Hacking is a difficult task to tackle at the table. Many RPG systems with dedicated hacking rules overshoot the target, making it a cumbersome chore to give computer systems a feeling of "real" security. Often this boils down to a player needing to endure a separate "hacking minigame," while the rest of the group goes to get refreshments.

Fast Lane Hacking supplies you with a simple, fast system for *Savage Worlds* to provide a more detailed experience for the group's dedicated electronic surveillance and information specialist (aka, the hacker).

Fast Lane Hacking

This system is based on *Dramatic Tasks*. It is primarily modeled for Cyberpunk or SciFi settings where the Internet has been replaced by cyberspace, a living digital world of neon lights, lightning-fast console jockeys, and vast riches (or a quick death). Hackers connect with their cyberspace decks, which they plug directly into their brains via a neuro-jack. Instead of a simple firewall they face Intrusion Countermeasure Electronics, also known as ICE, software which can pack a deadly punch!

Of course you can also use **Fast Lane Hacking** with modern settings, in which a hacker relies on an old-fashioned computer to break into high-security mainframes to steal data. See the **Hacking** chapter on page 2 for alternate rules.

New Professional Edge

Deckmeister
Requirements: Veteran, Smarts d8+, Hacking d8+

This hacker has honed their skills at breaking into cyberspace systems and fighting ICE to a razor-sharp art.

During each step of a cyberspace run they draw an additional Action Card and choose which to use.

Setting Rules

Dumpshock
Characters ejected from cyberspace may suffer Fatigue from the sudden rush of "changing realities." This is called Dumpshock, which is represented as levels of Fatigue. Dumpshock heals at a rate of 1 level per full hour of rest. Should a console jockey become incapacitated from Dumpshock they are knocked unconscious for 1d6 hours.

Cyberspace Decks

A cyberspace deck is a hacker's best friend, their gateway to cyberspace, and the tool of their trade. Many codeslingers modify not only their utilities, but also the decks themselves.

Power is a generic indication for the overall computing power of the deck. Faster cyberspace decks run better tools and suffer less reaction lag, making the life of a hacker significantly easier and less dangerous.

All cyberspace decks are assumed to have enough memory storage to hold the hacker's utilities and any data they wish to download from cyberspace. Exceptionally large data caches may require additional memory modules hooked up to the cyberspace deck (Game Master's discretion).

Hackers use a variety of programs to suit their needs, which collectively are called **utilities**. Software is only as good as the person using it though, so utilities themselves do not provide an advantage. Hackers who find themselves in a tough spot can undertake a **Fast Lane Hacking** run with only a cyberspace deck and no utilities by programming on the fly, but this is very difficult to pull off.

The cost given assumes starting funds of 1,000 dollars/credits/newyen. The Game Master should modify the cost of cyberspace decks to their game's starting funds.

CYBERSPACE DECKS AND UTILITIES		
Cyberspace Deck	**Power**	**Cost**
Cheap	1	500
Streetware	2	1,000
Corporate	3	2,500
Security	4	5,000
Military	5	10,000
Full Custom	6	20,000
Utilities		**Cost**
Utilities Package		200

Systems

Hacking into hosts in the Fast Lane inflicts a penalty on all rolls, depending on the protection installed on the host system. This starts at a no penalty for run-off-the-mill systems and increases with more sophisticated security. Obtaining passcodes for the system provides a bonus to certain steps.

Alerts

Hosts may trigger system-wide alerts. These alert states, called **Alert** and **High Alert**, bring about the activation of additional credential checks, loading of ICE, or the login of a security professional.

In **modern settings** ICE is replaced by aggressive countermeasure software which cannot harm the hacker, only their computer.

Cybercombat Fatigue

Combat in cyberspace leads to Cybercombat Fatigue. This Fatigue heals within a few seconds after a cyberspace run ends and the hacker jacks out.

If a hacker is incapacitated from Cybercombat Fatigue they are ejected from cyberspace, remove all Cybercombat Fatigue and take 1 Wound from neural feedback.

For **modern settings** Cybercombat Fatigue also exists, but it represents the strain hacking into a highly secured system puts on the hacker's computer. If a modern-setting hacker is incapacitated from Cybercombat Fatigue, their computer crashes.

Hacking

Breaking into a system is a multi-step process, and is handled similarly to a *Dramatic Task*. The hacker needs to collect five Task Tokens, except they don't stop if they reach the token limit or fail a Complication. There are five steps, each representing a different stage of the cyberspace run. Draw a card for each step. Clubs incur the usual –2 penalty, plus a Complication as described below. Unlike most Dramatic Tasks, the hacker must complete **all five steps**. The run does not end in success when the hacker reaches 5 tokens.

The console jockey may end a cyberspace run at any time by jacking out. If they jack out after drawing a Clubs card, either before or after making the roll for it, they have to succeed a Vigor roll –2 or suffer 1 level of Dumpshock Fatigue.

Step 1: Breaking in

The hacker enters the system, either through the front door, or by sneaking into a hidden access point.

Complication: Barrier ICE blocks the way! If the hacker fails their roll the system goes on Alert. If they critically fail the system goes on High Alert!

Modern settings: no change, but it's called a firewall.

Step 2: Avoid security

The intruder must get past security, preferably unseen. Whether it's ICE or Corp security doesn't matter.

Complication: Cyberpatrols spots the hacker! If the codeslinger fails their roll they suffer 1 level of Cybercombat Fatigue and the system goes on Alert (High Alert if it was already on Alert).

On a Critical Fail the hacker suffers the above consequences and also repeats step 2!

Modern settings: no change, but it's called an Intrusion Scanner.

Step 3: Navigate the system

Now that they are past the watchdogs the hacker needs to find the correct node in the system.

Complication: The console jockey triggers hidden ICE! If they fail their roll the system goes on Alert (High Alert if the system was already on Alert). If they critically fail the ICE also has offensive capabilities and the hacker suffers 1 level of Cybercombat Fatigue!

Step 4: Locate the paydata/manipulate the system

The hacker must find the correct access port or security panel in the vast data storages while under pressure!

Complication: More ICE activates and patrols the system. If the hacker fails their roll the datastore wipes itself as a security measure, the security panels lock down, and the system goes on High Alert. If they critically fail they also suffer 1 level of Cybercombat Fatigue from attacking ICE or Corp hackers.

In high-security hosts the ICE may be Black ICE! In that case the hacker suffers d4 Wounds!

Modern settings: There is no Black ICE, instead their computer is damaged as the intrusion countermeasures use weaknesses in its software to remove safeguards. Repairs cost d6 x 100.

Step 5: Get out

Getting out is not as easy as simply jacking out. Before the deck jockey jacks out, they need to wipe all traces of their intrusion, and clean up the logfiles.

Complication: Trace ICE is activated and it's locked on! If the hacker fails their roll the Trace ICE locates their physical location and reports it to its corporate masters. On a Critical Fail it also burns the deck! Until the hacker repairs it, which costs d6 x 100, they suffer –2 to all rolls in cyberspace.

Modern settings: It's simply called a Trace. On a Critical Fail the target has a security team nearby, or informs law enforcement elements; either arrive quickly.

Success or Failure?

If a hacker succeeds with **more than 5 tokens** the Game Master may reward them with additional intel, paydata, or other benefits of a flawless run.

If the hacker finishes Step 5 and has accumulated **exactly 5 tokens**, then their cyberspace run maybe didn't go exactly as planned, but they got what they entered the system for.

If they are after **Paydata** they copy the correct files and, if they wish so, delete the original in the system. That host had better have a good backup system!

If their target is **Manipulation of the target system**, the hacker now has a choice. They may make specific alterations to the system, like switching off cameras or setting them to show a looped image, opening cyberspace-controlled doors while having them showing as still closed, blocking alarms, or other semi-permanent changes, and then jack out. These manipulations may be detected by system administrators if they perform a system sweep.

Alternatively, the hacker may stay in the system and manipulate it on the fly as the situation changes. Every additional change requires a simple Hacking roll. On a failure the system goes to Alert, or High Alert if it was already Alert. On a Critical Failure the system immediately goes to High Alert and the console jockey gets swarmed by ICE. They suffer 1 level of Cyberspace Fatigue and are kicked off the system.

If the hacker **manages to complete all 5 steps, but does so with 4 or fewer tokens**, the run was a failure. Any **Paydata** they copied is either corrupt, irrelevant to the goal of the hacker and unsellable, or comes with hidden ICE attached which wipes it on first access.

Manipulations on the actual systems either don't take at all, or are immediately discovered by security personnel and corrected (passcodes get changed, surveillance taps deleted, the hacker kicked from the system).

FAST LANE HACKING CIRCUMSTANCES	
System	**Modifier**
Trivial	–1
Basic Security	–2
Corporate	–4
Military	–6
System Status	**Modifier**
Alert	–1
High Alert	–2
Passcodes	**Modifier**
User	+1
Security	+2
Cyberspace Deck	**Modifier**
Power lower than system modifier	–1
Power higher than system modifier	+1
No Utilities	–2
Damaged cyberspace deck	–2