MATR1X 0VERL0AD

A cyberpunk solitaire game

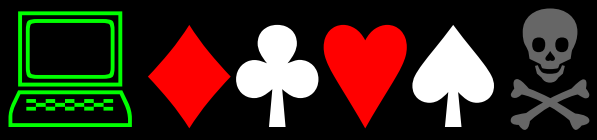
Written & Designed by M1CHAEL ELL10TT

Based on GR1DCANN0N by T0M FRANC1S

Produced by my Patrons:

M1CHAEL BA1N
C1NDY CHAMBERLA1N
SARA CH1CAZUL
NAV1
PATR0N
TER1
M1KE TH0RPE
T1M
T0NY
GU1LLAUME TREMBLAY

http://patreon.com/notwriting



/INFLUENCES
//GR1DCANN0N by T0M FRANC1S
//GENTLEMAN BAND1T by ALL1S0N ARTH
//DUNGE0N SOL1TA1RE: T0MB 0F F0UR K1NGS by MATTHEW L0WES

INTR0.TXT

Connecting to http://fanfiction.pacifica...
Authenticating...
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It is the year 21XX.

You are the best hacker in Pacifica Prime. You've been scraping pay-data off of corporate servers and scouting the dark corners of the neon-lit matrix since you were old enough to handle your mom's ancient dvorak keyboard.

No one knows the matrix like you do.

You've run scams with other hacker collectives to leak unreleased intellectual property. You once cracked a corporate manager's illicit credit account and used the money you stole to throw the best block party Pacifica Prime has ever seen. One time you arranged for a whole shipment of Amazing Prime™ slurry to be delivered to climate disaster refugees.

But that's all bits and bytes compared to this next job. Every run you've made was a setup for this moment. You have your sights on the biggest score of all: a single hack targeting the Royals of Pacifica Prime.

The Royals are untouchable. Corporate CEOs, celebrities, and oligarchs who control all the money and power in Pacifica Prime. You're about to steal everything they own and leave them for dead, burned from the inside out by their compromised cyberware. One night, one hack, one hell of a fortune. If you survive you'll have enough money to make a new world, a better world. If you fail, well, you've been on the run from these corporate suits for your whole life. Hackers don't retire in Pacifica Prime.

GAME.RULES

/Run matr1x_0verl0ad.exe
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MATR1X OVERL0AD is a cyberpunk solitaire game about killing the rich by hacking the internet. You'll use a standard set of playing cards, jokers loaded, to lay out a grid representing the internet and surround it with royal cards that represent your targets. You'll stack cards by order of their value on the grid, representing your efforts as a hacker to try to kill your targets, avoid ICE, and get out alive.

/SETUP

Start with a shuffled deck of playing cards, jokers loaded.

With the deck face-down, draw cards one by one and lay them face up in a 3×3 grid, skipping the center position. This is the matrix, a representation of the internet. If you draw any royals (jacks, queens, or kings) when laying out the matrix put them face down in a separate pile and keep drawing until you've made the grid without any royals.

If you drew any royals when setting up the matrix you now place them the same way you will when playing: put them outside the matrix, adjacent to the card in the matrix that it is most similar to. That means placing the royal next to the highest value card of the same suit. If none of the cards in the matrix match the royal's suit, then place it next to the highest value card of the same colour. If none of the cards in the matrix match the royal's colour, then place it next to the card that has the highest value. If there is a tie you choose where to put the royal. If the card most similar to the royal is on a corner of the matrix, you can choose which side of the card to place the royal.

//SETUP.EXAMPLE

/Run setup_example.exe
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Here is an example of a player setting up the matrix. The player has drawn cards from the deck and laid them out in a 3x3 grid, skipping the center space. They have set aside the 3 royals they drew when laying out the grid in a face down pile and are now ready to place them.

5♥	2♥	4♣
10♣		6♥
3♥	7♣	5♣

The player then places the royals outside the matrix. They draw and place the **K♣** first next to the **10♣** since it is the highest value card of the same suit. Next they place the **Q♦** next to the **6♥** since there are no diamonds and the **6♥** is the highest card of the same colour. Finally they place the **J♠** next to the **7♣** since there are no spades and the **7♣** is the highest card of the same colour.

	5♥	2♥	4♣	
K♣	10♣		6♥	Q♦
	3♥	7♣	5♣	
		J♠		

/PLAY

You are now ready to play MATR1X 0VERL0AD. You play by drawing a card from the deck and following these rules:

//R0YALS

If the card is a **royal** it is one of the targets of your epic hack, and must be placed using the placement rules above.

<<<We started calling them royals after the climate apocalypse. All that power and money spread across so few people. Of course we worshipped them, we needed to eat.>>>

//PR0GRAMS

If the card has a value of **2-10** this is one of the programs in your epic hack and you must place it on one of the cards in the matrix to form a stack. It can go on any card with the same or lower value.

<<<Well-known exploits, malware, multi-headed worms, trojan packages, storage doublers, and an entire flat of Amazing Prime™ energy drinks. Everything a hacker needs.>>>

//RESETS

If the card is an **ace** or **joker** these are different types of **resets**. When you reset a stack pick it up and add it to the bottom of the deck. Then place the ace or joker where that stack was in the matrix.

///ACES

Aces are a **soft reset**. You can play an ace on any stack of cards in the matrix to reset it and add it to the bottom of the deck. Aces have a value of 1.

///J0KERS

Jokers are a **hard reset**. You must play a joker on the stack that has the lowest value showing on the top card. If there's a tie, then you can choose either of the lowest cards. Jokers have a value of zero and their suit is wild [they can be whatever suit you like].

Empty spaces in the matrix have a value of zero.

/K1LL1NG R0YALS

When you place a card in the matrix opposite a royal – so that there are two cards in a row between the stack where you placed a card and a royal – those two cards become an overload of malicious code that you are firing at the royal through the matrix. The sum of the two card values is the overload's power. If the sum of the overload is equal to or greater than the health of the royal, the royal is killed. If the sum of the overload is less than the health of the royal, nothing happens.

Different types of royals have different numeric values and different methods by which they can be killed.

//JACKS

Jacks have 11 health. To kill a jack the cards in the overload can be any suit.

<<<The lowest of the royals. Glorified middle-managers. It doesn't take much to hack these fools. Some of them still have their passwords set to "secret".>>>

//QUEENS

Queens have 12 health. To kill a queen all cards in the overload must match the colour of the queen.

<<<True royals, these billionaires will take a little creativity to put in the ground.>>>

//K1NGS

Kings have 13 health. To kill a king all cards in the overload must match the suit of the king.

<<<The richest of the rich. Your programs will need to be perfect to crack their cyberware and liquidate their significant assets.>>>

Resetting a stack with an ace or joker also triggers an overload.

When you kill a royal, flip over their card and any associated ICE face down.

/ICE

If you cannot place a card in the matrix [because the card in hand has a lower value than any card showing in the matrix] it is added as Intrusion Countermeasure Electronics [ICE] to one of the royals.

ICE is placed on top or underneath the royal that it is most similar to [closest value and suit, just like the rules for placing a royal] and increases the royal's health by the card's value. When you place ICE make sure the cards do not completely overlap so that you can see the value of each card. This will make it easier to calculate the health of each royal when playing.

For example, if you cannot place a **3♠** on any stack of the matrix and the **K♠** and **Q♠** are alive and have been placed outside the matrix with no ICE, you would place the **3♠** offset on the **Q♠**, since it has the closest value [12 rather than 13]. The queen's health is now 15 [12 health for the queen + 3 health from the **3♠**].

If there is a tie when placing ICE you may choose which of the tied royals gets additional ICE.

If there are no royals around the matrix when you draw a card that you cannot play, it is placed as preventative ICE [the royals have heard rumours that you're coming for them]. Place the ICE following the rules for placing a royal [near the highest value and closest suit in the matrix]. When a royal is placed on a spot with preventative ICE it automatically adds the ICE to its health.

Cards played as ICE never return to the deck or matrix.

//PLAY.EXAMPLE

/Run play_example.exe
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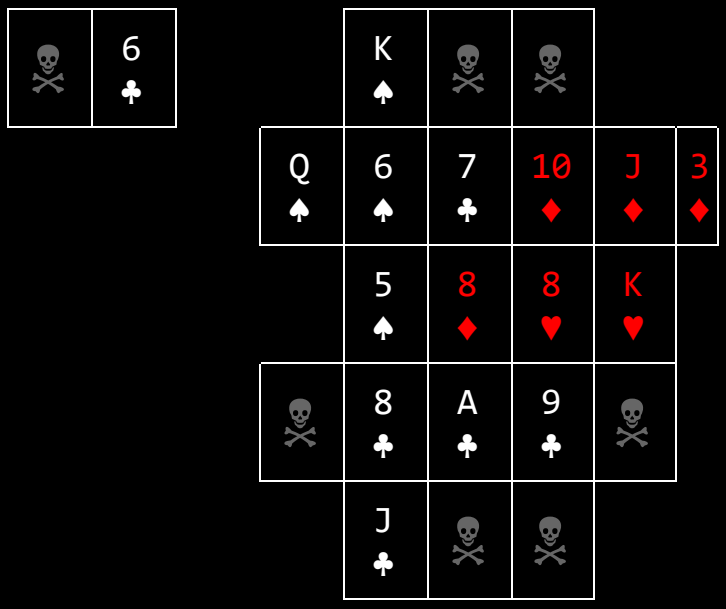
Here is an example of a game of MATR1X 0VERL0AD already in progress. The player has killed 6 royals and flipped their cards over. 5 royals remain alive outside the matrix, and 1 royal is still in the deck. The J♦ has the 3♦ as ICE and so has a total health of 14. The player's deck and latest draw are shown on the top left of the diagram below. The player has just drawn the 6♣ and must play it as a program in the matrix.

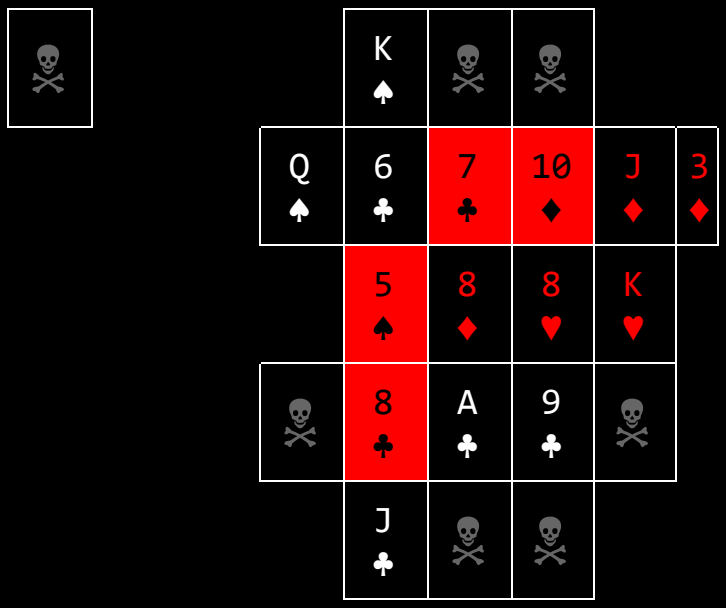


The player has 3 valid choices for where to place the card.

They could place it on the **5♠** triggering an overload against the K♥. This would not kill the K♥ because the cards in the overload (the 8♦ and 8♥) do not both match the king's suit.

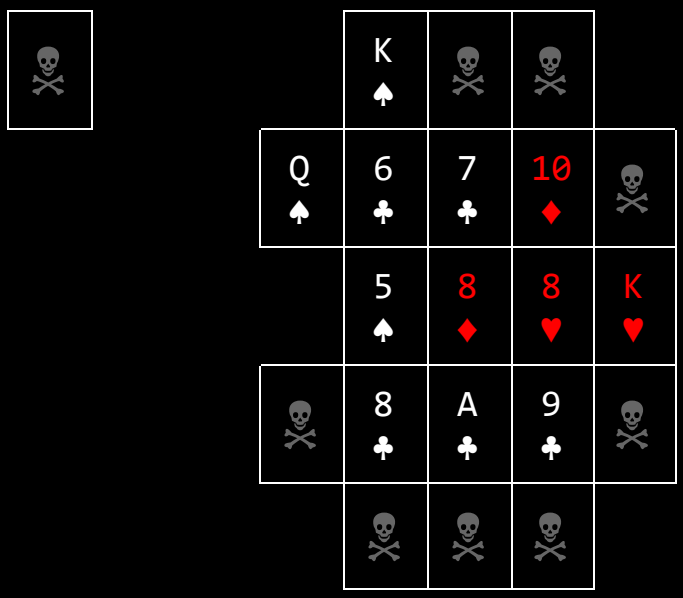
The player could also play the **6♣** on the **A♣**. This would not trigger an overload since the royal opposite this stack is dead. This would also make it difficult to play any lower valued cards in the future, which means more royals could get ICE and become more difficult to kill.

The player chooses the third possibility, to place the **6♣** on the **6♠**.



Since the **6♣** is placed opposite a living royal [the J♦] the card triggers an overload targeting the J♦. The overload includes the **7♣** and **10♦**, which have a total value of 17. The J♦ has a health of 14 [a base health of 11 plus the 3♦ as ICE]. The overload is greater than the jack's health and doesn't need to match the jack's suit or colour, so the J♦ dies.

This play also kills the **J♣**, since it triggers an overload with a sum greater than that jack's health. The player flips those cards over and continues to play.



/END1NG THE GAME

There is only one way to win MATR1X 0VERL0AD.

//K1LL ALL THE R0YALS

When you kill all the royals in the deck (all 3 jacks, 3 queens, and 3 kings) you've won!

<<<Congrats, you have done the impossible and can retire to a life of revolutionary justice.>>>

There are 3 ways to lose MATR1X 0VERL0AD.

//0UT 0F T1ME

If the deck is empty and there are still royals living around the matrix, you lose. You ran out of time and resources so the royals are going to hunt you down.

<<<Let's be honest, it was always going to end this way.>>>

//BLACK ICE

If any royal accrues enough ICE to bring it's total value to more than 20, you lose. The royal has gathered enough ICE that hacking their system has become impossible.

<<<The royals' private security will definitely track you down, kill you, and burn your entire apartment complex to the ground.>>>

//FATAL 1NF1N1TE RECURS10N ERR0R

It is possible to get stuck in an infinite loop where all you can do is place a reset card (a joker or ace), replay the cards in the stack, and play a reset again, unable to kill any remaining royals. If this happens, you lose.

<<<Your suite of elite hacking software and black market gear has malfunctioned. Don't worry, you'll be brain dead by the time the cops find you.>>>

Disconnecting...