HACK-ME IF YOU CAN

The Cards Game inspired by Netrunner

(c) Tonio Lagoule

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Components

A deck of standard 54-cards (Poker type) per player, tokens to symbolized Credits and Tags, possibly a die for counting number of Actions available each Turn.

Goals

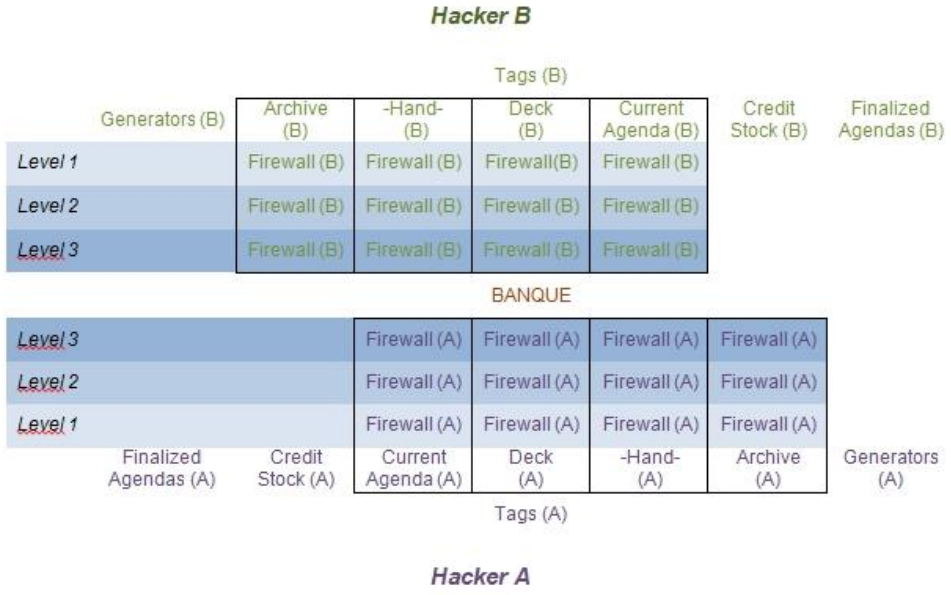
As a Hacker your goal is to score 5 different AGENDAS while preventing the opponent from doing the same. An AGENDA is finalized by investing CREDITS. CREDIT is the currency of the game, Hackers can get it through BANK or GENERATORS.

To prevent the opponent from winning a Hacker performs RUNS on its various RESOURCES to hack them. There are four types of Resources: the DECK (the pick), the HAND (cards in hand), The ARCHIVE (discard pile) and the CURRENT AGENDA (Project card to be finalized).

To protect its own Resources a hacker sets up FIREWALLS. These Defense programs allow stopping RUNS from opponent, even cause attacker to more serious problems like receiving TAGS or SHOCKS. To destroy a FIREWALL, attacker must spend CREDITS.

Playground

Here the different play areas showing the placement of cards.



VICTORY and DEFEAT conditions

A hacker with 5 different AGENDAS (Ace, 10, Jack, Queen and King) in its Finalized Projects area wins the game immediately.
A Hacker immediately lose the game if he suffers one SHOCK and has no cards in hand to discard at this time, or has four identical AGENDAS (ex: four jacks) in his/her ARCHIVE.

Cards Types

AGENDA (20 cards - Ace, 10, Jack, Queen, King)
An AGENDA is a victory condition for a Hacker, symbolizing confidential data to protect against the enemy until its completion. An Agenda is defined by two characteristics: COST and BENEFIT.
COST represents the investment necessary to complete the Agenda, the number of CREDITS to spend, taken in Hacker's Stock. The BENEFIT is the advantage the Hacker will win when finalizing this Agenda.

The Cost and Benefit vary depending on the card type:

- Ace (Cost=3): Gain 3 Credits.
- 10 (Cost=4): Your opponent takes 1 TAG.
- Jack (Cost=5): Check the first 3 cards on your DECK and place them back in your desired order, face down.
- Queen (Cost=5): Place all of Credits from one of your GENERATORS in play to your STOCK.
- King (Cost=5): Move your Firewalls in play as you want, in the order of Levels.

The Agenda is placed face down in the Hacker's "Current project" zone. There can be only one Current project in play at a time for each Hacker. Only the owner of Agenda can check the card at any time. Each Credit invested is taken from owner's Stock and putted on the face down card.
Once the total cost is invested on Current Agenda it is immediately finalized. Its owner reveals Agenda to opponent and performs the corresponding action described. He then puts the card face up in its "Finalized Agendas" zone. Credits invested goes to Bank.

A Hacker having 5 different AGENDAS (As, 10, Jack, Queen and King) in his/her "Agendas Finalized" wins the game.

FIREWALL (16 cards - from 2 to 5)
A FIREWALL is a computer program protecting a RESOURCE. It is defined by three characteristics: STRENGTH, LEVEL and ACTIVATION COST. POWER is equal to the value of the card (2 to 5) minus 1, thus a STRENGTH of 1 to 4.
STRENGTH represents Credits to spend to cross the Firewall when attacking. If the Hacker accessing the Firewall can't pay or doesn't want to, he suffers the effects described by the LEVEL of the Firewall. If he pays the Firewall is immediately destroyed.
LEVEL is determined by the location on which is put the Firewall, depending on the number of Firewalls already protecting the Resource. The first Firewall placed before a Resource is LEVEL 1, the second Firewall is LEVEL 2 and the third and final is LEVEL 3.
A FIREWALL has two states: ACTIVE or INACTIVE. When Firewall is placed into play it is INACTIVE, card is face down. When the owner of the Firewall decides to activate it then the card is put face up (ACTIVE).
An Active Firewall can be "boosted" one time, when Attacker accesses it (See BOOST).

Effects and Activation Cost of a Firewall according to its LEVEL (Firewall Strength=Value of the card - 1):

- Level 1 (Activation Cost=0 Credit): Stop your RUN.
- Level 2 (Activation Cost=1 Credit): Suffer 1 TAG then Destroy 1 of your FIREWALL in play.
- Level 3 (Activation Cost=2 credits): Suffer 1 SHOCK then Destroy 1 of your FINALIZED AGENDAS.

If the attacker cannot perform a required action (e.g. destroy one of its Firewall in play), the RUN is immediately stopped.
The Firewall card is placed face down horizontally by its owner in front of one of his/her 4 Resources. If a Firewall is already in play for this Resource, the new one is put on the upper Level. The limit is 3 Firewalls by Resource (Level 3 maximum).
A Firewall can be activated only when it is accessed by the opponent during his/her RUN, always starting from the highest level (3rd to 1st). The owner of the Firewall has the option to activate it or not but must always pay its Activation Cost to do so.
When a lower level Firewall is destroyed the upper Firewall takes its place at the end of the RUN. A hacker can place a Firewall at Levels 2 or 3 only if the level below is not empty.

GENERATOR (16 cards - from 6 to 9)
A GENERATOR represents a source of income for a Hacker. The value of the card (6 to 9) shows the number of credits to transfer from the BANK to the GENERATOR when it is put in play.
At the beginning of his/her Turn (before his/her Action Phase) the owner takes 1 Credit from the Generator and places it in his/her Stock. A Generator without Credit on it is immediately destroyed.

The Generator card is placed face up and Credits are put on it. There is no limit to the number of Generators in play, eg. a hacker with 4 Generators in play will get a total of 4 credits at the beginning of his/her Turn.

JOKER (2 Joker cards)
A JOKER is a special program allowing the hacker to pick a card of their choice in their Deck and put it in his/her hand.
This special action can only be performed at the beginning of the Hacker's Turn (before his/her Action Phase).
The Hacker reveals his/her JOKER card to the opponent, then search a card in his/her Deck and puts it in his/her hand without showing it to opponent. Hacker then places the Joker card in his/her Archive and shuffles his Deck and put it back face down.

Setup of a game
Each Hacker performs these actions in order:

- Shuffle your 54 cards Deck and have it cut by the opponent.
- Place the Deck face down in the proper area.
- Return first card on Deck face up. The Hacker with the highest value takes the first Turn (from lowest to highest value: Joker, Ace, 2 to 10, Jack, Queen, King).
  In case of equality put cards UNDER their Deck and reveal next card on Decks.
- The Hacker taking the first Turn draws 5 cards on his/her Deck to form his starting Hand. His/Her opponent draws 6 cards.
  If a hacker is not satisfied with his starting Hand he/she can, only once per game, put all his/her cards back in Deck, shuffle then draw again.

Turn
Turn starts. The Hacker performs the following two Phases:

Phase 1: Action.
Perform 4 Actions, as desired, in any order:

- Draw 1 Card on your Deck ;
- Take 1 Credit from the BANK to your Stock ;
- Put in play 1 GENERATOR or 1 FIREWALL or 1 AGENDA from your Hand ;
- Invest 1 Credit from your Stock on your Current Agenda ;
- Make a RUN on one Resource of the opponent (*);
- Pay 1 Credit to remove 1 of your TAGS ;
- Pay 2 Credits to deal 1 SHOCK to an opponent with 1 TAG or more. All his/her TAGS are then removed.

(*): this Action is forbidden during the first Turn of each Hacker.

Phase 2: Recycling.
Perform the following actions in order:

- 2.1 You can discard up to 2 cards in Hand to gain 2 CREDITS for each card and then draw as many cards on your Deck.
- 2.2 Pay 2 Credits to detroy one of your FIREWALL in play.
- 2.3 If your Hand contains more than five cards, discard cards of your choice in excess.

End of Turn. The opponent can take his/her Turn.

Terms and Concepts

TAG
Symbolizes detection of a Hacker by an opponent. A TAG, represented by a mark assigned to the Hacker, allows his/her opponent to inflict a SH0CK.

SH0CK
Symbolizes physical or mental aggression. When a Hacker takes a SH0CK he must immediately discard a random card from his Hand, pulled by his/her opponent. If this is not possible (no card in Hand), the Hacker immediately loses the game!

B00ST
When an opponent is accessing one of his/her Firewall, its owner may attempt a B00ST. He then returns face up the card on his/her Deck. If it reveals a Firewall, its Strength is added to that of the Firewall in play accessed by the attacker, then the Boost card goes in the Archive. If it reveals another card (Generator, Agenda or Joker) it is put directly into Archive without effect.
A hacker may attempt only one B00ST per RUN.

RUN (Details)
Piracy attempt by a hacker on the Resources of his/her opponent.
When trying a RUN the attacking Hacker declares his/her intention to the opponent and designates its targeted Resource. Attacking Hacker accesses Firewalls placed in defense of this Resource, starting with the highest level (3rd to 1st). If the Firewall is INACTIVE its owner can decide at that time to activate it by paying the Activation Cost. If the Firewall is inactive Attacking Hacker moves to the next one.

When accessing an Active Firewall the Attacking Hacker must pay a cost in credits equivalent to the STRENGTH of the Firewall (Value of the Card - 1). If the attacker pays, Firewall is immediately destroyed. If not the attacker suffers the effects indicated by Firewall Level.
If the effect does not stop the RUN, Attacker continues his/her RUN by accessing the next Firewall. An attacker cannot stop its current RUN until it reaches the targeted Resource.

0nce all Firewalls crossed the attacker access the Resource:

- Deck: First card on Deck.
- Hand: Card drawn at random from Hand.
- Archive: First card on Archive.
- Current Agenda: Agenda card in play.

Attacker reveals the card to which it has acceded. For Deck, Hand or Archive Resources, effects are:

- FIREWALL card: Attacker suffers X TAGS, where X is the value of the card (2 to 5).
- GENERAT0R card: Attacker gain X Credits from the BANK to his/her Stock, where X is the value of the card (6 to 9).
- AGENDA card: Attacker draws 2 cards on his/her Deck.
- J0KER card: Attacker suffers 1 SH0CK.

If the attacker accesses Resource "Current Agenda", effect is different:

- "CURRENT AGENDA": Attacker transfers all Credits invested on Agenda to his/her Stock.

Then, in all cases, Attacker may pay 2 Credits to destroy the accessed card. It is then placed UNDER the Archive of its owner, face up.

If card is not destroyed it is managed according to the Resource:

- taken from Deck: card putted back on owner's Deck, face down.
- taken from Hand: card putted back in owner's Hand.
- taken from Archive: card putted UNDER owner's Archive, face up.
- taken from Current Agenda: Agenda card putted back on owner's Deck, face down.

RUN is over.

Note: If no card is accessed because Resource is empty (e.g. no card in Archive or in Hand), the RUN ends after the last Firewall is crossed.

Glossary

ACTIVE / INACTIVE
State of a Firewall. When Firewall is put in play it is INACTIVE, that is to say, face down. Only the owner of the card can consult it at any time. During a RUN from opponent, the owner of the Firewall can ACTIVATE it or not when the attacking Hacker accesses it. To activate a Firewall you have to pay its Activation Cost. Active Firewall card is turned face up.

ARCHIVE
"Resource" area in which a Hacker puts his/her card destroyed or discarded. Cards in Archive are always face up.

BANK
Hackers common zone containing all the credits at the beginning of the game. These credits are distributed during the game, from Generators in play or when a Hacker gains Credits. When a Hacker pays Costs, Credits return to the BANK.

CREDIT
Currency of the game.

DECK
"Resource" area where Hacker's Deck is placed, constituting his/her pick. A Hacker with an empty Deck continues without considering the effects making him/her drawing a card.

DISCARD / DESTROY
A discarded or destroyed card goes on the Archive of its owner, face up. If several cards are discarded or destroyed at the same time, the owner chooses the order in which he/she places the cards on his/her Archive.

HAND
"Resource" area made of cards drawn from his/her Deck by a Hacker. It is symbolized by an empty space between the Deck and the Archive for placing Firewalls to defend it.

CURRENT AGENDA
"Resource" area in which a Hacker puts an Agenda card, on which he/she must invest Credits to complete the Agenda. Each Hacker may only have one Current Agenda at a time in play.

FINALIZED AGENDAS
Area where a Hacker stores Current Agendas that were successfully completed, face up.

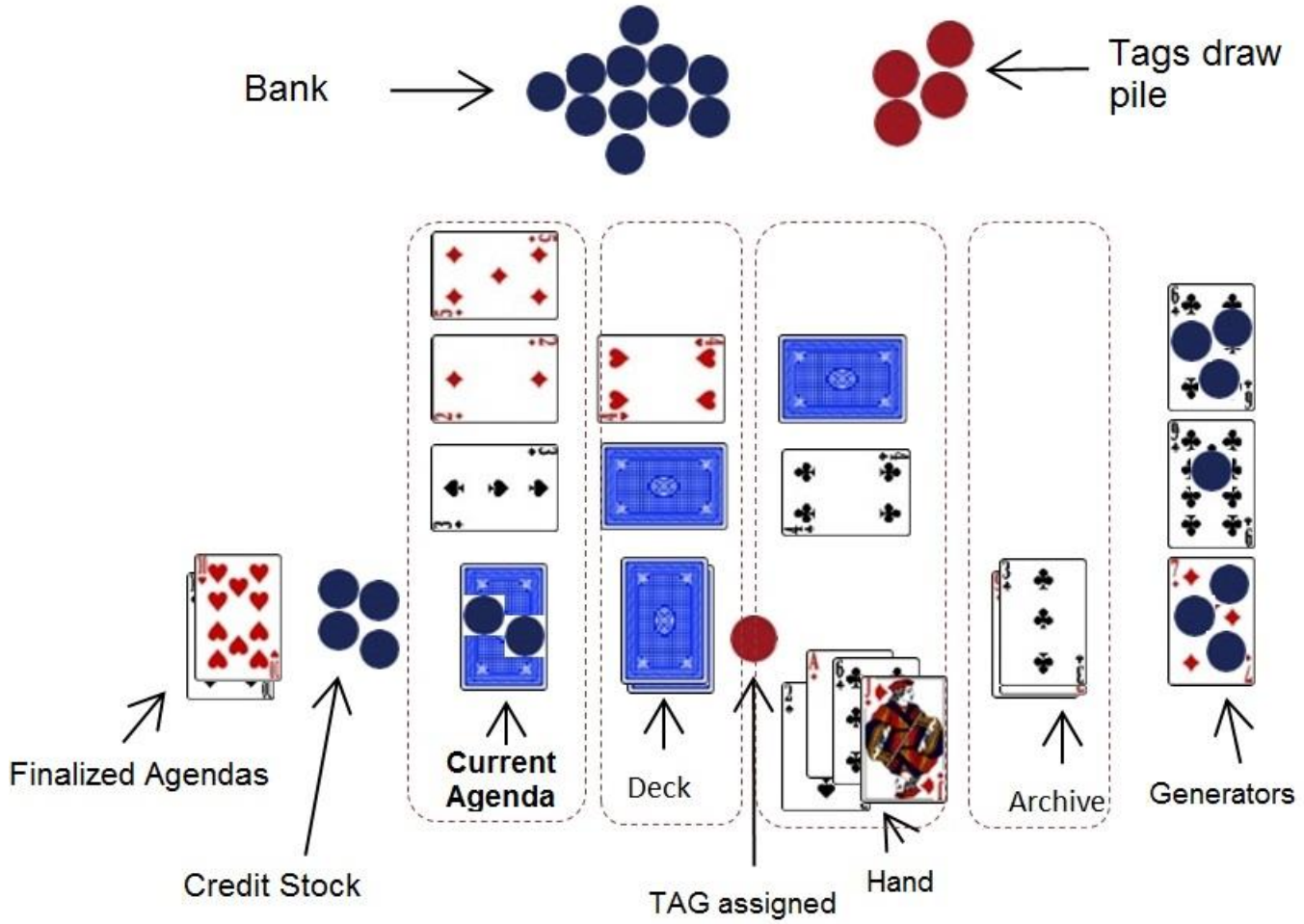
STOCK
Personal Credits Fund of a Hacker, used to pay any costs or invest on his/her Current Agenda.

RESOURCE
Resources are the four targets a player can attempt to hack by performing a RUN on the opponent's Deck, Hand, Archive or Current Agenda. Depending of the target Resources are accessed differently.

TURN
Phases of game for a Hacker. The first phase is to perform 4 Actions from a choice of 7. It is possible to perform the same action multiple times per turn. The second phase gives the option to discard cards in Hand and destroy one of your Firewalls in play.

PLAY AREAS

Zones represent different parts of the playing area for each of the Hackers. It includes their 4 Resources: Deck, Archive (to the right of Deck), Hand (empty space between the Deck and the Archive) and the Current Agenda (to the left Deck).
To the left of the Current Agenda stands Credits Stock and Finalized Agendas. TAGS are put next to the Deck and Generators are aligned on each side of the playing area.
Between Hackers lie Firewall Levels (Level 1 near each Hacker then 2 and 3 reaching to the opponent) and finally, in the middle, the Bank.



The 4 Resources are rimmed in red. The other play areas are located on either side: Finalized Agendas, Stock, Generators and, in a common area in the center, Bank and available Tags.
Note that the Hacker pictured suffered 1 Tag and has invested 2 Credits on his Current Agenda.

Diagram of a RUN

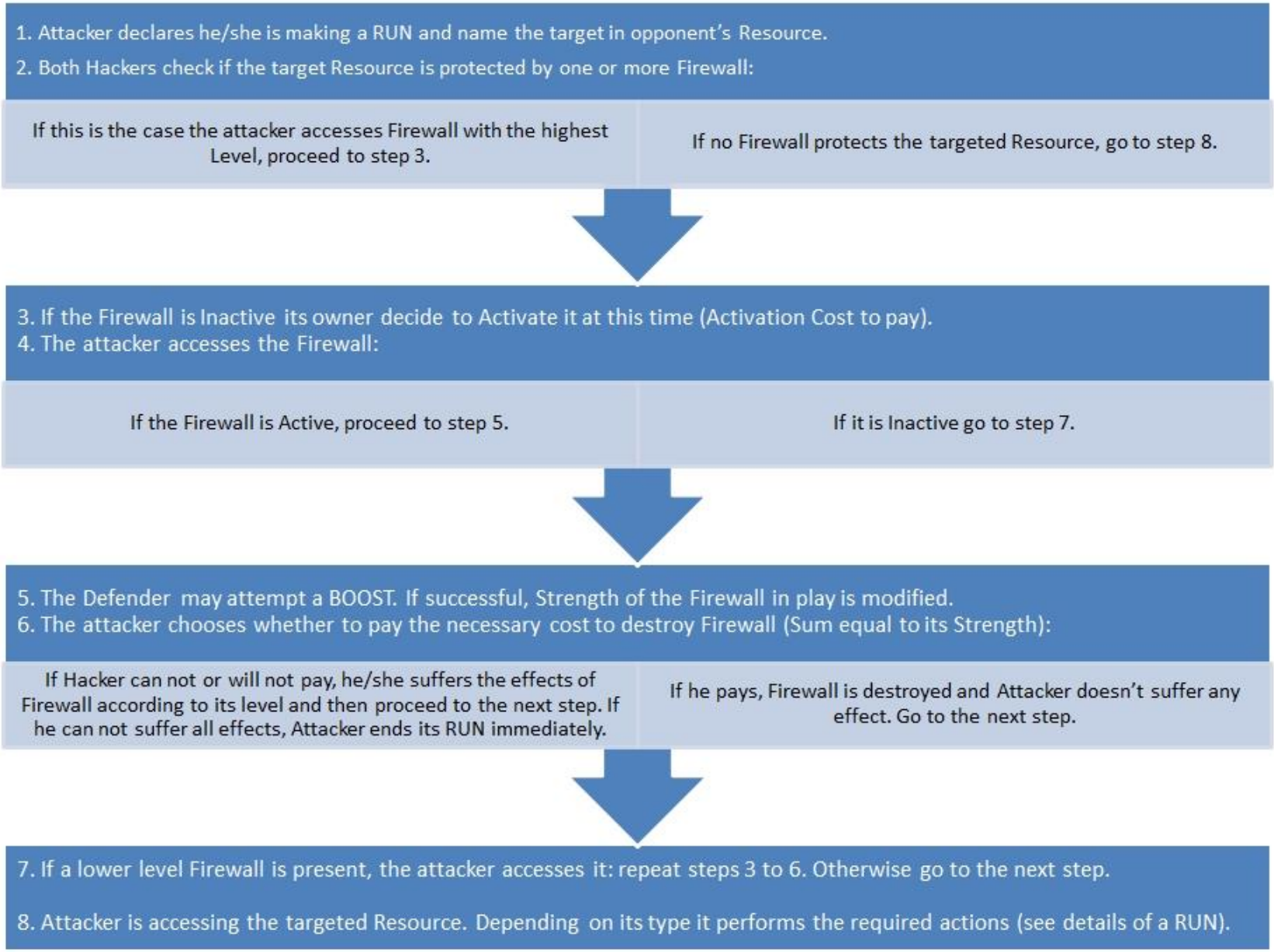
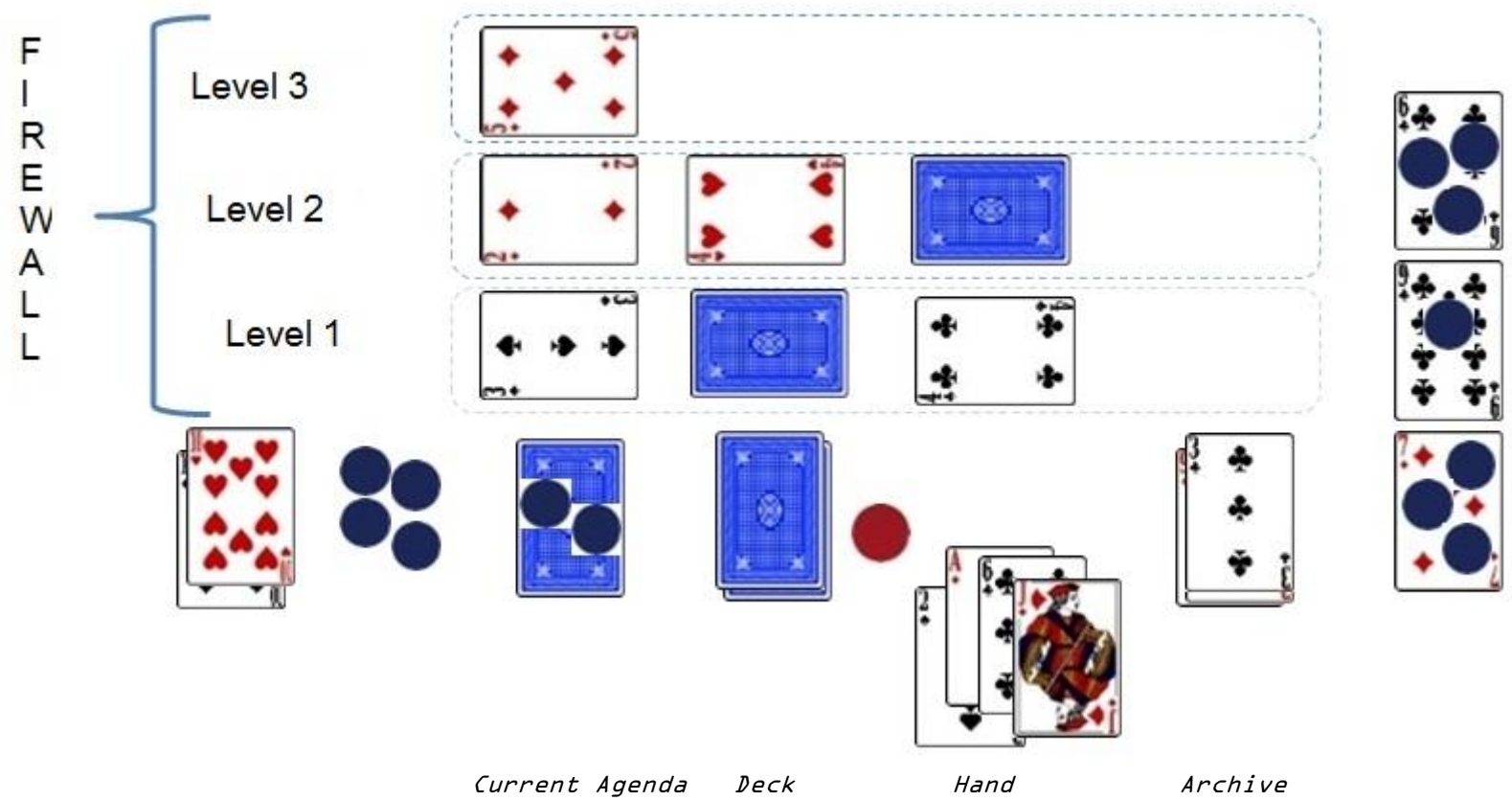


Diagram of the placement of Firewalls by Level



Firewalls are placed horizontally on 3 Levels before the Resource they protect. In the example above the "Current Agenda" is protected by 3 Active Firewalls, Deck by an inactive Firewall on Level 1 and an active on Level 2, Hand by an active Firewall on Level 1 and an inactive on Level 2 and finally Archive has no Firewall.

Tips

The principle of a game of "Hack Me If You Can" is based on the balance between defense and attack according to the progress of the game. During the first Turns you must use your 4 Actions to protect your Deck and Hand Resources and play Generators.
Once assured of good sources of credits with several generators in play and Firewalls protection, you can start investing on an Agenda while making RUNS according to the opponent's mistakes: a poorly protected Resource, possibility of a SHOCK when he/she has no cards in hand, etc.
Remember to anticipate your own expenses to enable your Level 2 and 3 Firewalls during opponent's Turn. Plan what card will be on your Archive because it's visible. If a Generator or Agenda is there be sure that the opponent will get these easy Credits or cards draw.
After the first 10 Turns, when the economy is no longer a concern, choose to draw cards and recycle to accelerate your game.
According to the progress of the adversary you must do everything to prevent him/her from finalizing his last Agendas or otherwise stake everything on your own advance using your 4 Actions to invest.

Detailed diagram of a RUN