

# Old School SciFi: the Hacker Class



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**Hackers** are learned specialists capable of modifying and circumventing security measures in technological devices. Some are thrill junkies intent on testing the limits of the most well-defended data troves; others are corporate and government watchdogs and spies, monitoring the populace and performing industrial espionage for profit and galactic security. With the omnipresence and interconnectedness of such things in the modern galaxy, hackers are more dangerous than ever before.

Due to their skill set, most **Hackers** play an indirect role in combat operations, specializing in sabotaging enemy equipment and communications so as to make the jobs of **Mercenaries**, **Pilots**, and other classes easier.

**Table 1: Hacker Advancement**

Level	XP	HD	BHB	SV
1	0	1	+0	15
2	2,500	2	+0	14
3	5,000	3	+1	13
4	10,000	3+1	+1	12
5	20,000	4	+2	11
6	40,000	5	+2	10
7	80,000	6	+3	9
8	160,000	6+1	+3	8
9	320,000	7	+4	7
10	640,000	8	+4	6

**Table 2: Hacker Exploit Advancement**

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1	1	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-
4	2	2	-	-
5	3	2	1	-
6	3	2	2	-
7	3	3	2	1
8	4	3	2	2
9	4	3	3	2
10	4	4	3	2

# Hacker Class Abilities

**Weapon/Armor Restrictions:** Hackers prefer to use easily portable weapons, but their understanding of technologies makes them more adaptable than most non-combatant classes. They may only wear Light Armor and their weapons are limited to clubs, daggers, firearms, grenades, mono-daggers, and laser pistols.

**Exploits:** Through a combination of technical insight, software, and finger-sized transmitters on their person, a hacker is capable of manipulating the environment and devices around them through thought alone via actions known as Exploits. A Hacker begins play knowing two 1st-level Exploits; in order to learn more, a Hacker typically cruises the galaxy, learning from other hackers, buying programs on black markets, and trial and error experiments with their own coding.

Each day the Hacker may prepare a number of Exploits as shown on **Table 2: Hacker Exploit Advancement**. They may choose to prepare an Exploit more than once, similar to a way that a **Star Knight** does for **Meditations**. Once they activate an Exploit, the energy to use it is lost.

**Gearhead:** All Hackers start with a mini-computer at no cost at 1st level. They also receive bonuses or an increased chance of success when interacting with modern devices and computers. A good rule of thumb is a +2 bonus if using a skill system of rolling vs. ability scores, and that they are able to perform typical programming action without a roll. Much like how soldiers know how to take the safety catch off of a gun, or a mechanic knowing the difference between a gas and electric welder.

**Saving Throw:** Hackers receive a +2 on Saving Throws made to resist **Exploits**.

**XP Bonus for Intelligence:** Hackers with an **Intelligence** of 13 or 14 receive a 5% **Experience Bonus**, and those with 15 or higher get 10%.

**Reputation (9th):** At 9th level the Hacker gains a reputation within the technical and security communities, or at least their alias does. They can choose to establish a secret online community, where 1d6 1st-level **Hackers** might come to join and serve them loyally as Assistants.

**Languages:** Unless otherwise stated, **Hackers** are able to speak the common language and the computerized language of **Robots**.

# Level 1 Exploits

## Charm Machine

**Range** 120 feet

**Duration** 1 hour

This Exploit affects Robots, technological interfaces with an AI, and possibly living creature's with an artificial brain (Referee's discretion). If the target fails a Saving Throw, the Hacker is treated as a trusted user by the character or system.

## Data Scan

**Range** 120 feet

**Duration** 2 turns

This Exploit automatically detects the presence of powered devices (including Robots) within range of the Hacker for the duration. It does not determine the specific uses or features of those detected, only that they are present.

Alternatively the Hacker can choose to tag a specific individual within line of sight upon using this Exploit, allowing them to track their distance and direction in relation to their own position for the duration.

## Distracting Clamor

**Range** 120 feet

**Duration** 1 turn

This Exploit creates a high-pitched sound, bright strobe lights, or other annoying features to emanate from the target. All those within a 30 foot radius suffer a -2 on to-hit rolls and other actions requiring concentration. It's very noticeable and can be accurately perceived up to 300 feet away (and possibly more at the Referee's discretion).

## Hologram

**Range** 60 feet

**Duration** 1 turn

This Exploit creates a holographic image ten cubic feet. The hologram is capable of making audio sounds as well but seems realistic from a distance of 30 feet or greater. One must succeed on a Saving Throw or approach closer to recognize it as a fake.

## **Jam Communications**

**Range** 60 feet

**Duration** 1 minute/level

The target is incapable of performing technological communication or surveillance if a device, or using such devices if a creature. Against a robot, it disables any scanners they have for the duration.

## **Short-Circuit**

**Range** 120 feet

**Duration** Immediately

This Exploit affects devices utilizing a power source with focused ionic energy. If the target fails a Saving Throw, a device on their person sends out a shockwave of harmful energy, dealing 1d6+2 damage and consuming an energy cell if said device was powered by one.

# **Level 2 Exploits**

## **Datamine**

**Range** Self

**Duration** Immediately

This Exploit is capable of coaxing out secret or protected information about a feature or target on a successful Saving Throw. If the Saving Throw's a failure, the Hacker can't use Datamine on that same target for 24 hours.

## **Erase**

**Range** 120 feet

**Duration** Immediately

This Exploit is capable of deleting the past hour's worth of actions and identity regarding the Hacker or another selected identity/event from a targeted device, robot, or cybernetic implant. If the target fails a saving throw, any evidence of the identity's existence within that time-frame will be erased from their memory, recording devices, etc.

## **Signal Booster**

**Range** Self

**Duration** 1 hour/level or until used

This Exploit doubles the range on any Exploit or technological device. In regards to Exploits, it must be used in conjunction with the Exploit to be affected used the round immediately after Signal Booster. For technological devices with an effective range, this Exploit's effects last 1 hour per Hacker level.

## **Seize Cybernetics**

**Range** 60 feet

**Duration** 1 round/level

This Exploit takes control of a cybernetic implant on the target's body on a failed saving throw, causing it to attack them internally or externally. The affected implant deals 1d6 damage per round to the target and imposes a -4 penalty on any rolls involving use of that implant.

## **Shield Barrier**

**Range** Self

**Duration** 1 hour

This Exploit covers the Hacker in a transparent cloak of energy, absorbing 3 points of damage per attack directed at them.

## **Virus**

**Range** 120 feet (1,200 feet starship combat)

**Duration** Immediately

This Exploits deals 1d6 damage per Hacker level to a single artificial being, starship, or target with cybernetics within range.

# **Level 3 Exploits**

## **Holographic Duplicates**

**Range** Self

**Duration** 1 hour or until destroyed

This Exploit creates 1d4 holographic images of the Hacker, acting in perfect synchronization. Attackers cannot distinguish the images from the Hacker, and may attack them instead (determined randomly). When a hit is scored upon one of the images, it disappears.

## **Meltdown**

**Range** 60 feet (600 feet starship combat)

**Duration** Immediately

This Exploit creates a 20 foot radius explosion centering on a technological device, dealing 1d6 damage per level to those within its radius who fail a Saving Throw. The device consumes a power cell if it contained one.

## **Overclock**

**Range** 60 feet

**Duration** 1 turn

This Exploit pushes a technological device beyond its limits at risk of damaging it. If a weapon, it deals an additional 1d6 damage; if armor it grants a -2 (+2 if ascending) bonus; vehicles add 3 to their movement speed, and miscellaneous equipment should provide an additional +2 on relevant rolls for their intended use.

At the end of the duration the Hacker rolls a Saving Throw. On a failure the device is damaged to the point that it can't be used until repairs are complete.

## **Summon Drone**

**Range** 240 feet

**Duration** 1 minute/level

This Exploit turns a specific finger-sized device on the Hacker's person into a robot with combat and scouting programs. It will obey the letter of the Hacker's commands. At the end of the duration, the drone becomes inert and folds up into its original smaller form.

**Drone:** hp 14; AC 5 [14]; HD 3+1; Base To-Hit +3; Atk laser pistol (2d6); Special All-Around Vision, Dark-vision 40 feet, Infra-vision 40 feet, Robot Traits; Sv 15; Mv Fly 20; HDE/XP 3/0

## **Surveillance**

**Range** 240 feet

**Duration** 1 hour

This Exploit allows the Hacker to remotely view distant areas within range via a bug-sized aerial robot that can move a maximum of 240 feet from its creator. The robot moves at a speed of 6, and anything the robot sees or hears the Hacker does as well. The Exploit can also record anything it sees and be saved in a mini-computer or other similar device.



# Level 4 Exploits

## Blackout

**Range** 120 feet

**Duration** 1 minute/level

All powered devices within range of the Hacker cease functioning. Vehicles turn off and lose control, energy weapons won't shoot, lit areas become dark, enemy Hackers can't use Exploits, and so on. This does not apply to the Hacker's own equipment and Exploits.

Robots within range must succeed on a Saving Throw or be incapacitated for the duration.

## Ghost in the Machine

**Range** Self

**Duration** 24 hours

The Hacker uploads their consciousness into a device within 30 feet, leaving their original body in a vegetative state. While separated, they can maneuver through cyberspace and effectively 'jump' between technological devices with a speed of 24. They can also seize control of said devices, use Exploits, and even communicate with others and appear as an avatar on computer screens.

Any damage done to machines the hacker possesses is carried over to the original body once the duration is over.

## Safecracker

**Range** 60 feet

**Duration** 1 hour/level

As Charm Machine, save that the Saving Throw to resist is made at a -4 penalty. Additionally there's no data trail of evidence linking the Hacker's use once the duration ends within the device itself, as its internal memory deletes any identifying features.

## Sensory Overload

**Range** 60 feet

**Duration** 1 round/level

The Hacker sends out a multitude of holograms, audio programs, and other sensory simulation software designed to be loud, eye-watering, and painfully overpowering. The target must make a Saving Throw or treat all other targets as though they were invisible for the Exploit's duration.



## **Hack the Planet**

The implied setting of White Star is leaps and bounds ahead of our own world technologically. In real life, a computer with an Internet connection is plausibly hackable, but a coffee brewer not so much in spite of also being electronic. So what are the limits on things a Hacker can hack?

In short, anything which is a powered device, currently interfacing with a powered device, or has a powered current is hackable at a bare minimum. In some cases it may not make sense how a Hacker is able to use their Exploits, such as being stranded on a desert planet with no modern communications devices. It is up to the Referee's judgement to determine whether or not an Exploit can function under such circumstances.

The Exploits were open-ended enough to simulate a wide variety of ideas: Meltdown can represent overheating the engine of an enemy vehicle by disabling its heat sinks, or the stored energy in a laser pistol dissipating all at once. Using Charm Machine on an annoying Holo-advertisement to instead embarrass and denigrate its corporate sponsor might represent the rewriting of its script. An investigative Hacker trying to search for clues in a missing person's house might notice something's afoot when their Datamine tells them that the target's automatic coffee-making machine was used well after their target disappeared.

A Hacker should be capable of operating in the field instead of being cloistered in some stuffy room. Much like Arthur Clarke's statement that "sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," the Hacker class is capable of triggering large environmental changes in cyberspace and on the battlefield with but a thought and a swipe of a finger against an insubstantial holo-screen.

## **Alright, Roll a Hacking Check**

The core White Star game is barebones at best when it comes to tampering with security. In spite of having Exploits, there may be times when a Hacker PC asks if he can't alter the password on an electronic lock, gain access to a building's security cameras, or a similar action not covered as such. The Charm Machine Exploit is intended to be broad-based enough to allow for such things, but in this alternative it's a quick, limited-use trick up the sleeve the Hacker pulls out when he needs to hack things fast. Although there are several proposed skill systems available in White Star products, here's two which should suit the needs of most campaigns:

**D6 Hacking:** The Hacker rolls a single six-sided die when attempting to break security, access restricted information, or otherwise performing a similar action carrying a degree of failure and risk. If the result is 2 or lower, he succeeds at a hacking attempt. The probability of success increases to 3 in 6 at 3rd level, 4 in 6 at 6th level, and 5 in 6 at 9th level. Against particularly well-encrypted systems, the probability may lower by one value, to a minimum of 1 in 6, and go up one value for poorly-protected systems.

**Saving Throws by Security Level:** In this variant, a Saving Throw is rolled for a device, robot, or hackable target instead of the Hacker rolling a skill check. Generally speaking, there will come times when a Hacker player character wishes to use their Exploits on a device or machine which isn't necessarily an NPC and a Saving Throw is in order. There are two ways the Referee can handle this:

The **first option** is that the device uses the Saving Throw value of its wielder, network administrator, or one who has jurisdiction over the device. This represents the innate skill of the user to avoid unwanted tampering.

The **second option** is most useful for "unmanned devices" and times where the user may be unskilled yet bought the best Firewalls money can buy. Here's some sample Saving Throw values on the following page.

## **Minimal Security: 18**

Firewall Cost: Negligible

*Examples:* Taco Town holo-advert, convenience store electronic lock, neglected machinery

## **Average Security: 15**

Firewall Cost: 150 credits (Base Cost 5 credits as a starship modification)

*Examples:* Middle class home alarm system, handheld weapon's ID lock

## **Good Security: 12**

Firewall Cost: 400 credits (Base Cost 10 credits as a starship modification)

*Examples:* Most robots, vital infrastructure projects on a well-to-do space station

## **High-end Security: 9**

Firewall Cost: 1,000 credits (Base Cost 20 credits as a starship modification)

*Examples:* Millionaire's home alarm system, secret agent's communicator

## **Top Security: 6**

Firewall Cost: 1,000 credits (Base Cost 50 credits as a starship modification)

*Examples:* Galactic bank security, Killsat launch codes

It should go without saying that a failed hacking attempt, Exploit or no, exposes the system to unauthorized entry and carries appropriate consequences. A failed *Charm Machine* against a security robot causes its programming to recognize that the Hacker in question is trying to tamper with it. A tech-savvy criminal may realize that someone attempted to trace their activities via *Datamine*.

In most circumstances normal hacking takes more time than the *Charm Machine* Exploit. Hacking a system may take anywhere from several minutes to days depending on its size, security, and complexity. This is foolhardy to do in the middle of combat unless you have several team-mates covering your back.

# New Equipment & Services

**Burner Communicator:** Often simply called “burners,” these are temporary, disposable communicators programmed to self-destruct in 1 hour since their activation. This is accomplished via embedded heat-dispersing bulbs designed to fry the interior chips and circuits.

Burners cost 10 credits for audio and 25 with hologram capabilities, but are obviously limited in regards to long-term use.

**Cryptocurrency:** A digital currency unit unconnected to any banking or government figure, cryptocurrency is a favored stock in trade among free-market ideologues and the criminal element. Cryptocredits can be bought with real credits on a 1 for 1 basis. Attempts to trace purchases made with cryptocurrency imposes an appropriate penalty for the tracker: 1 die less on a D6 system, -2 on a “roll vs. ability score” system, Saving Throw is 2 better for defender, and the like.

In spite of its pseudonymous advantages, there are downsides. First is the fact that not all markets recognize them as a valid unit for trading. Second is the fact that cryptocurrencies tend to depreciate in value; after one month of game-time, any cryptocredits still possessed by a character has a 20% chance of losing value, plus an increase of 1% each month. A failed roll causes the character to lose half their effective cryptocredits due to less purchasing power.

**Encrypted Link:** This piece of software is bought for a single piece of equipment, such as a mini-computer, communicator, recording stick, or similar device. Encrypted Links prevent unauthorized access and communication from unknown users, requiring the use of a hacking skill, Exploit, or specialized equipment to intercept the communications. The owner can designate up to twenty other users who can communicate with them.

Costs 200 credits. As a Starship Modification, it has a Base Cost of 5 credits.

**Fake ID:** Attainable either as a physical card or software, these falsified credentials are often customized by the forger upon purchase to meet specific criteria. The cost is for gaining access to one kind of authority, such as a weapons permit, security clearance, etc. A Fake ID allowing for multiple forms of service or access is more expensive, but risks straining credibility the more that are added.

Costs 100 credits per qualification.

**SAU:** Short for 'software accessory unit' and pronounced 'sa-ow' in English, a SAU is a purchasable piece of software for a person's mini-computer (see White Star Chapter 3) which can add useful functions. Many SAUs are free or negligible in cost, meant to serve as conveniences for daily life or entertainment. Ones of interest to adventurers are likely to cost a pretty credit. A sample list of SAUs are provided below:

*Auto-Rescue:* Requiring integration with a settlement's computer network in order to function, Auto-Rescue is attuned to the user's vital signs, and will dispatch an emergency beacon to the nearest police headquarters and hospital if the user suffers grievous injury. Civilian versions trigger when the user falls below 50% of their total hit points. Costs 50 credits.

The military version of this SAU doesn't need access to a public network and can be customized to trigger when the user falls to 0 hit points instead and be tailored to give dispatches to specific individuals (such as members of the same unit) instead of a broad public-access network. Costs 250 credits.

*Holo Games:* Designed by health-conscious game designers as a way to encourage exercise and outdoor activities, holo games overlay themselves over the user's visual sensory organs to portray a partially-virtual environment. Typical games involve shooting at illusory enemies with equally-unreal weapons, urban exploration scavenger hunts, and coordination-based "workout simulators."

As long as a character regularly plays them for several hours a week, they gain a +2 bonus on all athletics-based checks. Costs 5 credits per game.

*LungBuddy:* Favored by asteroid miners, astronauts, and maintenance workers, this SAU provides a statistical analysis of the surrounding atmosphere in a 600 foot radius in temperature and chemical composition. It automatically detects if there's any breathable substances potentially dangerous to the user's physiology nearby (and yes, vacuum environments register as harmful to non-spacefaring life forms). Costs 50 credits.

*Tactical Coordinator:* Favored by modern armies, space pirates, and mercenary companies, the Tactical Coordinator provides voice-activated visual and auditory alerts for compass direction, the vital signs of life forms within a 30 foot radius, and the number of shots remaining in a projectile weapon. Costs 150 credits.

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