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Editorial: 30 Years— Happy Birthday, Netrunner!

by Jens Kreutzer
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After almost two decades in a Bodyweight™ Data Crèche, the Top Runners' Quarterly is back for an encore. “Quarterly” has come close to meaning “once every quarter century”, but better late than never, I suppose. It is the happy occasion of **Netrunner**'s 30th anniversary that has made this magazine interrupt its hibernation. First published in 1996, **Netrunner** has had quite a run indeed, albeit in different incarnations.

As is well known, **Netrunner**'s situation in 2026 is nothing like the one 30 years ago. Richard Garfield's original game was discontinued by Wizards of the Coast at the turn of the century, but in 2012, Fantasy Flight Games (FFG) launched a new version with certain alterations and dubbed it **Android: Netrunner**. Among other changes, **Android: Netrunner** used a different setting, introduced factions with special abilities and deckbuilding restrictions, and removed the hidden bidding aspect from the rules for tracing. FFG's new distribution model did away with randomized booster products and instead sold complete sets, a concept called Living Card Game, which was certainly convenient for players. Though apparently commercially successful, **Netrunner** was discontinued for the second time in 2018.

However, as a testament to **Netrunner**'s continued appeal and dedicated fan base, a volunteer organization refused to let **Android: Netrunner** die and took on the challenge of keeping it alive and readily available for players: Null Signal Games. To avoid copyright issues, they redesigned the cardbacks and created an entirely new set of cards that use the same factions and rules, with new artwork to boot. Apart from the different back, these new cards are compatible with and can be mixed with **Android: Netrunner** cards (if you sleeve them). What is more, new sets are published on a regular basis, and there is a vibrant tournament scene. The cards can be downloaded for free as PDFs to print them out, or you can order physical cards from the Null Signal Games (NSG) website:

<https://nullsignal.games>

Do have a look; the NSG website is definitely worth your time, and you owe it to yourself to check out **Netrunner**'s present status.

NSG's enthusiasm and prolific creative output as well as their ability to get away with what they are doing are quite astounding and deserve the greatest respect. Thanks to their efforts, **Netrunner** is very much alive in 2026, though in an incarnation that is different from its original one. It would be such a great boon if NSG could republish the original version of **Netrunner** as well and make access to physical playsets easy, but I assume that copyright rules would make that impossible even for NSG.

Still, there are those among us that prefer playing the original version of **Netrunner** in all its glory—for all sorts of reasons. Perhaps you prefer the original setting that was created by Mike Pondsmith and featured in the pen-and-paper roleplaying game *Cyberpunk 2020*? It has seen a surge in popularity since 2020, when the massively successful computer game *Cyberpunk 2077* by CD Projekt RED hit the streets. Names like Arasaka and Trauma Team have become almost mainstream since then.

Or you might prefer the original artwork, which has preserved its very special kind of retro charm. You might prefer the strategic variety offered by limitless and faction-free deckbuilding. You might prefer the original rules for tracing. You might prefer the (mostly) excellently balanced card designs by Richard Garfield himself. You might actually prefer the smaller card pool because it makes it easier to judge what might be waiting in that juicy datafort. Or you might just ask the obvious question: Why settle for a remake when I can play the original? Whatever your reason may be—this issue of the TRQ is for you.

Keep on running,
Yours,
Jens Kreutzer
(TRQ Editor)

“Elementary, My Dear Wilson!” Famous Netrunner Stacks

#22: Mystery Box

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“Uncompetitive. Go with 35 Mystery Box and 10 cards that win.”

—Byron “Neal” Massey on combining Mystery Box with Stealth.

Mystery Box is a program that is probably not very effective at all in the average Runner stack because of its random nature. True to its name, a Runner might open the box and “find” a more or less useful program in it—or nothing at all. It will be a foolhardy and rare run indeed in which a Runner encounters an unexpected piece of ice and then pulls exactly the right icebreaker out of a hat, erm, box. And if you happen to find a Rabbit—you have just paid 3 bits for a program that costs zero bits. All in all, it amounts to suicide to depend on the box in a pinch, and if you pop a box for fun, you might be overpaying for a cheap program. But since Mystery Box, once you have paid for its installation, installs a program *at no cost*, it does have a potential that is worth exploring in a dedicated Mystery Box stack.

As a reminder, here is Mystery Box’ card text:

Mystery Box (Program – 1 MU) - 3

0: Show the top five cards of your stack to the Corp. If any of those cards are **programs**, trash Mystery Box and then install one of those **programs**, at no cost. Shuffle your stack afterwards. Use this ability only during a run and only once each run.

To gain the maximum benefit, the Runner will want to install the most expensive programs with Mystery Box, such as high-end icebreakers, Cloak, Disintegrator, or perhaps Newsgroup Filter. What makes things really interesting is this official ruling on how Mystery Box works:

Joan of Arc can prevent the trashing of Mystery Box, and the new program will still be installed.

(Wendy Wallace, Netrunner-L mailing list, May 24, 1996)

So, you can prevent Mystery Box from trashing itself and still get its effect! That means that a Runner can get multiple uses out of it, quite probably using it during each run, as long as there is some way to prevent the trashing. Suddenly, the installation cost of Mystery Box looks like a good deal as long as the trash prevention is cheap. Joan of Arc is a classic, but Umbrella Policy, while single-use, is another candidate.

Umbrella Policy does not require MU and can also save Hardware in a pinch.

Umbrella Policy (Resource) - 0

Trash: Prevent an installed **program** or **hardware** card from being trashed.

The following stack is supposed to be fun to play and to showcase the mechanism described above; as Byron Massey states in his comment quoted at the beginning of this article, combining Mystery Box and Stealth is far from competitive (because it takes a long time to set up properly). However, Mystery Box is a welcome excuse to utilize the underused card Cloak for a change (normally, it is considered too expensive). I also do not own 35 Mystery Boxes; this stack makes do with the four I do own, which I think is the minimum needed to achieve some modicum of consistency—if you have trouble finding the first Mystery Box, the whole strategy stalls.

Stealthy Mystery Box by Jens Kreutzer

4	Mystery Box
9	Cloak
3	Morphing Tool
1	Newsgroup Filter
1	Joan of Arc
5	Zetatech Mem Chip
1	R&D Interface
2	Armored Fridge
5	Umbrella Policy
1	The Shell Traders
4	Crash Everett, Inventive Fixer
2	Silicon Saloon Franchise
1	Back Door to Hilliard
5	Livewire’s Contacts
1	If You Want It Done Right ...

Mystery Box is used to install as many Cloaks as possible to fuel the many runs this strategy wants the Runner to make—once per turn usually. The breaker of choice is Morphing Tool, as it costs a whopping 10 bits but is installed for free with the Box and can indeed be used as needed during an encounter with a hitherto unknown piece of ice. Since we’re freeloading programs left and right, we might as well include Newsgroup Filter. Both Umbrella Policy and eventually, once the Runner finds her, Joan of Arc do the heavy lifting of trash prevention.

That many programs require lots of MU, hence the Zetatech Mem Chips. Crash Everett helps us set up good Mystery Box runs, positioning expensive programs on top of the stack, ready to be found inside the Box. The Shell Traders are a good outlet for Mem Chips and expensive programs that accidentally end up in the Runner’s hand, as well as for R&D Interface and Armored Fridge. Silicon Saloon is also included for fun (and because it works in

conjunction with Crash Everett) and can be substituted with more copies of other cards on the list, for example more Boxes or Joans, if you have them. Or you could give AI Boon a try.

The trick is to find the first Mystery Box and get going with it. Crash Everett can help find it, and Livewire's Contacts conveniently provide the bits needed for its installation. Sometimes, a Box will find another Box, in which case the Runner might opt to *not* prevent the first Box from being trashed and just replace it with the new one, which can then be used right away (and thins out the stack). The hope is that the stealth bits provided by Cloaks will be enough to keep up with the Corp's defenses. Breaching R&D regularly is the main goal of this stack, but also putting pressure on the other forts.

Daniel Schneider also built a Mystery Box stack, but it features Fubar instead of Morphing Tool for a change (and has 50 cards):

**Silence Sucks
by Daniel Schneider**

- 5 Mystery Box**
- 5 Fubar**
- 1 Forward's Legacy**
- 3 Clown**
- 2 Newsgroup Filter**
- 1 Mouse**
- 1 Shredder Uplink Protocol**
- 1 R&D Protocol Files**
- 1 Expert Schedule Analyzer**
- 1 Emergency Self-Construct**
- 4 Tycho Mem Chip**
- 8 Umbrella Policy**
- 4 Crash Everett, Inventive Fixer**
- 2 HQ Mole**
- 1 R&D Mole**
- 8 Jack'n'Joe**
- 2 MIT West Tier**

Whichever combination of programs you choose, enjoy the free ride that Mystery Box offers.

**Emails to the Editor:
A New Take On Big Walls**

edited by Jens Kreutzer
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The following reader comment on the "Great Wall" article in the last issue had reached me a very long time ago and has been waiting to be published ever since. I'm sorry, Manuel, that it took me so long. It's always nice to get some feedback on articles, so please, everybody, feel free to email me your thoughts.

Manuel Stratmann, Cologne, Germany, presents his take on a "Big Wall" deck:

**The Toughest-Walls Fortress
by Manuel Stratmann**

- 4 Superior Net Barriers**
- 3 AI Chief Financial Officer**
- 4 Data Masons**
- 2 Siren**
- 1 Remote Facility**
- 1 Aardvark**
- 1 Lisa Blight**
- 1 Crystal Palace Station Grid**
- 9 Accounts Receivable**
- 4 Credit Consolidation**
- 2 Project Consultants**
- 1 Nerve Labyrinth**
- 1 Glacier**
- 2 Sandstorm**
- 1 Razor Wire**
- 1 Shotgun Wire**
- 1 Mobile Barricade**
- 2 Wall of Ice**
- 2 Toughonium Wall**
- 1 Imperial Guard**
- 1 Baskerville**

Manuel's comments:

"The Toughest-Walls Fortress" features the strongest walls and their supporters. Runners usually believe that Wall ice does not pose much of a danger, is comparatively expensive to rez and easy to break, but in this deck, half of the walls do Net damage and therefore present a threat to an unarmed runner. The breaking cost also is quite high for all wall breakers except Pile Driver, yet with the support of Crystal Palace Station Grid in combination with Lisa Blight, Runners using Pile Driver also have to pay a lot. For example, a Sandstorm equipped with five subroutines on a data fort with Crystal Palace Station Grid makes the runner pay 11 bits to break through; the corporation only has to pay 10 bits for rezzing that Sandstorm if two or more Data Masons are already rezzed.

The two superwalls, which already have four subroutines, can gain another one with the help of Lisa Blight, thereby putting Pile Driver in a lot of trouble. In comparison to London City Grid, Crystal Palace Station Grid has the advantage to be effective on any icebreaker the Runner may choose, and each piece of ice has the potential to sport two subroutines or more. The Aardvark upgrade, finally, is the win-the-game card against Runners depending on Worm wall breakers once it is played together with a Siren and a wall.

But big walls are expensive to rez; therefore, we need to be equipped with a powerful bit engine next to the support provided by Data Masons. Accounts Receivable and

Credit Consolidations generate bits and are recycled with the ability of AI Chief Financial Officer, which also gives us the opportunity to recycle trashed nodes and upgrades and helps us draw essential cards. Scoring this agenda is crucial to make this deck run; therefore, it is included three times.

In order to force the Runner to install all kinds of breakers, Nerve Labyrinth and the two sleepy sentries Imperial Guard and Baskerville are included; if the Runner uses a noisy wall breaker, they will be quite cheap to rez. Scoring the Superior Net Barriers can either be done with the help of the Siren fort or with the help of the Remote Facility in combination with Project Consultants.

The following deck is a version of “The Toughest-Walls Fortress” that has been adapted to the 1/15 format (only one copy of a card is allowed for every 15 cards in the deck—usually 3 copies in a 45-card deck).

The Toughest-Walls Fortress (1/15 format)
by Manuel Stratmann

- 3 Superior Net Barriers
- 3 AI Chief Financial Officer
- 1 Ice Transmutation
- 3 Data Masons
- 2 Siren
- 3 Holovid Campaign
- 2 Braindance Campaign
- 1 Remote Facility
- 1 Aardvark
- 1 Lisa Blight
- 1 Crystal Palace Station Grid
- 3 Efficiency Experts
- 3 Accounts Receivable
- 3 Credit Consolidation
- 2 Project Consultants
- 1 Nerve Labyrinth
- 1 Glacier
- 2 Sandstorm
- 1 Razor Wire
- 1 Shotgun Wire
- 1 Mobile Barricade
- 2 Wall of Ice
- 2 Toughonium Wall
- 1 Imperial Guard
- 1 Baskerville

One Ice Transmutation replaces the excess Superior Net Barriers, and the bit engine consists of more variegated cards, but the strategy is basically unchanged. Since the adaptations are only minor ones and their impact on the deck’s efficiency is limited, chances are good that we will show the Runner his or her limits.

Ed.: Thank you very much for sharing these interesting decks with us, Manuel. I especially like the idea that, for only one bit and a discarded card (which can come back

with AI Chief Financial Officer), Lisa Blight makes the superwalls just a little bit less palatable for Pile Driver.

Tournament Report:
Netrunner Sealed in Koblenz

by Jens Kreutzer
with Fabian Fritzer
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Though few and far between, tournaments for original **Netrunner** can still be found, thanks to organizers like Fabian Fritzer, who has established a little tradition of holding an annual tournament in Koblenz, Germany. This is a report on the tournament that took place on February 1st, 2026. Last year, I had finished in last place, so it was quite unexpected when I actually won this year’s tournament—I’ll explain below why a bit of luck was probably involved.

Like in the years before, Fabian (German National Netrunner Champion) had invited us to an Indian restaurant named OM in Koblenz that let us use a room for the tournament (and our lunch). There were seven participants in total, two from Koblenz, two from Frankfurt, and three international guests from the Netherlands. Fabian had meticulously prepared everything for a Sealed-deck experience that made do without any sealed product. He has preserved (and written down) the contents of several Starter packs and assigned them numbers; we rolled dice and were then given a random Starter. In the same fashion, we received the contents of one Base set booster, one Proteus booster and five Classic cards. Everybody then got to building one Corp deck and one Runner stack out of that card pool.

Since we were seven and wanted to use the chance to play against opponents one does not meet every day, we decided to play a round-robin (everybody plays a game against everybody else). A bye for each player was necessary because of the odd number of participants. Seven rounds would take quite some time, so we could not play matches of both Corp and Runner games against each opponent, but only one game per round, making sure that everybody played three games each as Corp and Runner in the course of the tournament.

Round 1: Corp 2 – Runner 10

My first opponent was Carel van Maris from the Netherlands. I was to be the Runner in the first round and lucked out when my early All-Hands run let me extract Employee Empowerment and Corporate Boon from HQ for 5 agenda points. Carel then fast-advanced a Data-Fort Reclamation and created a subfort with Liche and Namatoki Plaza. I needed some time to regroup and installed Evil Twin and Newsgroup Filter. When Carel tried to advance another agenda in that subfort, I sold an Expendable Family Member with Smith’s Pawnshop and played Lucidrine Booster Drug, which gave me enough bits to breach the Liche for the win.

Round 2: Corp 10 – Runner 5

Erik Rehorst, also from the Netherlands, was my next opponent. Once more, I was the Runner. Erik hid a Political Coup behind a Zombie, but thanks to Social Engineering, I was able to liberate that agenda for 2 points. I could not do anything against the Walls that went up next, though, so Erik scored Employee Empowerment and made good use of it during the rest of the game. I installed Evil Twin and Ramming Piston, but a Canis Minor proved too much of an obstacle for Evil Twin, so Erik scored On-Call Solo Team. I then ran R&D and found Priority Requisition. I also had Shredder Uplink Protocol and put some pressure on HQ, but later overwrote it with Newsgroup Filter. In the end, Erik fast-advanced Detroit Police Contract for the win.

Round 3: Corp 10 – Runner 4

Next up was Robert Schagen from Frankfurt. This time, I was the Corp. For quite a while, I had the problem that I did not draw enough ice. At first, there was only Iceberg to protect R&D, but Robert had a Force Shield and ran with impunity. Helplessly, I had to witness him grabbing Detroit Police Contract and Security Net Optimization from R&D for 4 points. Only later did I overwrite Iceberg with Data Naga to clamp down on intrusions. Early on, I hit Robert with Audit of Call Records and gave him a tag, but he just shrugged and removed it. I still had not been able to start icing a subfort and finally scored Main-Office Relocation with Project Consultants for 3 points. Robert continued running, but an Off-Site Backupped Audit of Call Records cost him his Broker this time. I installed an unrezzed Remote Facility, keeping it in the open without ice for a couple of turns before putting a Cerberus in front of it. When the time came, I scored Priority Requisition with Management Shake-Up and the extra action from Remote Facility. Priority Requisition then rezzed the Cerberus for me. I was able to capitalize on the well-protected Remote Facility and slow-advanced a Hostile Takeover for the win.

Round 4: bye

Round 5: Corp 10 – Runner 4

After sitting out in round 4, I faced Frank Crins from the Netherlands, once again as Corp. Frank ran Blink in his stack, complemented by Enterprise, Inc., Shields, which he both handily found with The Short Circuit. While Frank was busy setting up, I worriedly eyed the four agendas I had in HQ. Pooling all my bits, I fast-advanced Priority Requisition with Project Consultants and rezzed Data Naga in front of HQ, breathing a sigh of relief. Perhaps it was too obvious because Frank smelled a rat and proceeded to run HQ with Blink. Though he broke the end-the-run subroutine, Data Naga trashed Blink, which hampered the Runner's ability to make further intrusions. But first, it was time to raid HQ, and with the help of HQ Mole and HQ Interface, Frank stole two of the three agendas still stored in HQ: Data Fort Reclamation and Corporate Coup for 4 points. Since Frank had trouble breaching my new subfort with Remote Facility, I was able to slow-advance Hostile Takeover, which put me

at 4 agenda points, too. A little later, Remote Facility in combination with Systematic Layoffs and Overtime Incentives allowed me to fast-advance Security Net Optimization for the win.

Round 6: Corp 4 – Runner 10

I had feared my next encounter, this time facing off versus the German National Champion himself. Fabian played the Corp and scored an early Hostile Takeover safely tucked away behind two pieces of ice. The ice in front of R&D turned out to be Chihuahua, and I made a couple of cheap runs with Shaka. What I saw in R&D was not to my liking at all: Urban Renewal and Punitive Counterstrike. So I installed Fall Guy and Sunburst Cranial Interface (which gave me +1 hand size). Fabian proceeded to advance Corporate Retreat in his well-guarded subfort, and I tried a harrowing run with Lucidrine Booster Drug. I had to contend with Neural Blade and Zombie and, in the end, was one bit short of breaking all of Zombie's subroutines. So I snatched the agenda for the price of two brain damage, one from Lucidrine, one from the Zombie. Fabian scored another 3-point agenda while I was down and out. I then got lucky a bit since I could run R&D on the cheap and found Corporate Downsizing first, then Corporate War for the win.

Round 7: Corp 10 – Runner 4

In the final round, I played as Corp against Peter Billig from Koblenz. At the start, I iced both HQ and R&D with walls. Peter had a Jackhammer, ran HQ and scored Security Net Optimization. A desperate effort combining Overtimes Incentives and Systematic Layoffs let me put Main-Office Relocation away into safety. Peter then focused on R&D, probing it with Custodial Position and filching Detroit Police Contract. In frustration, I made a gamble and laid out Priority Requisition, a TRAP!, and BBS Whispering Campaign out in the open. Fortunately, Peter did not find the agenda, and in the next turn, I used Management Shake-Up to score it, which allowed me to rez a Zombie. Not keen on further shenanigans, Peter used SeeYa to spot my unrezzed Remote Facility and ran with Shaka to trash it in time. In the end, I scored Data Fort Reclamation with Project Consultants for the win. Another agenda had been stashed away in the archives.

Fabian and I had each won five of the six rounds, but the tiebreaker worked in my favour. These were the results:

1. Jens Kreutzer 10 points
2. Fabian Fritzer 10 points
3. Carel van Maris 6 points
4. Robert Schagen 4 points
5. Peter Billig 4 points
6. Frank Crins 4 points
7. Eric Rehorst 4 points

Some thoughts: I had included a lot of Net damage (two TRAP!s and a Setup! as well as lots of ice that does Net or brain damage) and also some tag 'n' bag options like Urban Renal and Badtimes in my Corp deck, but all of this did not

really play much of a role. I am not very proud of the fact that fast-advancement was the key to victory—and I did have all four fast-advancement Operations in my deck (plus Remote Facility and Off-Site Backups).



I included a lot of multi-access cards in my Runner stack: R&D Interface, Custodial Position, two Executive Wiretaps, All-Hands. I also had two Lucidrine Booster Drugs, Inside Job, and Social Engineering, which came in handy as little surprises for the Corp. I had no Broker, but I did have Newsgroup Filter and Shredder Uplink Protocol. I had also included Fortress Respecification (more for a lark, really) and Running Interference (a favourite of mine), but they never got the chance to shine.

Fabian Fritzer also has an exciting story to tell about this tournament: How a Mercenary Subcontract saved his life from an Urban Renewal.

“It was one of those games. I had played Hunt Club with action 1, exposing an Agenda behind two Ice. I calculated I could get through. As action 2, I played Promises, Promises. In action 3, I stole the Agenda. I wondered why the Corp did not rez any of the Ice. Maybe it was saving the credits for an Urban Renewal? As action 4, I drew a card and ended my turn with only four cards in my hand—not enough for surviving an Urban Renewal. But I had two Hidden Resources installed.

The Corp’s turn started with a Chance Observation. I had no Base Link and no tag prevention, so I was tagged. In action 2, the Corp rolled a die to decide which of the two Hidden Resources it would trash. The die roll resulted in the trashing of Mercenary Subcontract. In action 3, the Corp played what it had to play: Urban Renewal! I had only four cards in my hand. However, there still was that second Hidden Resource. I flipped it over: Bolt Hole! Bolt Hole!!”

Thanks a lot again for hosting, Fabian, and I hope there will be another tournament next year. I think we all had a lot of fun, and it was great seeing the players from the Netherlands again after such a long time.

Interview with Fabian Fritzer

by Fabian Fritzer and Jens Kreutzer
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Fabian, thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview. Could you first introduce yourself to our readers, please?

I am Fabian Fritzer; I am a child of the 1980s, and I live in Koblenz, Germany. Some aspects of my life are quite normal: I live with my girlfriend, and we have a young daughter. I work as a software developer.

My combination of hobbies is less normal: In addition to playing **Netrunner**, I also breed caterpillars. I offer guided insect field trips, as well as an “insect cinema” and a “caterpillar zoo” for elementary schools. I also spend a lot of time in my garden, growing apples and other fruit.

*Tell us a little bit about your **Netrunner** background. When did you first play **Netrunner**; what attracted you to the game? Do you also play the newer editions?*

I first played **Netrunner** in 1997. My school friends introduced me to the game. I remember my first game: I bumped into Cinderella, suffering two meat damage. I installed Codecracker. My opponent warned me that I could not break Sentries with Codecracker. Anyway, I ran into Cinderella again ...

But failure at the beginning is something that motivates me. And so I kept on playing and won my first game against an Employee Empowerment speed Corp that relied on Filter as their only ice. This time, Codecracker did its job.

What attracts me to **Netrunner** is the thrill: Will I access a Setup or an Agenda? It feels great to access an agenda—just like picking a ripe apple from a tree. Ok, now I’ve stolen this lovely agenda, but maybe the Corp will kill me next turn?

Also, **Netrunner** is a duel; that means it is a two-player game without the kingmaker effect that spoils many other games. But **Netrunner** is more than just a game: It is the epic battle between the individual freedom of the Runner on the one side and the wealth and the success of a big and mean Corporation on the other side.

I also play the newer editions. My biggest success was rank 21 of 256 in the World Championship at Rotterdam in 2019.

*What are your thoughts on **Android: Netrunner** and the new Null Signal Games implementation?*

When **Android: Netrunner** came out in 2014, I was very excited. I was also disappointed because to my taste, it was much too different from the original. Now, I have to admit that **Android: Netrunner** is almost as thrilling as the original. But I miss the old computer graphics and the dark and dystopic flavour of the original game.

Just look at the card Boostergang Connections from the original game. Its flavor text reads, “If you don’t fear death, they are great to hang with”. In **Android: Netrunner**, there is nothing that comes close to playing a Boostergang Connections or installing Cascade with its old-school computer graphics artwork.

Android: Netrunner is more balanced than the original; but sometimes, I miss exactly that brokenness of some of the old cards. Null Signal Games balanced the card pool even further, but the cards become more and more complex with more and more text.

There are still really great cards among them, which inspire deck building. Take, for example, the card Ritual, which lets the Runner draw one card for each remaining action. This forms a lovely combo with action-gaining cards, allowing the Runner to play a “super turn”.

What is the Netrunner scene in Koblenz like in 2026?

We are four players, and we meet regularly in an Indian restaurant called OM.

*Famously, you are known as a German **Netrunner** champion.*

As far as I remember, Lukas Kautzsch won the German Nationals in 2011, which was the last official German Championship, so he would be considered the reigning German **Netrunner** champion. But I had won the German Championship five times before that, the first time in 2001.

We were only six players then, but it was great fun. I played my “Newsgroup Toasting” Corp deck. It forces the Runner to run by installing Newsgroup Taunting, then flatlining them with Audit of Call Records and Scorched Earth. I achieved a second-turn kill, which was crucial for winning this tournament.

There is a report in this TRQ issue about the tournament you organized in Koblenz this year. Could you tell us something about how you organized it? Will there be more tournaments like that?

I kept eight original starters and boosters, and we played with those cards. I invited a lot of players, and we turned out to be seven participants. I plan to organize at least one such tournament per year.

Is there a favourite strategy or card that you have?

Lucidrine Booster Drug and its artwork are hilarious. Also, I love being close to getting flatlined as the Runner, but winning before flatlining. Promises, Promises is also a great card because it increases the stakes and the thrill.

What are your thoughts on Mystery Box, which is the topic of this issue's deckbuilding column?

One of the most interesting cards in the game. I only own one copy of it, but I plan to play a Mystery Box deck online using Magic Workstation one day.

*How do you see the future of **Netrunner**?*

Android: Netrunner has a large enough fan base, so it will endure for many years or even decades.

For original **Netrunner**, Ludovic will continue organizing tournaments in Paris, and I in Koblenz. I also created a discord group for players who want to play original Netrunner online through Magic Workstation:

<https://discord.gg/5Zu6KR9gJ>

Any message to our readers?

Keep on running in a free world!

Fabian, thank you so much for the interview. See you in Koblenz!

Did You Know?

Bits and Pieces from the NR Trivia Collection

#22: Chimera and Cerberus

by Jens Kreutzer

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Chimera and Cerberus are fabulous beasts from Greek mythology that have found their way into **Netrunner** as icons for intrusion countermeasures intended to scare off Runners and similar riff-raff.

Let’s first take a closer look at Chimera. The illustration on this Upgrade card shows a lioness, and in antiquity, the creature known as Chimaera or Chimaira (Χίμαιρα) in Greek was indeed described as combining features of a lion, a goat, and a snake. The ancient Greek word Chimaira actually means “goat”.

Classical depictions often show the Chimera with the forepart of a lion, with a goat’s head (that could breathe fire) growing from its back, and with a tail that is a snake. Rarely, it is also depicted with wings, which are at least hinted at in the artwork by Larry Friedman. In genetics, a chimera can also refer to an organism that contains cells

with different DNA, like a mixture between sheep and goat, for example.

In **Cyberpunk 2020**, the pen-and-paper role-playing game (RPG) **Netrunner** was based on, there are a number of programs specifically designed to attack Demon programs, namely Manticore, Hydra, and Dragon. Chimera is absent and was only introduced to the game in **Bartmoss's Brainware Blowout**, a supplement that offered adaptations of **Netrunner** cards for the RPG. But since the mythical Chimera is said to be the progeny of Echidna and Typhon (both monsters half human, half snake), along with both Hydra and Cerberus, it is all in the family, I guess.

Cerberus (or Kerberos, Κέρβερος) is of course the three-headed dog that guards the entrance to the Underworld in Greek mythology. Sometimes, he is depicted with additional, snake-like heads, or a dragon as a tail. The original hellhound, Cerberus' hellish connection is evoked in the scary artwork by Robert McLees dominated by black and red. Cerberus is the third-most expensive AP ice in **Netrunner**, and the icon portrays its function as a dangerous and relentless guardian well.

Though spelled "Cerebus", the Cerberus program is featured in the **Cyberpunk 2020** RPG and can be found in the supplement **Rache Bartmoss' Guide to the Net**. On page 148, it is described as a "Pit Bull program with the ability to fire Hellbolts. It will detect and follow a Netrunner. If the Netrunner escapes, Cerebus will lurk within the borders of the Net sub[grid] in which it was launched and await the Netrunner's return. Note: this means it could be waiting outside a particular datafortress: be on guard! ICON: Cerebus appears as a dark, metallic dog with two heads. One of the heads fires Hellbolts out of its eyes and the other howls and barks as it pursues the Netrunner."

It is quite clear from the description that it is indeed the canine guardian of Hades the designer had in mind (and not Cerebus the Aardvark from the eponymous comic book series, although Aardvark is also a **Netrunner** card), who sometimes is described as having only two heads instead of three and as being able to shoot fire from his eyes.

All in all, I think the **Netrunner** version of the **Cyberpunk 2020** anti-personnel program does it justice; the Cerberus counter is a reference to the hound's lurking in Netspace and waiting for the Runner's next run in order to jump them. In Greek mythology, both Chimera and Cerberus were bested by heroes, by the way: Bellerophon, riding his winged horse Pegasus, slew Chimera, and Heracles subdued Cerberus by throttling him with his strong arms. So, as a Runner, try to emulate those heroes and give Chimera and Cerberus a good trashing.

Obituary

by Jens Kreutzer
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Byron William Massey, also known as Neal to the **Netrunner** community, sadly passed away on October 11, 2010, in a car accident. He was 43 years old. Byron was a high-school teacher for mathematics and science in Oregon, USA, and he was an avid **Netrunner** aficionado of the first hour. Also a prolific writer, Byron was probably best known within the community for his column "Neal's Last Words" (archived at www.arasaka.de). I think a case can easily be made that these articles are some of the best ones ever written about **Netrunner**.

Byron passed away all too soon and is sorely missed. Whenever I planned on another installment of my articles, I would ask him for advice, which was freely and candidly given. He would kindly point out my mistakes and make suggestions for improvements. In fact, I sent him a list of possible topics for future discussion a long time ago, and he has already commented on some of them. So, "Neal's Last Words" fortunately are not really his last words. You can find one of his quotes in this TRQ issue, and if there ever will be any further issues of the TRQ in the future, we might hear still more from this respected voice.

Byron, thank you for everything, and rest in peace.

Netrunner Videos

by Jens Kreutzer
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There are not too many videos to be found online that deal with original **Netrunner**. While the boardgamegeek website (www.boardgamegeek.com) does have some videos, they are at least ten years old.

Youtuber cortexjackal recently made an effort to provide some more videos on **Netrunner**. Why not check out his channel and give him some encouragement to continue his project?

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