

# ADVANCED SLICING

HOUSE RULES FOR THE EDGE OF THE EMPIRE RPG

## INTRODUCTION

Slicing of whole computer systems is realized as a single skill check on **Computers (Intellect)**. This document contains suggestions for house rules that make slicing a computer system more challenging and more fun.

Typical encounters using these rules target on copying, stealing or modifying data, controlling remote systems (video cameras, spring guns, garbage compactors, ...), disable communication and many more.

## THE COMPUTER SYSTEM

The abstract representation of a computer system consists of several elements that are connected by lines (see top right of this page). All systems have a **system state**.

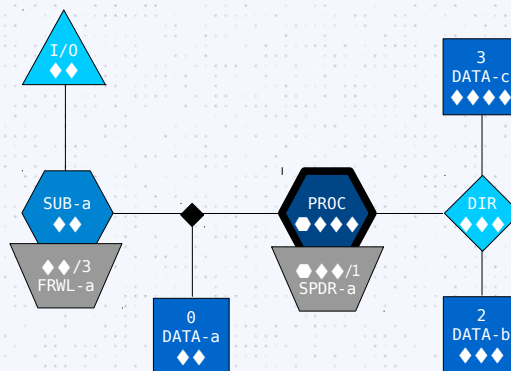
State	Description	Skill checks
Normal	System operates normal	not modified
Warned	System has detected traces of possibly hostile activity.	A setback die (■) is added to all checks of intruders.
Alarmed	System has recognized a hostile entity (e.g. a slicer).	Two setback dice (■■) are added to all checks of intruders.

The shapes of the elements are for the look-and-feel only and have no connection to the dice. Every element has one stat that describes its **Complexity**. To refer to an element they should be named by type and a letter (e.g. DATA-b). Numbers would confuse with other stats.

### I/O-PORTS

I/O-ports are the points to gain access to a computer system, for example terminals, scomp-links, or antennas. They have a physical location. The key pad and display of a blast door usually has the Complexity simple (-) to access. A personal computer terminal surely is password protected, but a slicer with the appropriate gear can gain access by a **Hard (◆◆◆) Computers check**. The entry points of wireless networks are exposed to the public and therefore well protected, so that a **Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Computers check** is needed to gain access. This may be the reason for slicers to infiltrate the building first to find a less secured terminal inside.

In the system, a slicer is represented by a program (see TYPES OF PROGRAMS). It can move from element to element along the connections and depending on the result of skill checks.



### Business computer system of a small mining facility of the OreMaster Mining Corporation

I/O: computer terminal on a desk  
SUB-a: sub processor with Firewall, function: controls surveillance cameras  
PROC: main processor with spider program  
DIR: every rank on Knowledge (Education) upgrades one die of the Computers skill check  
DATA-a: archived reports  
DATA-b: business calculations  
DATA-c: mining prospects  
Objective: Copy DATA-b and deliver to client

A slicer can voluntarily disconnect at any time from the system without harm. If she wants to enter the system again, she has to start over at any I/O-port. Some elements have the ability to kick a slicer out of the system. If this succeeds, the slicer is Disoriented for 1 round. If the slicer uses a direct physical connection (e.g. droid with scomp-link) some elements can cause physical damage.

### PROCESSORS

Processors (PROC) and sub-processors (SUB) are represented by six-sided symbols. The Complexity specifies the difficulty to gain control over the (sub-)processor. All types of processors can contain **programs**. Every system has at least one processor that functions as the **main processor** for this encounter.

If the slicer gains control over the main processor he can operate all available functions of the sub-processors in the system, too. Additionally he sees the architecture of the whole system.

### DIRECTORIES

Directories are represented by a diamond labeled "DIR". The Complexity indicates the difficulty to find the path to the **data**. If specified, the slicer can add ■ when he has ranks in a required Knowledge skill to find the connecting link to the desired data.

The number of remaining successes (☆) determine which connectors to data elements become visible to the slicer: with 2 successes he will see DATA-b but not DATA-c in the example above. Directories without Complexity are represented by a small black diamond. There the slicer can decide to move along any path without making a skill check.

### DATA

Files, documents, video recordings, audio surveil-

lance objects are represented by a square. Data elements have two stats:

- a) A number that specifies how many remaining successes are required to be found by a slicer.
- b) The Complexity refers to decrypting the data. A slicer has to access the data first (move to the data element) and then use the **Copy** operation to transfer the data to her slicing gear. Decryption can take place later. (If she is sure to have the correct data...)

### PROGRAMS

Programs run on a (sub-)processor. Programs can attack other programs (e.g. the slicer's program) and some of them can move along the grid. See TYPES OF PROGRAMS.

## COURSE OF ACTION

### ENTER THE SYSTEM

The slicing encounter begins by entering the system at an I/O-port with a successful Computers skill check. Thereafter the program representing the slicer is located on the I/O-port element. From that one or more lines lead to other elements.

### OPERATIONS

In the system the slicer can choose between different operations, depending on the type of the current element. One operation counts as a maneuver, so a slicer can execute two operations during his turn. Even operations that require a skill check count as one maneuver.

Operation	Description	Skill check
Move (All)	Move from one element to another along the connecting line. Some programs prevent the slicer from moving further.	none, except for Directories to find connectors
List (Dir only)	Search a Directory for connecting lines to data.	see Directories
Copy (Data only)	Usable only on data elements. Copies the data to the slicing gear.	none
Alter (Data only)	Modify data. Encrypted data has to be decrypted before and encrypted after.	<b>Computers</b> with the Complexity of the target element.
Delete (Data only)	Delete data in the element (the element stays).	<b>Computers</b> with the Complexity of the target element.
Decrypt (Data only)	Usable only on data elements. Decrypts the data.	<b>Computers</b> with the Complexity of the target element.

Operation	Description	Skill check
Control (Proc only)	Gain control over functions of the element (cameras, guns, doors, ...).	<b>Computers</b> with the Complexity of the target element.
Engage (All)	Attack a program on the element or defend, if attacked.	see INTERACTION
Exit (All)	Exit the system. The slicer's program terminates without trace.	none

### SPENDING ADVANTAGE, THREAT, TRIUMPH AND DESPAIR

During the slicing encounter the slicer can spend advantages and triumphs and the GM can spend threats and despair according to the following suggestions:

Cost	Result
☉ or ☽	- Recover 1 strain. - If the attack leads to the enemy slicer being kicked out of the system, the slicer is disoriented for 1 round.
☉☉ or ☽	- Add ■ to the slicer's next skill check. - If the attack kicks out the enemy slicer, he suffers 1 strain.
☉☉☉ or ☽	- Ignore setbacks caused by system state until the end of your next turn. - If the attack kicks out the enemy slicer while being physically connected, the slicer suffers 1 wound damage. - Get familiar with the system: collect one ■ that can be spent later during this encounter.
☽	Insight: see full structure of the system (elements without stats).
☹ or ☹	Suffer 1 strain.
☹☹ or ☹	Add ■ to the slicer's next skill check.
☹☹☹ or ☹	System state raises (to warned or alarmed).
☹	- Immediately kicked out of the system. - The slicing causes traces, that lead to the identity of the slicer, if investigated.

## INTERACTION

When a slicer (i.e. her program) and a program are located on the same element, they can inter-

act.

### 1. DETERMINE INITIATIVE

The player makes a **Simple (-) Cool** or **Vigilance** check depending on whether he started the interaction or was surprised. The GM does so for the involved programs. A program's dice pool equals its Attack stat.

### 2. ROUNDS AND TURNS

The active player attacks. Slicers make an **Average (◆◆) Computers check**, programs use their **Attack skill**. Difficulty always is Average.

Each uncanceled success means one point of damage. Subtract **Countermeasures** (rating in Intellect for the slicer) to see, if the opponent suffers damage. If Integrity drops to or below zero, the program is terminated (slicers are kicked out).

Resolve any remaining Advantage, Threat, Triumph or Despair according to the table for operations.

### 3. INTERACTION ENDS

If one side of the involved opponents is terminated the interaction ends.

## TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Programs are described by four stats: Operations, Attack, Countermeasures and Integrity.

**Operations:** available Operations.

**Attack:** skill value to attack an opponent and to determine initiative.

**Countermeasures:** the soak against damage resulting from attacks.

**Integrity:** always 1. Indicates how much damage a program can suffer before being terminated.

### THE SLICER

This program represents the slicer's actions and progress in the computer system.

**Operations:** Move (1 per maneuver), see Table

**Attack:** same as the slicer's skill in Computers.

**Countermeasures:** the slicer's rating in Intellect. If the slicer's program is terminated, the slicer is kicked out of the system (see I/O-Ports).

### SPDR (SPIDER)

A processor activates a spider program when the system state changes from normal to Warned or Alerted. The spider tracks intruders across the grid by moving 2 elements per maneuver and attacks them.

**Operations:** Move (2 per maneuver), Engage

**Attack:** ◆◆◆◆

**Countermeasures:** 1

### FRWL (FIREWALL)

Firewalls cannot move. To overcome a firewall (e.g. to access the element, the firewall belongs

to) or move further, it has to be terminated. A firewall is designed to block standard attacks. When the same slicer attacks it 4 rounds without terminating it, it raises the system state.

**Operations:** Engage, Block (no hostile program can pass), Raise System State.

**Attack:** ◆◆

**Countermeasures:** 3

### WTDG (WATCHDOG)

Watchdogs cannot move. As soon as a slicer moves to the element the Watchdog belongs to, it raises the system state at the end of the round and sends message to the system administrators. The slicer can try to terminate the watchdog during one round.

**Operations:** Engage, Raise System State, Distress Call.

**Attack:** ◆◆

**Countermeasures:** 2

## EXAMPLES

### SMALL COMPUTER SYSTEM

See top of the first page for a small networked computer system for a mining facility or a space port office.

### BLAST DOOR

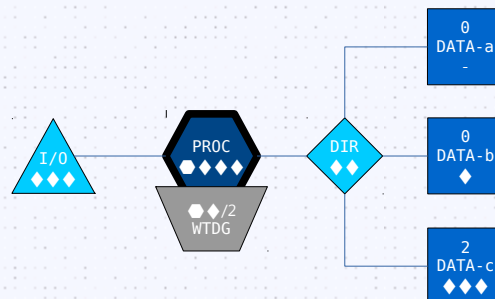
I/O: keypad on wall  
PROC: function: open/close door



"Slicing" this simple system does not require a skill check (simple difficulty). To open or close a blast door using the Advanced Slicing rules, the slicer needs one successful **Easy Computers (◆) check** to control the function "open/close". This is the same as in the Core Rulebook.

### PERSONAL COMPUTER TERMINAL

I/O: password protected terminal on desk  
PROC: function: shutdown computer  
WTDG: Watchdog program  
DIR: every rank on Knowledge (Underworld) upgrades the Computers skill check  
DATA-a: unimportant personal data  
DATA-b: encrypted personal data  
DATA-c: encrypted inventory of illegal goods





Objective: copy DATA-c without being detected.

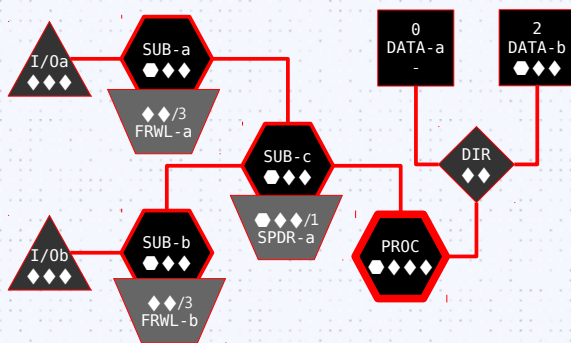
## SLICING SHIPS DURING SPACE COMBAT

The Core Rulebook explains a rule for jamming sensors of a ship during combat. These house rules see the ship's sensors as an I/O-Port. However, gaining control over a sub processor behind the I/O-port could not be managed in the time suggested for the action by the rulebook. Advanced slicing retcons this in the following way (as retroactive continuity has a long, long tradition in the galaxy...):

The action provides the ship's sensors with strange and complex data to analyze. This draws calculation power from other ship systems.

## IMPERIAL FACILITY SYSTEM

- I/Oa: computer terminal in the officer's bureau
- I/Ob: computer terminal in the laboratory
- SUB-a: sub processor with Firewall, function: control laboratory doors
- SUB-b: sub processor with Firewall, function: control experiments
- SUB-c: sub processor with Firewall, function: control voice intercom in the facility
- PROC: main processor
- DIR: every rank on Knowledge (Core Worlds) upgrades one die of the Computers skill check
- DATA-a: unimportant diaries of the science personnel
- DATA-b: encrypted plans of a new ship type



Objective: copy DATA-b -or- control doors and intercom

## GAME MECHANICS

Advanced Slicing emphasizes dealing with computer systems in the galaxy. Usually not every member of the PC's party is a slicer, so Advanced Slicing should not end in a solo adventure for the slicer. Computer systems influence the game world, for example by surveillance cameras, doors, weapons, finding shortcuts on the map of a building, placing distractions etc. The GM should

encourage the interactions between the slicer and the rest of the party: gain some time for the slicer by entangle protruders in a fight, while he tries to open a security door for a quick escape.

## THE FORCE

In the cold and lifeless virtual world the Force is not present at all. But the beings behind the systems (slicers, programmers, admins,...) can be influenced by the force.

## NETWORKS

There surely are computer networks that span the galaxy, but most systems the slicers will see, are only connected to other systems of the same planet or – for security reasons – the same city.

## MORE TO COME

Some ideas for more house rules:

- Data has a size – you need the appropriate equipment to copy and store data.
- Ranged Attacks (determine distance by counting elements on path).
- Honeypot programs (HNPT) imitate data elements and attack slicers.
- Two opposite slicers engage in a fight in the system.
- Slicers deploy own programs.
- New Program type worm (WORM) that infects the slicer's gear (or the droid's system).

## THANK YOU

- <http://www.noisetexturegenerator.com/> for the tool to create the page background.
- Aazlain for the symbol font.

## LEGAL DISCLAIMERS

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