SysHack

InfoSec Handbook

A Game of Hacking
& Corporate Espionage

Game Designer: Paul Becker
Character Art: Aimée Becker, Anna Ferrara
Other Art: Paul Becker, B Simon Smith
Layout: B Simon Smith

System Requirements

Players	4-8
Ages	10+
Time	15-30 min

1.0 Overview

Conglomerate employees,

The InfoSec division has identified a breach in security. There are hackers among you who are at this very moment attempting to steal our top-secret data. Please take all necessary precautions, report any suspicious activities to your superiors, and help us root out the hackers. It is of the utmost importance that you

//$SystemOverride$/backdoor.exe?password="#4CK3r5uN!73"

Fellow hackers, the time has come! Find each other, steal any top-secret data you can find, and don't get caught! We're in control now!

SysHack is a deduction game of hacking and corporate espionage. Steal top-secret data or expose 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 12.

2.0 Winning

First team to 2 points wins!

• The Hacker Team scores 1 point each time they expose a "Top Secret Data" data card during an Agent Phase.
• The Conglomerate Team scores 1 point each time they expose a hacker affiliation card during an Agent Phase.

For this game, the term "expose" means to turn the card face-up permanently. Exposed cards remain face-up for the rest of the game.

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

3.0 Components

18 EXE Cards

1 Data Miner

9 Data Cards

7 Message Cards

9 Affiliation Cards

8 Reference Cards

4.0 Setup

1. Remove cards according to the number of players.

Remove any affiliation and data cards that have a number greater than the number of players, as well as the Kompromat data card and the Rasputin affiliation card.

In a 4-6 player game, remove one Courier and one Data Analyst from the EXE deck as well.

2. Give every player a reference card.

3. Shuffle the affiliation deck and data deck separately. Deal one data card and one affiliation card to each player.

IMPORTANT: Players are NOT allowed to look at their data card.

4. Shuffle the EXE deck, and deal 2 cards to each player.

5. Place any remaining EXE cards in a pile in the center.

6. Place the message cards next to the EXE cards.

7. Randomly choose the starting player. That player receives the Data Miner card. If you like, choose the player who last used a computer.

The game is now ready to begin.

5.0 Gameplay

5.1 Overview

SysHack takes place over a series of rounds, each consisting of an InfoSec phase followed by an Agent phase.

— InfoSec Phase

Starting with the player who currently has the Data Miner card, each player will either play an EXE card to activate its ability, or discard an EXE card to swap any two data cards.

Many EXE cards can also be used during another player's turn, such as the Courier or the Data Analyst. The card's text will help you determine the appropriate time to play it.

— Agent Phase

Once all players have taken a turn, the Data Miner will lead everybody through an Agent phase.

Directly before this happens, the other players have one last chance to perform out-of-turn actions.

Then, all players except the Data Miner will close their eyes and put a hand out. The Data Miner will tap a player to activate her as the Agent, who will open her eyes and perform her affiliation's Agent Action. A conglomerate agent will try to expose an adjacent affiliation card, while a hacker agent will expose an adjacent data card.

— Cleanup

After the Agent phase, shuffle any discarded EXE cards and deal them out so that each player once again has 2 cards. Pass the Data Miner card to the left. The new Data Miner begins a new InfoSec phase.

5.2 General Rules

– Data Privacy

You may NEVER peek at the contents of any data card, even your own, unless using an EXE card to do so.

– Info Privacy

You may NEVER openly state the contents of any face-down affiliation card or data card.

For security reasons, this information is highly classified, and can only be disseminated using the Courier EXE card to send an encrypted message.

However, you may – but are never required to – *discuss what you know* about cards. You may also ask other players what they know. For example, "Do you know what team David is on?" "Yes, I do."

Other players are never required to answer your questions, nor are they required to be honest if they do.

5.3 InfoSec Phase

Starting with the player who currently has the Data Miner card, every player will take a turn in clockwise order.

On your turn, do one of the following:

Play one of your EXE cards to perform its action,

OR

Discard an EXE card face-down to swap any two data cards.

When playing an EXE card for its action, place it face-up on the table so everybody can see it, and read the action out loud.

When the action is complete, discard the EXE card face-down to the EXE pile in the center.

If you do not have any EXE cards in your hand when your turn is reached, skip your turn. This only occurs if you have played both your cards already.

— "Swapping" and "Secretly Swapping"

Whenever you are instructed to **swap** cards, the swap must be done openly, so that all players can see which two cards were swapped.

Whenever you are instructed to **secretly swap** cards, take both cards under the table and mix them, trying to keep track of which is which. Then place them back in their locations, so only you know if they were swapped or not.

— Playing Out of Turn

Some EXE cards may be played when it is not your turn, and still others must be played when it is not your turn. The text on the cards will help you play each card at the appropriate time.

When an EXE card has an out-of-turn action, the action generally must pertain to the player whose turn it is. For example, when playing a Courier out-of-turn, you must send a message to the player whose turn it is.

One exception to this rule is the Customs EXE card, which allows you to block the action of any player who has just played an EXE card, regardless of whether it is that player's turn.

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Example Turn:

On your turn, you play the Data Analyst card. This allows you to view – and optionally swap – any 2 data cards. You view your own data card as well as Aimee's, but decide not to swap them.

Graham then plays his Data Analyst as well, because it has an out-of-turn action which allows him to view your data card.

— Sending Messages via the Courier

The Courier EXE card allows you to send an encrypted message to another player. This is your only means of directly discussing classified info about the data and affiliation cards. You may, of course, be deceitful in your messages. When you play the Courier card:

1. Choose message – Pick exactly 2 message cards to form your message.

2. Announce Subject and Recipient – Announce to everybody who the message is about, and who you are sending it to. It can be about any player, even yourself or the recipient.

3. Wait, then Send – Wait a couple of seconds to allow other players to react to the message if they wish, then hand the message to the recipient.
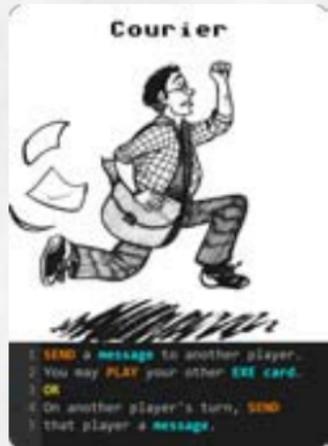
4. Respond (optional) – The recipient may choose to send a message back to you in the same way, except that she does not announce a subject.

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You may not respond to a response message.

Remember, you can send messages not just to provide information, but to ask questions as well, using the "?" card along with any other message card.

Some EXE cards – which say, "INTERCEPT a message" – allow other players to see or manipulate your message or its response.

Example: Aimee is on the Conglomerate team just like you. It's her turn, and she's using the Overseer card to give the Data Miner to another player. 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 look through the message cards and choose the cards saying "TRUST" and "NO". You set down the other cards and announce, "This message is about Dan." You then hand the message to Aimee. She looks at your message, but chooses not to send a response. She shuffles the cards back into message card deck.

Aimee doesn't know what team you're on, so she isn't sure whether you yourself can be trusted. Just to be safe, she changes her mind and uses her Data Analyst instead of the Overseer.

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5.4 Agent Phase

After each player has taken a turn, if you have the Data Miner card, you will guide each player through the Agent phase.

> During the Agent phase, either team may have an opportunity to score. Be careful, though, because a Data Miner on your team might choose an Agent on the other team by accident!

1. Out-of-Turn Actions – Other players (not the Data Miner) can perform any out-of-turn actions now. Once nobody wants to take additional actions, continue to the next step.

2. Eyes Closed and Hands Out – Announce, "Everybody, close your eyes and put a hand out." *(You, the Data Miner, will keep your eyes open throughout the entire agent phase.)*

3. Choose Agent – Tap another player's hand and announce, "I have activated an Agent. Everybody put away your hands."
"Agent, please open your eyes, perform your affiliation's agent action, and then close your eyes."
(Silent communication between the agent and the data miner is allowed.)

4. Eyes Open – When the Agent's eyes are closed, announce, "Everybody, open your eyes."

These steps are included on the reference cards, and the appropriate agent action is written on each affiliation card.

- Affiliation Agent Actions

Agent: If you are on the Conglomerate team…

EXPOSE the affiliation card of either adjacent player.

(i.e. turn it face-up permanently)

If an adjacent player's card is already exposed, the next player in that direction whose card is hidden can be targeted instead.

Agent: If you are on the Hacker team…

EXPOSE your data card, or that of an adjacent player.

(i.e. turn it face-up permanently)

If an adjacent player's card is already exposed, the next player in that direction whose card is hidden can be targeted instead.

5.5 Cleanup

Players keep any EXE cards they have remaining. Shuffle the EXE discard pile and deal until each player has 2 EXE cards. Any remaining EXE cards go face-down in the center to form the new discard pile.

Pass the Data Miner to the left. The new Data Miner begins the new round.

David is the Data Miner. He instructs everybody to close their eyes and stick out a hand, and then secretly chooses Aimee as the Agent by tapping her hand. David announces he has chosen an agent, so everybody puts their hands away.

Aimee is a Hacker. Dan is to her right, but she's not sure what kind of data card he has. Tom is to her left, but earlier in the game Tom's data card was already exposed (it was a "No Data" card). However, just past Tom is Beth, whose data card has not yet been exposed. In this case Aimee could either choose Dan's data card or Beth's to expose.

Aimee gestures, indicating to David that she wants to expose Beth's data card. Since David is sitting closer to Beth, he turns over her card on Aimee's behalf. Aimee then closes her eyes again, and David announces, "everybody, open your eyes."

Everybody opens their eyes and looks around to see what's been revealed.

6.0 4-Player Game

The following rules changes occur when playing with 4 players.

• 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.

• The hacker team wins by revealing the top-secret data card.

• The conglomerate team wins by revealing the hacker with the star symbol.

Appendix A: Kompromat Expansion

– Changes to Setup

• The **Rasputin affiliation card** replaces a Hacker affiliation card during setup.

• The **Kompromat data card** replaces a "Top Secret Data" data card during setup.

– Changes to Gameplay

• During the Agent Phase, **when the Agent has chosen a card, she does not immediately expose the card.** Instead, she must PEEK at the card, and decide whether to expose it or leave it face-down. If it is left face-down, the Data Miner does not get an opportunity to see it.

• **The Rasputin affiliation card and the Kompromat data card can never be exposed,** and must always be left face-down.

• As in the normal game, **exposed cards can never be re-hidden.**

• **Rasputin is neither a hacker nor a conglomerate.** He is on his own team. However, his Agent action is exactly the same as a hacker's Agent action.

• **At the end of the game, the Rasputin player reveals himself and exposes any data card.** If he exposes the Kompromat data card, Rasputin wins alone. Otherwise, Rasputin loses and the team that would have won otherwise wins.

– Note About the Kompromat Expansion

The goal of the Kompromat expansion is to sow more distrust and confusion among the players than is present in the normal game. As a hacker or a conglomerate player, you must be sure to keep the Kompromat card away from other players, while simultaneously trying to achieve your goal. As Rasputin, your goal is to find the Kompromat card so that you can expose it at the end of the game.

Additionally, since the Rasputin player is on his own team, the expansion serves as way to create even teams of hackers and conglomerate when playing with an odd number of players.

Credits

Publisher

Brainstein Games

Designer

Paul Becker

Character Artists

Aimée Becker, Anna Ferrara

Graphic Designers

Aimée Becker, Paul Becker, B Simon Smith

Playtesters

Ronelia Balmoris Becker, Royce Banuelos, Aimée Becker, David Becker, Dennis Hoyle, Dan Kent, Feng Wu, Graham Lock, Tom Olson, Pyris, Daniel Palmer, Tim Page, Beth Rodda, Kris Ruiz, Drew Star, Jason Turner, Yu-Chi Wang, Ting Zheng, and many more.

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