



Hack-a-Pad

PROTO 1a.1 (2025-09-03)

A tablet hacking game by J-P Kurikka

Player count: 2 (3-4 when using two decks)

Age recommendation: 12+

Game length: 30 minutes

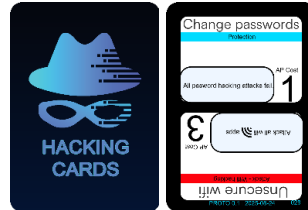
In this modern age your whole life is on your tablet and you use various applications to ease your digital life. While these apps make your life easier they are also potential routes for hackers to intrude your privacy. As a hacker your aim is to keep your pad safe and at the same time hack your opponents pad and destroy their privacy.

Components

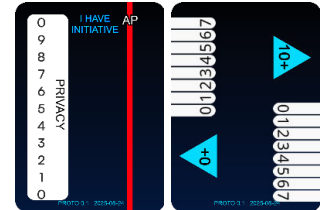
AppShop cards (22 pcs)



Hacking Cards (28 pcs)

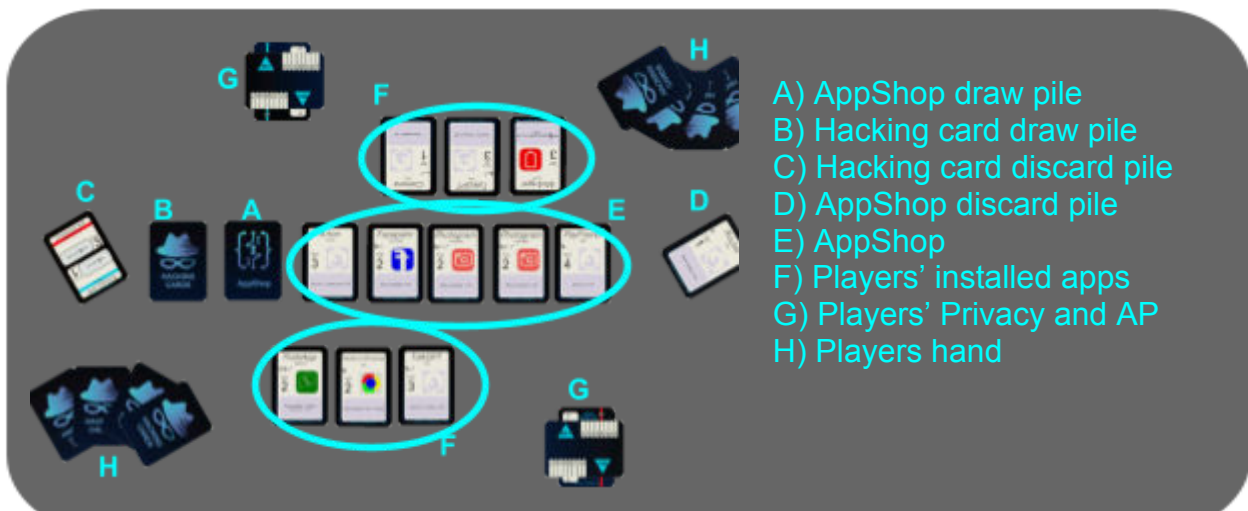


Privacy/AP tracker (4 pcs)



Setup

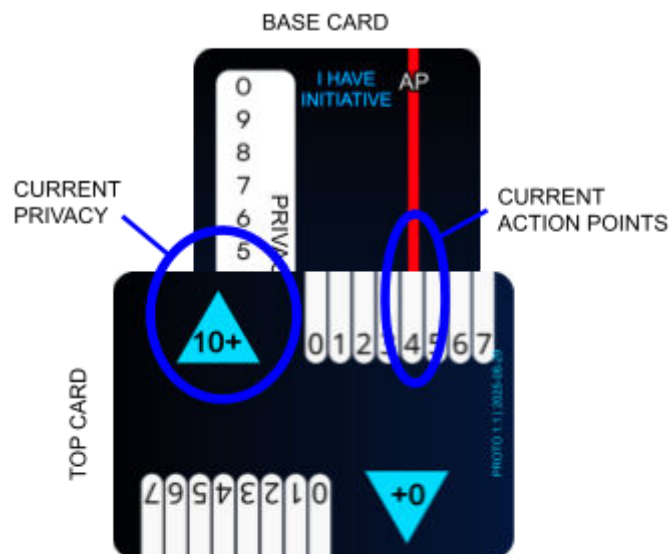
1. Give each player 1 Privacy/AP tracking base card and 1 Privacy/AP tracking top card
 - a. Choose a starting player
 - b. The starting player places the base card in front of them "I have the initiative" text face up and others place the base card "I have the initiative" text face down.
 - c. All players place the top card horizontally over the base card so that 20+ marker is on Privacy meter top slot 0 and AP line points to top cards AP value 4.
2. Shuffle AppShop cards and draw 5 cards from the deck to the table face up as AppShop. Place the rest of the AppShop cards in a face down pile on the side as AppShop replenishment deck.
3. Shuffle Hacking cards and deal each player 4 cards. Place the rest of the Hacking cards on the table face down as a draw pile.



Tracking the Privacy and Action Points (AP)

Players have Privacy points and Action points. Privacy points can be thought of as the player's health. If privacy reaches 0 the player is eliminated. Action points determine what kind of actions the player can execute during their turn. Playing an action from a Hacking card costs action points as well as drawing a Hacking card from the Hacking card draw pile.

Privacy and Action points are tracked using the Privacy/AP tracking cards that are divided into base card and top card. The base card is also used to indicate if the player has the initiative during the round.



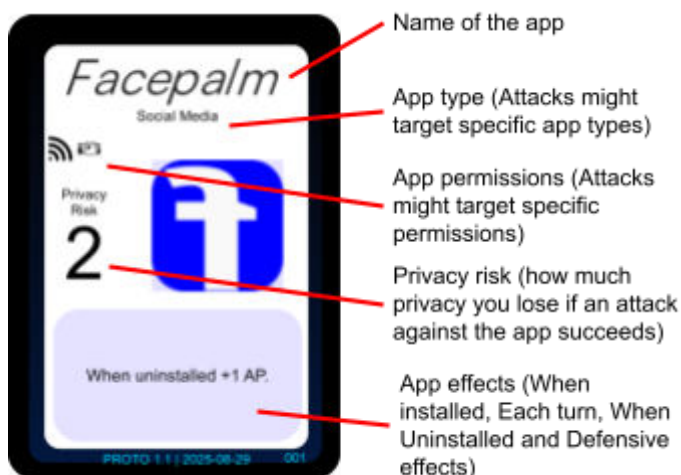
Privacy tracking

The Base card has white area that has numbers from 0 to 9. The top card has triangles that have numbers 0, 10, 20 and 30. The top card defines the tens of privacy and the base card defines the ones. So if the top card is horizontally on top of the base card so that it is just below base card privacy number 5 and the top card has the triangle with number 10 pointing upward the privacy value of the player is 15 (10+5=15).

AP tracking

The base card has an AP line on the right side of the card and the top card has numbered slots from 0 to 7 on the right side. The top card should always be positioned horizontally on top of the base card so that the AP line of the base points to the number on the top card that shows the Action Points the player has left.

Apps



AppShop cards are applications you may install to your pad. You may have at maximum 5 apps installed at the same time. If you have more apps, you must uninstall the oldest app.

Each app has a Privacy risk number. This is the amount of privacy you lose if the app is successfully attacked.

Most apps have different permissions they require (wifi, location, camera, mic). These are vulnerabilities that may be attacked at. Apps also have a category that they belong to. Some attacks target certain app categories. Note that some attacks can attack any app.

Apps may have different activities. These activities are divided in three categories:

- 1) When installed activities are executed only once at the time the app is installed (placed in front of you in the row of installed apps).
- 2) When uninstalled activities are executed only once at the time the app is uninstalled (removed from installed apps and placed to the AppShop discard pile)

- 3) Each turn activities are executed every turn after all players have installed new applications in the beginning of the round.
- 4) Defensive traits are effects that give you bonuses against certain types of attacks. E.g. "Malware attacks against you cost +2 AP", means that the attacker must pay an additional 2 AP to be able to use malware type attacks against you.

How to play

In the game one player has the initiative. After each round the initiative is given to the next player.

Rounds

The game play is divided into rounds and each round consists of two phases where players take turns.

Phase 1: Install apps from appshop

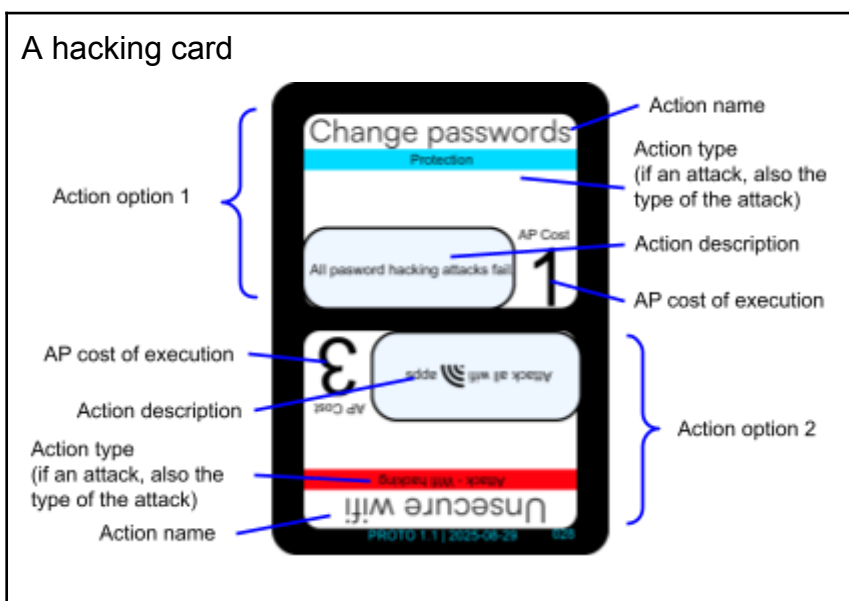
1. Starting from the player who has the initiative you take turns installing an app. An app is installed by taking one card of the five face up cards in the AppShop and placing that card in front of you on the table to the right from the apps previously installed.

When a card is taken from AppShop immediately place a new card from AppShop draw pile to that position face up. If the AppShop draw pile is depleted, shuffle discarded AppShop cards as a new AppShop draw pile.

2. Execute the possible "When installed" activities from the just installed app.
3. If you have more than 5 cards in your apps, uninstall the leftmost (oldest) app by placing it to the AppShop discard pile and execute the possible "When uninstalled" activities on the card.
4. If some players have less than 3 apps in front of them, they take turns repeating step 1-2, until all players have at least 3 apps.
5. All players execute "Each turn" activities on all installed apps

Phase 2: Attack and protect

Starting from the player who has the initiative, players may use their Action Points (AP) to do actions and draw Hacking cards to their hand. During your turn you may do any number of any of the following actions in any order until you decide to stop or you have no more action points left.



1. Pay 1 AP and draw a card from the Hacking Card draw pile to their hand
2. Play a Maintenance Hacking card action by paying the AP cost of the action and discarding the Hacking Card
3. Play an Attack Hacking card action by paying the AP cost of the action and stating the targeted player and apps

After you no longer wish to make any actions during your turn (or you don't have any AP left) you pass the turn to the next player in clockwise order. If you have Action Points left you may still use those to play Protect actions from your hacking cards if you are attacked by other players.

Attacking and Protective measures

When you decide to attack your opponent you choose a Hacking card from your hand that has an Attack activity, reduce your AP by the AP cost mentioned in that action and place the card on the table clearly stating which action from the card you are executing.

If the Attack card does not target all apps (or all apps with named permission) you must define which apps you attack at.

If the targeted player has Action Points left, they may use those to play Protect actions from their hand. All Attack actions define the type of the attack and the attack can be countered only by playing a Protect action that states it cancels the effect of that specific type of an Attack or direct attacks against the specific permission (vulnerability).

If the targeted player is unable or doesn't want to play Protect action, their Privacy is reduced by the sum of Privacy Risk in the Attacked apps.

Note: Some installed apps may affect the AP cost of attacks against the player or protect against certain types of attacks.



End of the round

After all players have finished their Attack and protective measures phase, the player clock wise next to the player who had the initiative turns "I have the initiative" text face up on their Privacy/AP meter base card and the player who previously had the initiative turns the text side face down. After that the new round begins.

Game end

The player whose privacy reaches 0 is eliminated from the game and in a two player game the player still having privacy left wins the game.

In 3-4 player games the game continues for a maximum of 3 rounds after the first player is eliminated. After the three rounds if there are more than one player remaining, the player having more privacy left wins. If there is a tie the player left with most Privacy and AP wins.

Request for feedback (prototype)



Thank you for taking the time to go through the Hack-a-Pad game. As you are currently having a close look at a prototype of the game I would love to hear your comments and feelings about it. Did you just browse through the rule book or did you have a chance to try the game, it does not matter. Any comments that you have are very welcome and useful in game design. So please, point your browser to address <https://wannabeboardgamedesigner.com/hackapad-proto-feedback> and answer a short questionnaire. Thank you!