Dungeons & Dragons

The Security Power Tool You Didn't Know You Needed

BSides Dublin May 24 2025

Who am I?
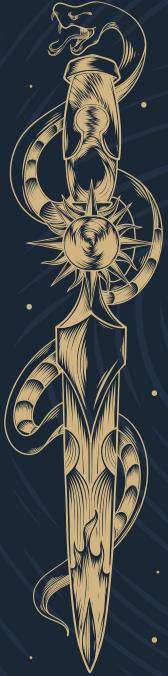
Join us at BSides København

CFP closes on Jun 1
Conference on Nov 8 2025
https://bsideskbh.dk/

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Agenda

01. Which problem are we trying to solve?
02. Your brain likes games and learning with others
03. Role playing games are immersive and diverse (and fun!)
04. Meet HackBack

Game Based Learning 101

Playing games to learn

<u>Not</u> gamification

Gamification is turning something into a game, typically for motivation

What's the problem with training?

Very traditional approach:

- class-based
- computer based

or, specifically in IR:

- tabletop exercises

Tabletops 101: What and why?

To build 'Muscle memory' on incident handling

Tabletops (TTX)

Ye traditional IR TTX
(and why they suck..)

Generally speaking
- Participants don't open up
- Not completely honest != reality
- Egos clashing
- Some people just fights the scenarios...

But most important:
- No focus on engaging participants
- 'Fun' is (almost) taboo

Result: Dull, No learning, no engagement, no learning, no purpose

TRADTIONAL INCIIDENIT RESPONSE TABETOP EXERCISES

Game-Based Learning

Most studies in the sample reported analog GBL as an effective pedagogical tool with an impact on the learning, cognitive, and psychological levels.

It's fun playing games

Fun is serious business

Article from the media *Frontiers in Psychology: Playing at the school table: Systematic literature review of board, tabletop, and other analog game-based learning approaches*

Your Brain is Wired for Learning With Others

Many ways to do this in practice

Chosen to implement team-based learning as role-playing games

Because of real life experience after trying it

and

Because we like games and believe in their (serious) potential

I think we're all impressed by how stupid humans are. It reaches almost epic proportions. We're stupid in dozens and dozens of ways—but human minds are plug-and-play devices; they're not meant to be used alone. They're meant to be used in networks. Games allow us to do that – they allow us to use collective intelligence. Collectively, we're not so stupid.

Article summing up panel debate at Stanford Graduate School of Education, quoting James Gee, an Arizona State University: *Playing to learn: Panelists at Stanford discussion say using games as an educational tool provides opportunities for deeper learning.*

Why Role Playing Games?

When Dungeons & Dragons and its cousins are placed in an inviting, encouraging, compassionate, and intellectually engaged environment, play opens the door to truly amazing possibilities for learning.

We're geeks.
So we'll take any excuse to do D&D as part of our grown-up jobs
You probably will too

Article quoting David Simkins, a professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology, who is an expert on games and learning: *How 'Dungeons & Dragons' Primes Students for Interdisciplinary Learning, Including STEM*

Roleplaying is immersive

Players laugh. A lot!

When players are immersed, they

- Forget their egos
- Forget to protect their turf
- Forget to fight the scenario
- Are more honest in general

Bonus

- Empathy
- Lifelike simulation

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Meet HackBack

A general framework for simulating *any* situation

..also it's open-source (soon-ish)

HackBack

Tabletop Exercises. The fun kind.
https://www.hackbackgaming.com/
https://www.linkedin.com/company/hack-back-gaming/
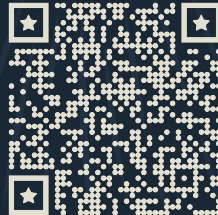
Wide range of applications

- De-abstractify
- Teaching non-techies
- Teaching teamwork
- Marketing events
- Team events
- Simulating real events

Meet HackBack IR Edition

- Run by Incident Master (IM)
- Team with broad skills
- Each player plays a character
- Actions = roll die
- Open-ended scenarios

Characters

- Modifiers
- Stereotypic, relatable characters
- Getting into character
  - Can be challenging

Example scenario

- ❖ Entire IT infrastructure is in MS Azure
- ❖ It's 16:50, Friday
- ❖ Alert from Microsoft DART
- ❖ Administrator (*from Marketing?!?*) logged in.
- ❖ Suspicious: Employee is on vacation

What do you do?

Suggestions?
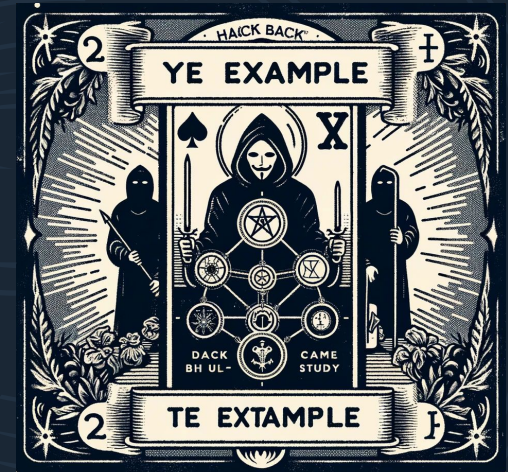
To HackBack and beyond..

- 'Micro attack simulations' included for 'Purple Team with a layer of communication'
- Let's risk assess the Death Star
- Two teams play together in real time
  - Attack/Defense
  - Co-op

Again, lots of possibilities

Let's all join the same guild on this!

Everything is (soon) open source
- mostly <u>Quarto</u> Markdown

Sharing is caring
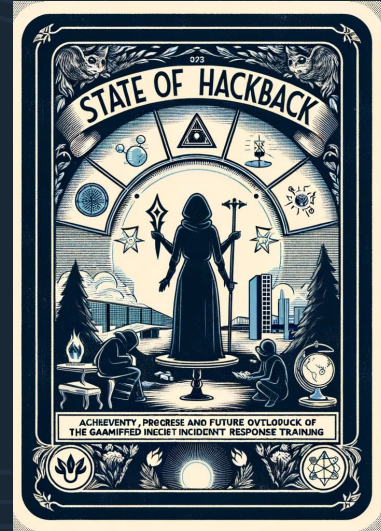
Join our Discord server if you want to help
out

https://discord.gg/hackback   https://github.com/HackBackGaming
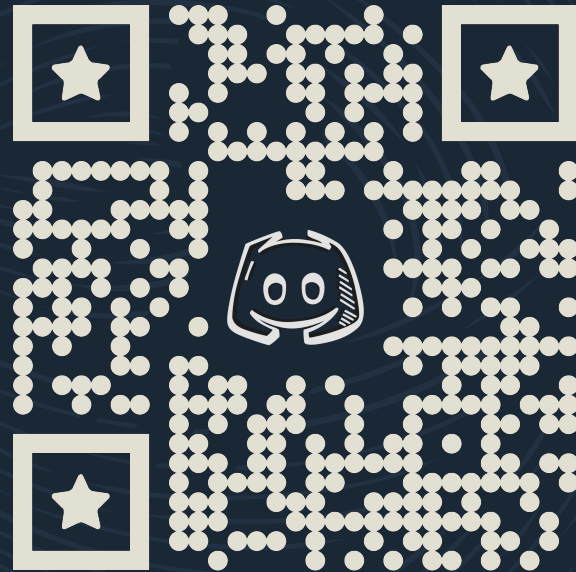
State of HackBack

We had plans..

- Premade characters
- 3 scenarios (not quite there)
- Rules
- IM handbooks (in the works)
- Various in-game handouts (IR plans, playbooks etc)

Ready for use! (...with a bit of help..)

Doing NIS2 (like anyone else)?

Why not make it fun and engaging?

Remember:
Have fun <u>and</u> learn!

One last thing..

Want to play with me?

Awesome! Get in touch!

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