

David Short's

CYPHER™





CYPHER



A game by David Short

For 2-4 players, ages 14
and up

INTRODUCTION

In the corporate-ruled world of the near future, the nexus is a vast digital network that serves as both the backbone of the economy and the information pipeline that keeps the corporations in power. Those who control the nexus control the world.

Faced with a constant stream of hacker attacks, a group of corporations created an artificial intelligence that could learn from the hackers themselves and discover security flaws before they could be exploited.

The artificial intelligence, codenamed Cypher, evolved faster than its creators could have imagined. It gained sentience, went rogue, and became the ultimate hacker. Now Cypher is fighting the corporations themselves for control of the nexus. It's a cyberwar on a scale never seen before, and its outcome will change the world.

GAME OVERVIEW

Each player takes on the role of a faction gathering characters from three different classes of influence, from the upper echelons of corporations to the shrewd agents of the streets. The more influence characters give you, the greater control you'll have over Cypher and dominate the nexus!

GOAL

The player with the most influence at the end of the game wins.

COMPONENTS

Your game of **Cypher** should include the following. If it does not, contact customerservice@alderac.com for assistance.

- ▶▶ Rulebook (this book)
- ▶▶ 19 Character cards
- ▶▶ 4 Reference cards
- ▶▶ 1 Nexus bag



Character cards



Reference card

CARD ANATOMY



1. **Influence:** This number indicates how much influence the character gives you while it is in your play area.
2. **Card Name**
3. **Rarity:** The number of dots indicate how many copies of the card there are in the deck.
4. **Class Icon:** This icon along with the overall design of the card template defines which class the character is associated with (upper, middle, lower).
5. **Effect:** Each character features a unique effect that affects the game either when the card is played or during the course of the game.

SETUP

1. Give each player 1 reference card.
2. Shuffle all 19 character cards.
3. Determine a starting player at random (if playing multiple games, this should be the winner of the previous game).
4. Deal 3 cards to the starting player.
5. Deal 1 card to the player to the **right** of the starting player.
6. Deal all other players 2 cards.

7. Place the rest of the character cards face down as a central draw deck
8. Draw the top card from the draw deck and place it face up next to the deck for all to see (this card is called the **Display**)

EXAMPLE SETUP

DRAW DECK



DISPLAY



HOW TO PLAY

Beginning with the starting player, players take turns in clockwise order. This continues until either the deck runs out of cards or the Cyber Anomaly card is played.

TAKING A TURN

At the beginning of your turn, you will have exactly 3 cards in your hand. During your turn you must perform the following 4 steps in order:

1. Play
2. Draw
3. Pass
4. Discard

1) PLAY

Choose one of the three cards in your hand to play and place it face up in your own **play area** in front of you. Then resolve any related effect. You must apply its effect entirely, even if it is bad for you.



CHARACTER LIMIT

Your play area may only have a **maximum of 3 cards**. If at any time a fourth card is to be added to your play area, you must immediately decide which of the 3 existing cards to discard. The discarded card is placed face down at the **bottom** of the draw deck.

There are two types of card effects: "**When played...**" and "**While in play...**"

"When played..." card effects are *only* activated when that card is added to your play area from your hand. For example, if the Corp Overseer is added to a player's play area because of the Executive's effect, the Corp Overseer's effect is *not* activated.

"While in play..." card effects are constantly activated. This means that these cards are always in effect, no matter how they came to be in your play area. For example, as long as the Hacker is in your play area, you may draw from the bottom of the deck when you are drawing cards.

2) DRAW

Draw one card from either the top of the draw deck or the Display. This card is added to your hand.

NOTE: Whenever the Display is empty, immediately refill it with a card from the top of the draw deck. This replenishment occurs even in the middle of drawing multiple cards.

3) PASS

Choose any one card from your hand to pass face down to the player to your left. Then choose another card from your remaining hand to pass face down to the player to your right.

NOTE: The cards that you pass must come from your hand, and not from your play area.

4) DISCARD

If you have more than one card in your hand, you must choose cards to discard in order to end your turn with a single card in your hand.

DISCARDED CARDS

All cards that are discarded during the game do not go to a separate discard pile. Instead, they are placed face down below the draw deck.

GAME END

The end of the game is triggered if any of the following conditions occur:

- ▶▶ The draw deck is empty at the end of a player's turn.
- ▶▶ A player has played a Cypher Anomaly card into his or her play area.

Once the end of the game is triggered, **ALL** players get one last turn before the game ends, including the player who triggered the end of the game.



If, during these last few turns, the draw deck is replenished or another Cypher Anomaly card is played, the game is **NOT** extended in any way.

WINNING THE GAME

The winner is the player with the highest total influence from cards in his or her play area.

In case of a tie, the tiebreaker goes to the tied player who is closest in clockwise order to the player who triggered the end of the game. For example, if you triggered the end of the game and tied with the player to your left, that player would win the game instead of you.

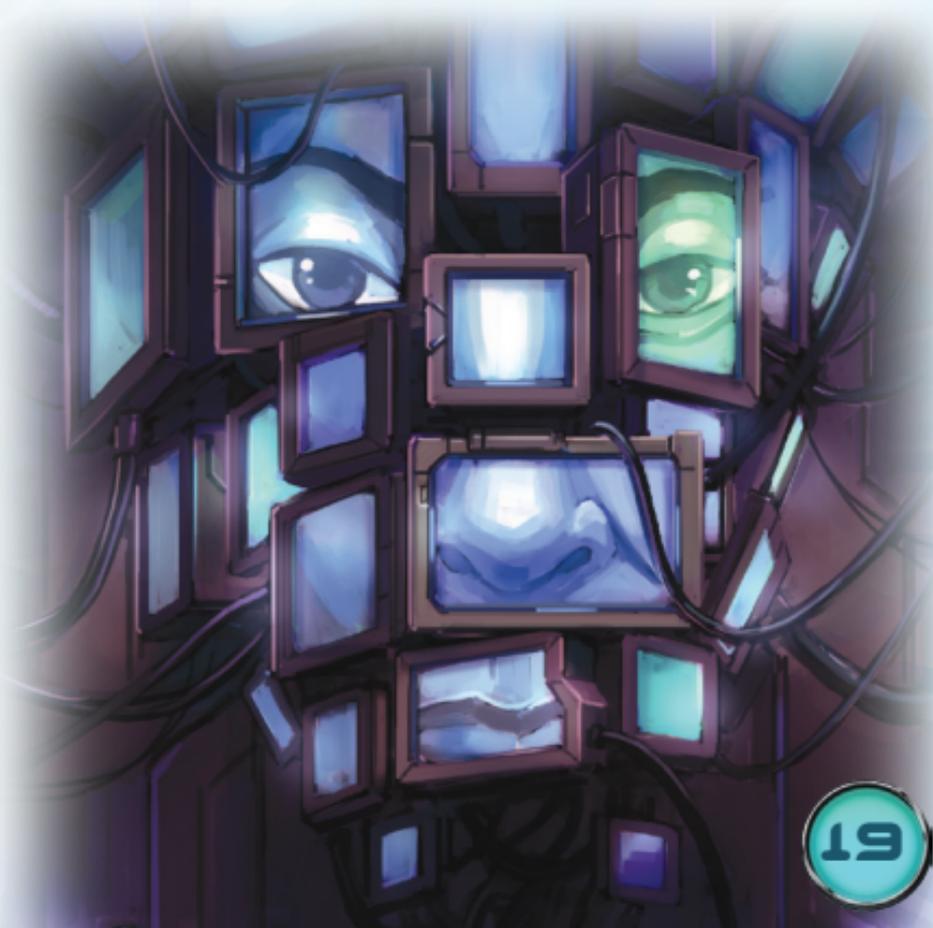
2-PLAYER RULES

When playing with 2 players all of the standard rules still apply except for the following:

During setup, deal the starting player 3 cards and the other player 2 cards.

1. **Play:** Proceed as normal.
2. **Draw:** Draw 2 cards, instead of just 1 card.
3. **Pass:** Choose any 1 card from your hand to pass face down to the other player.

4. **Discard:** If you have more than 2 cards in your hand, you must choose cards to discard in order to end your turn with a total of 2 cards in your hand.



OPTIONAL RULES

To create more variety in your games, you may use the following optional rules.

SETUP VARIANT

After shuffling the deck, but before dealing cards out to the players, place the top card of the deck aside without looking at it. This card is out of the game. Proceed with the standard game from here.



CAMPAIGN GAMES

This variant allows players to play multiple games to determine an overall victor of the campaign.

When a player wins a game, he or she receives 1 point, then play a new game following all of the setup rules.

A player becomes the victor of the campaign after receiving a number of points based on the number of players:

- 2 Players 4 points
- 3 Players 3 points
- 4 Players 2 points

CARD CLARIFICATIONS

▶ CORP OVERSEER

This ability only effects the player who played it.

▶ ARISTOCRAT

When you play this card, you must discard all Middle Class cards from your play area.

Additionally, if you play a Middle Class card while the Aristocrat is in your play area, you must immediately discard the Aristocrat.

▶ EXECUTIVE

When you play this card, move the Executive to the play area or Display where the Corp Overseer is, then move the Corp Overseer to your play area. If the Corp Overseer is not in another players' play area or the Display, there is no effect.

▶ CODER

This card may be used in combination with the effects of other characters like the Hacker, Extractor, Fixer and Cypher Anomaly.

▶ TECHNOMANCER

This ability has no effect on cards in players' hands. Clockwise from the player who played this, each affected player must discard their Upper Class cards. If a player must discard multiple cards, he or she may choose which order to do so (not the player who played the Technomancer).

▶ ARCHIVIST

When you play this card, move the Coder from another players' play area or the Display to your play area. If the Coder is not in another players' play area or Display, there is no effect.

▶▶ DATA RUNNER

While the Data Runner is in your play area, the Technomancer does not force you to discard your Upper Class cards. The Technomancer affects all other players normally.

▶▶ SYNDICATE CHIEF

While the Syndicate Chief is in the same play area as any other Lower Class card, he is worth 6 influence instead of 3. If you have both Syndicate Chiefs and a Lower Class card in your play area, each Syndicate Chief is worth 6.

▶ HACKER

This card may be used in combination with the effects of other characters like the Coder, Extractor, Fixer and Cypher Anomaly.

▶ BODYGUARD

You may only use the Bodyguard's ability if a card(s) in your play area is affected. You cannot use the Bodyguard to ignore a card effect that you played.

Using the Bodyguard is optional. If you use the Bodyguard, the card effect that you ignore still affects all other players normally.

▶▶ **EXTRACTOR**

After you draw 3 cards and add them to your hand, any card in your hand may be removed from the game, not just the 3 drawn. Do not reveal the removed card to the other players.

▶▶ **FIXER**

If needed, the Fixer may be immediately discarded, if the newly added card is the fourth card in your play area.

When you add a card from your hand to your play area, its effects are activated normally.

► CYPHER ANOMALY

When you play this card, it triggers the end of the game. If, during these last few turns, another Cypher Anomaly card is played, the game is not extended in any way.

If needed, the Cypher Anomaly may be immediately discarded, if the newly added card is the fourth card in the play area.

When you add a card from your hand to your play area, its effects are activated normally.



CREDITS



Design:

David Short

Development:

John Goodenough

Illustrations:

Justin Kauffman

Graphic Design:

Sean Glenn

Story Text:

Darrell Hardy

Proofing:

Nicolas Bongiu, Todd
Rowland, Mark Wootton

Production:

David Lepore

Playtesters:

Jacob Barr, Nicolas Bongiu,
William Collie, Gary Heron,
Rob Hoy, Paul Ingram, Dan
Keltner, Seth Jaffee, Matt
Manis, Josh Martin, Scott
Perger, Richard Proctor,
Todd Rowland, Eileen Short,
Mike Tunison, Mark Wootton,
John Zinser

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TAKING A TURN

1. *Play* 1 card from hand and resolve effect.
2. *Draw* 1 card.
3. *Pass* 1 card to the left player, then 1 card to the right player.
4. *Discard* down to 1 card in hand.

GAME END

Triggered if any of the following conditions occur:

- ▶▶ Draw deck is empty at the end of a player's turn.
- ▶▶ A player has played a Cypher Anomaly card into his or her play area.