Hackers is a game of keyboard cowboys who control and manipulate Nodes in a bid for supremacy. These Nodes are real world electronics and devices like computers and cellphones.

Materials
To play you will need:
- This rulebook
- At least one opponent
- Map of 30x30 1" squares
- Cards numbered 1-10
- 20 tokens or markers used for counting Instructions. These can be beads, wooden discs, currency, etc.

Definitions
Grid: Virtual overlay on a physical space (such as a city) where hackers compete for network supremacy.
Node: Controlled points on the Grid that could represent computers, mobile devices, or other machines.
Network: The group of Nodes a player controls.
Instructions: Resource measuring time that is used to execute programs.
Program: Usable software to destroy, disable, or enhance Nodes.
Instant Command: A type of Program that executes immediately.
Ongoing Task: A type of Program that continues to function after executing.
Offense: The "attack" rating of a Node.
Defense: The protective rating of a Node.
Hard Drives: How many successful attacks a Node can sustain.
Orthogonal: Squares to the four directions.
Diagonal: Squares to the four non-Orthogonal directions.
Adjacent: Any square in orthogonal or diagonal distance from the Node.

Hack
The easiest method for cards are using a standard deck of 52 playing cards. Each player chooses a suit and takes the numbers 2 to 10 as well as an Ace, which represents 1.
These cards form your "Hacking Deck", which is used to "Hack" during important actions like shutting down hostile tasks, figuring out who gets first turn, etc.
The contents of the Hacking Deck is always hidden from your opponents, but you may check it whenever you want.

When these rules call for a Hack that means both involved players secretly choose a numbered card from their Hacking

Deck and simultaneously reveal them.
Whoever has the higher value wins the Hack. If there is a tie Hack again, if that also ties then both players use a randomly drawn card.
After a Hack any used cards are discarded.
Once the Hacking Deck is empty shuffle the discards to form a new Hacking Deck. This can happen at any time. No player can look at any discards.

When a Hack happens with more than 2 players in the game, the uninvolved players must show and discard a card of their choosing from their Hacking Deck. This is done so all Hacking Decks stay the same size.

Example Hack:
Ultralaser wants to Shutdown the Task "Haste" running on Zerocool's Node. This requires a Hack. Ultralaser really needs Haste to be removed, so he chooses an 8. Zerocool doesn't mind, so he chooses a 4. Both players reveal their cards. Ultralaser has a higher value so he won the Hack and "Haste" is Shutdown.

Setup
To begin a game follow these steps:
    1. Setup the Grid
    2. Install Programs
    3. Initialize Nodes
    4. Launch Programs
    5. Begin Play

Victory Conditions
The last player with usable Nodes wins the game.

Setup The Grid
The map is a piece of paper with 1" squares, normally 30 by 30 squares.
There are various Features that can be present on the map, each with varying effects:

• Zone (grant +Offense equal to Zone difference between caster and target. For example Zone Three to Zone One does +2 Offense. If no Zone is specified that Zone is Zero. Forcefully exiting a Zone via a Push or other effect applies an automatic 2 Offense.)
• Hardline (grants 1 Instruction per turn per friendly Node in this square or adjacent)
• Teleport Pad (upon entering square automatically move to exit square)
• Boost Pad (no cost to move through)

- Shutdown Trap (free Shutdown on entering Node)
- Focus Crystals (programs executed by Nodes in this square or adjacent have Blast 4 property)
- Life Sucking Crystal (Nodes in this square or adjacent can trade 1 Hard Drive for 3 Instructions)
- Caster Helper (Nodes in this square or adjacent cast spells at -2 Instructions to a minimum of 1)
- Defensive Cover (Nodes in this square or adjacent have +1 Defense)
- Turret (Nodes in this square or adjacent can cast spells not in the spellbook)

Players can either create a map layout in advance, or generate a layout dynamically.
To generate a layout choose any number of Feature Tokens, then shuffle and place them face down.
Players take turns putting Feature tokens anywhere on the Map. Once all tokens are placed, flip them over and mark the related Feature.
Normally 35 Feature tokens are used in this manner:

5 Defensive Cover, 1 Caster Helper, 1 Life Sucking Crystal, 4 Focus Crystals, 5 Boost Pads, 3 Shutdown Trap, 2 Teleport Pads, 5 Hardlines, 4 Zone One, 3 Zone Two, 2 Zone Three

Install Programs
Each player begins with 3 "Root Programs" that are always available, and also chooses an additional 8 Programs from the list below. The resulting list is called their Program Directory.

Root Programs:
Movement - Command, Instruction V, Distance 0, target friendly, use Orthogonal or Diagonal movement
Shutdown - Command, Instruction 0/1, Distance 20, target any, Hack to remove Task
Kill - Command, Instruction 5, Distance 1, target hostile, Offense N, Defense N

Program List:
Inner Strength - Task, Instruction 2, Distance 0, target friendly, +1 Offense
Firewall - Task, Instruction 2, Distance 0, target friendly, +1 Defense
Fortress - Task, Instruction 3, Distance 0, target friendly, +2 Defense
Shadow Tendrils - Command, Instruction 8, Distance 10,

target hostile, Offense N, Defense N

Greater Shadow Tendrils - Command, Instruction 9, Distance 10, target hostile, Offense +1, Defense N

Shadow Pierce - Command, Instruction 8, Distance 8, target hostile, Offense N, Defense -1

Shadow Blast - Command, Instruction 10, Distance 10 Blast 2x2, target any, Offense N, Defense N

Dual Strike - Command, Instruction 10, Distance 1, target hostile, Offense N twice, Defense N

Stitch - Command, Instruction 6, Distance 5, target other friendly, Heal 1

Regenerate - Task, Instruction 9, Distance 5, target friendly, Heal 1

Skullcrack - Task, Instruction 10, Distance 3, target hostile, Stunned

Lightning - Command, Instruction 3, Distance 4, target any, Offense +1, Defense N

Chain Lightning - Command, Instruction 5, Distance 4 Multiple 3, target any, Offense N, Defense N

Haste - Task, Instruction 4, Distance 0, target friendly, +1/0 Orthogonal Movement

Teleport - Command, Instruction 4, Distance 0, target friendly, Move 4 squares

Shove - Command, Instruction 3, Distance 7, target any, Offense 1, Defense N, Push 2

Enfeeble - Task, Instruction 6, Distance 8, target any, Offense -1

Bishop - Task, Instruction 5, Distance 0, target friendly, +1/0 Diagonal Movement

Initialize Nodes
Each player has 10 Nodes in their Network.

Nodes are various computing devices that only vary once programs are run on them. How each Node is represented on the Grid is up to the player, some may prefer device icons while others like virtual representations of fantasy creatures, sci-fi soldiers, etc. This means you can use anything you want like plain tokens or miniatures, as long as they can be differentiated.

Nodes have 6 statistics:

Offense, Defense, Hard Drive, Orthogonal and Diagonal Movement (often noted X/Y where X is number of squares per Y Instructions cost), Effects

The values for these statistics are:

Offense 2, Defense 1, Hard Drive 2, Orthogonal Movement 1

per 1, Diagonal Movement 2 per 1, Effects none

Players Hack to decide the initialization order. Whoever wins the Hack can choose to initialize first or second. Initializing a Node means deploying and placing a Node marker on the Grid, in any square not within 3 squares of an existing Node. In addition Nodes cannot begin adjacent or in the square of Features.
Once the winning player initializes their first Node the next player does the same, then players alternate initialization until all Nodes have been placed.

Launch Programs
Players Hack to decide the order of program startup.
Whoever wins the Hack can choose to prepare first or second.
The player is granted 30 Instructions that can only be spent running Tasks from the player's Programs on friendly targets. Once complete the next player does the same.

Begin Play
Players Hack to decide the turn starting order.
Whoever wins the Hack can choose who takes the first turn. The player who has the second turn receives a bonus +2 Instructions (for that turn only).

Turns and Instructions
Each turn gives a player a base of 10 Instructions. Any leftover Instructions are not carried forward between turns.

Instructions are used to execute programs and can be spent in any order and on any Nodes.

A player may pass their turn at any point.

Once a turn is complete play continues clockwise to the next player around the table until the game is over.

When a player has 5 or less Nodes remaining they receive 15 Instructions for that turn only. This is called *Emergency Overclock*.

Programs
Programs are listed as:

Program Name: The common name of the program
Execution Type: Command (Instant) or Task (Ongoing)
Instruction Cost: Number of Instructions to execute.

Instruction cost can never be less than 0. Instructions can be listed as X/Y, such as 0/1 for Shutdown. That means the first use each turn is free, and subsequent uses cost 1 Instruction.
Range: This is a Distance value. Distance 0 means the program targets the executing Node only. Distance 4 would mean 0-4 squares away. Distance may have properties like Blast (X by Y square), Line (X squares tall in a line from caster, 1 square wide), Wall (X squares wide in a line from caster, 1 square long), Hollow Square (X by Y squares no center), Flying V (1 square, then 3, then 5, then 7), Multiple (two targets within X squares).
Targets: Can be "friendly", "hostile", or "any". If "other" is used, like "other friendly", then the program cannot target the executing Node
Effects: This is what happens when the program is executed. An offensive program would have an Offense/Defense listed here. These can be set (such as Offense 2), bonuses (Offense +1), negatives (Offense -1), multipliers (Offense N twice) or based on the executing Node (Offense N)

Command programs have their effects resolved immediately, then they are considered complete.

Task programs last until Shutdown. Apply any effects from Task programs in the statistics for the targeted Node. For example "Shield" would change Defense from 1 to 1+1. This notes that the "+1" is a single effect that can be Shutdown. A second Shield would show Defense as 1+1+1. Whereas "Fortress" would change Defense to 1+2. Similarly "Skullcrack" would apply "Stunned" to the effects list.

To execute a program pay the listed Instructions cost from your current pool.
Choose a friendly Node to be point of origin for the program.

Offensive programs are resolved using the formula:

(Offense + modifications) - (Defense + modifications) = Damage

Once Damage is decided, reduce the target's Hard Drive by that amount. When 0 or less Hard Drive remains a Node is destroyed and removed from the Grid.

Disconnects
Once per game each player can use a Disconnect. Executing a Disconnect immediately interrupts the current player,

even out of turn, and must be declared when a player executes a program.

Once a Disconnect has been declared both players Hack. If the player using Disconnect wins the current program is cancelled, but the opponent still pays the Instruction cost. Otherwise the program happens as normal.

Example Disconnect:

Ultralaser is about to cast Nuke 2.0 on a group of Nodes that are important to Zerocool. Before resolving the program Zerocool declares "Disconnect!", and both players Hack. Zerocool choose a 10 and Ultralaser only has an 8, so the Disconnect is successful. The Nuke 2.0 is cancelled and has no effect, although Ultralaser still pays the 6 Instruction cost.

Variants

Players can agree on different setups by changing any of these options:

- Grid size (normally 30x30), layout, and Feature Tokens (normally 35). Note initializing Nodes should limit their distance by 1/10 the size of the Grid, so 30x30 means no Nodes can initialize within 3 squares of another. Note Shutdown Distance is normally 2/3 of the Grid size, so 30x30 means Distance 20.
- Number of programs in the Program Directory of each player (normally 8)
- Number of Nodes (normally 10)
- Starting statistics for Nodes (normally A2, D1, HD2, OM 1/1, DM 2/1)
- Instructions granted during Launch Programs phase (normally 30)
- Instructions granted each turn (normally 10)
- Instead of keeping Hack Deck secret play "open handed" with cards visible

Writing Programs

Advanced players may wish to create their own programs. This can be done using a consistent internal math system for calculating Instruction cost based on the chosen type, range, effect, etc.

Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E
Node	A	D	HD	OM	DM	E

Program	Type	Instructions	Range	Targets	Effects
Movement	Command	N	Distance 0	friendly	Use Orthogonal or Diagonal Movement
Shutdown	Command	0/1	Distance 20	any	Hack to remove Task
Kill	Command	5	Distance 1	hostile	Offense N, Defense N
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					