so she doesn't know whether you yourself can be trusted. Just to be safe, she decides to give the Data Miner card to Roy instead of Dan.



//---- 4 Player Game ----//

For games with 4 players, the following rules changes occur:

- During setup, when dealing affiliations, use the hacker card with the star symbol on it, as well as another hacker and two professionals. For data cards, use one "top secret data" and three "no data" cards.
- **DO NOT snoop around before the game!**
- The hackers win by revealing the top secret data card.
- The professionals win by revealing the hacker with the star symbol.

//---- Quick Reference ----//

Before the Game

Starting with the player to the left of the data miner, each player will **PEEK** at another player's affiliation card.

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