



undefined

The Matrix

A campaign for [Risus: The Anything RPG](#)

Created by David Masad

INTRODUCTION

First of all, this document is recommended only for people who have seen the movie The Matrix and understand the plot. While a brief background description is given, it is not enough to play a full campaign. The Matrix's bizzare and paranoid plot (not to mention the badass moves) lend themselves perfectly to an RPG - in fact, two have been made already, and you can find links to them at the bottom of the page.

BACKGROUND

The year is circa 2200, but nearly nobody knows it. During a brutal war between humanity and the race of intelligent machines it spawned, the forces of humanity used an unknown method to scorch the skies, severely limiting the amount of sunlight that reached the earth. Sunlight was then the machines' main source of power, and it was believed that they would not survive without it. In order to remain operational, the machines took billions of human beings and placed them in special vats where the heat and bio-electric energy produced by the human body could be harnessed and used as a power source. The minds of these humans were plugged into what is called The Matrix - a giant interactive simulation of life as it was towards the end of the 20th century. Humans are grown in crops, and spend every moment from 'birth' to death not knowing the truth about the world.

At some point, a man was born within The Matrix; a unique individual, who had the power to alter and change The Matrix as he pleased. It was he who discovered the truth, and for the first time in generations unplugged people from The Matrix. Thus began The Resistance.

Today the majority of humanity is still unaware of its state of bondage, but a growing number are free and fighting back. Some of the free individuals live in Zion - the last (or first) human city. The rest live aboard ships, traveling underground and hacking into The Matrix, going inside it and continuing the fight to free humanity. These 'Unplugged' men and women know that The Matrix is not reality, and use this knowledge to perform superhuman feats while within it. Against them stand Agents, computer artificial intelligences that inhabit The Matrix and are charged with protecting it. Agents too can bend the rules of The Matrix to their limits, and they can do so much better than the humans. Only The One has any chance in a fight against an Agent. To the rest they are undefeatable, and the only way to survive an encounter with one is to run.

CHARACTERS

Characters are built with the standard Risus rules, with all options enabled except Funky Dice. Characters will probably be either Resistance fighters or Agents. While the style of play significantly differs between the classes, the two have comparable abilities and the rules given here cover both of them pretty well.

There are two Special Cliches that allow characters to perform superhuman feats: **Unplugged** for humans, and **Agent** for machines. All characters should have one of these Cliches (but not both - duh). These Cliches may not be purchased with double-pump.

Besides Cliches that describe the character's profession (Hacker, Accountant, etc.) characters should have Skill Cliches - treated like Cliches, but limited to proficiency in something specific. For example, instead of **Soldier**, a Cliche that would allow a character to skillfully use a multitude of different firearms, a character has to take Skill Cliches for the specific types of guns they know how to use.

Some example Skill Cliches:

- *Ju Jitsu*
- *Helicopter Pilot*
- *Pistol*
- *Stealth*
- *Shotgun*

Skill Cliches allow more variety in character creation. Skill Cliches cost *half* the cost of regular Cliches, and can be purchased double-pumpable. Skill Cliches represent not only the character's proficiency in a specific field, but also the quality of the equipment they are using for it. Thus, a character who is lowered to 0 dice in their **Submachine Gun** Skill Cliche hasn't forgotten how to use an Uzi - they have run out of ammo, their weapon has

jammed, etc. Certain items can also give bonuses to Cliches and Skill Cliches.

Note: Only PC's are required to use Skill Cliches. NPC's can, for simplicity's sake, have Cliches such as ***Soldier***, ***Cop***, etc.

USING SPECIAL CLICHES AND TEMPORARY SKILL CLICHES

The Special Cliches (***Unplugged*** and ***Agent***) have a number of uses. They provide the dice for any rolls that involve performing superhuman feats, such as running up a wall, jumping a two block gap, bending a spoon with will alone, etc. They can also be rolled in any combat round - they are always appropriate. However, they cannot win a combat round. A higher roll than the opponent simply means the character avoids damage.

The Special Cliches can also be used to boost other Skill Cliches: the character pumps a Skill Cliche normally, but loses the dice from the Special Cliche instead of the pumped Skill Cliche itself. However, for every one die added to the Skill Cliche by the pump, subtract *two* dice from the Special Cliche. The character must choose whether to pump the Skill Cliche normally or through their Special Cliche before rolling the dice. A character may not combine regular pumping and pumping with the Special Cliche.

Finally, Special Cliches also act as a pool from which characters can take dice and use them to give themselves temporary Skill Cliches. If a character encounters a situation in which they require a Skill Cliche that they do not possess, they can take dice from their Special Cliche and use them to give themselves temporary Skill Cliches. The rate is one die in a Skill Cliche for every die subtracted from the Special Cliche. The temporary Skill Cliche does not recover and is lost once reaching zero. The Special Cliche only recovers once the temporary Skill Cliche has been reduced to zero.

Example:

*Tensor, a Resistance fighter with **Unplugged (6)**, is going up against three **Swat Cops (3)**. Tensor pumps his **Submachine Gun (2)** up by two dice, and hoses the Swat team. Two of the cops drop dead, but a third remains unharmed. The cop then fires his pistol. Tensor uses his **Unplugged** to run up the wall and dodge the bullets. Tensor is now out of ammo for his SMG (the Skill Cliche has dropped to 0 from the pump) and is too far away to attempt to enter in unarmed combat with the cop. He chooses to give himself a temporary Skill Cliche **Pistol (3)**. His **Unplugged** is reduced by 3. Grabbing a pistol dropped by one of the fallen cops, Tensor lets loose at the cop and nails him. As combat is now over, Tensor loses his **Pistol Cliche**, and **Unplugged** recovers back to 6 dice.*

RUNNING A MATRIX ADVENTURE

A Matrix campaign can be played either as the humans or as the machines. While both sides are close in their abilities, the style of the adventures differ significantly.

Resistance adventures are mostly raid-esque: go in, do something, get out before the Agents get there. The end of the adventure tends to be a race to get to the exit before the Agents get there. Stealth and secrecy are as important for characters as combat skills.

Agent adventures tend toward the investigative: Agents are stronger than the humans in a straight fight, but they have to find them first. Once the Resistance fighters are found, the game becomes a race to catch them before they can exit The Matrix and return to reality. Cliches involved with investigation, law enforcement, surveillance and similar are advised.

Both sides should be given access to any equipment they want, but should remember that the larger and more elaborate the request, the more likely the other side are to notice. A shotgun can be brought into The Matrix secretly by the Resistance, but a nuclear device would likely draw every Agent within miles. Similarly, for Agents to drive a tank through downtown LA would both give away their location to all the Resistance fighters in the region, as well as destabilizing the regular 'plugged' humans' view of reality, making them easier to free. GM discretion is advised.

OTHER MATRIX RPG'S

A Matrix RPG based on the D6 System was written by Michael Lynes and can be found [here](#).

A card-based Matrix RPG was created by Chris 'Aranthis' Parlevliet and can be found [here](#).

Check them both out.

Does this rock? Does it suck? Do you know how to make it better? Send comments, complaints, flames (well no, not flames please) to Dpaymas@yahoo.com
ICQ: 53914418

Legal Stuff: All trademarked names and copyrighted materials are the property of their respective owners. What is not copyrighted by anyone else is copyrighted by me :->. Permission given to freely distribute, copy, modify, etc. provided you give me credit for it (i.e. don't call it your own work). If you will be posting it anywhere else online, please tell me.