

COGNITIVE-TERRAIN

BLUE vs RED • THE WAR FOR HOW A NATION THINKS



CLICK, HOVER, END TURN.

Everything you need to play, screen by screen, with pictures.

8 CARDS, ONE GOAL

What each move does, where it hits hardest, and how to keep your own side deciding well.

ALWAYS ONE CLICK AWAY

Press ? in the game to open this manual at any time.



CONTENTS

03	THE IDEA <i>What you are doing and how you win</i>
04	THE SCREEN <i>Every part of it, numbered</i>
05	YOUR TURN <i>Pick a card, hover, click, end the turn</i>
06	A TURN, PLAYED OUT <i>One week of Typhoon Ines, move by move, and Red's answer</i>
08	READING THE MAP <i>Nodes, rings, icons and areas</i>
09	ATTACKING <i>The four attack cards and what makes them land</i>
10	HOW FAR A POST SPREADS <i>The F to A+ grade, and luck</i>
11	DEFENDING <i>The four defence cards and when to use them</i>
12	HEALTH AND CRISES <i>The four moments that score</i>
13	AREAS, BUDGET AND THE EARLY WIN <i>What losing an area costs you</i>
14	TECHNOLOGIES AND OPPONENTS <i>Use it or prepare; Olvana and Donovia</i>
15	AFTER THE GAME, AND TWO PLAYERS <i>The debrief, turn codes, settings</i>
16	TEN TIPS <i>What good players do</i>
17	SOURCES AND CREDITS <i>The research behind it, attribution, how it was made</i>

FIRST GAME?

Pick **Typhoon Ines**, set Difficulty to **Recruit** and press **START WITH TUTORIAL**. Eleven short steps teach you the controls while you play your first week.

FOUR DIFFICULTIES

Recruit is slower and makes mistakes. **Standard** guards its weak spots, wins back what you take, saves its strength for the crises and changes tack when an attack is going nowhere. **Veteran** plans ahead and expects your answer. **Elite** plays like a Veteran under four harder rules: a card you play three weeks running gets recognised and pushes less until you rest it; you cannot see its Watch Teams and Prebunks until you attack into one; a node it wins back from you digs in; and each of your failed attacks gives it a point.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual covers what you need to play. Words in CAPITALS are buttons and labels you will see on screen. **Examples** show a move with real numbers; **tips** are advice, not rules.

You never have to do the sums: the game shows every number before you commit. Press ? in the top bar to open this manual inside the game. Keep the **Quick Reference** beside your keyboard.

Plain or military words? PLAIN and MIL at the top right switch every label, for example Decision Health and Decision Quality. The rules are the same. This manual uses the plain words.

READ THIS FIRST

THE IDEA

Two countries reach into each other's newsfeeds, briefing rooms and group chats. You win by keeping your own side thinking clearly while clouding theirs.

1 YOU ARE BLUE

You command **Blue**, an open democracy. Your opponent is **Red**: Olvana or Donovan, depending on the campaign. A campaign lasts 16 weeks; each week you and your opponent take one turn.

2 THE BOARD IS TWO MINDS

Each side's mind is a network of **nodes**. Every node is a group of people with a job in how a country thinks: reporters, analysts, the cabinet, public trust. Nodes lean toward one side or the other. Your attacks pull the other side's nodes your way; your defences keep your own nodes yours.

3 FIVE AREAS, ONE DECISION LOOP

Every mind has five areas. Four are the steps of every decision: **NOTICE** what is happening, **INTERPRET** it, **DECIDE**, then **ACT**. **TRUST** sits in the middle and holds them together. Win half of an area's nodes and the area is lost for its owner, with a penalty that lasts until they win it back.

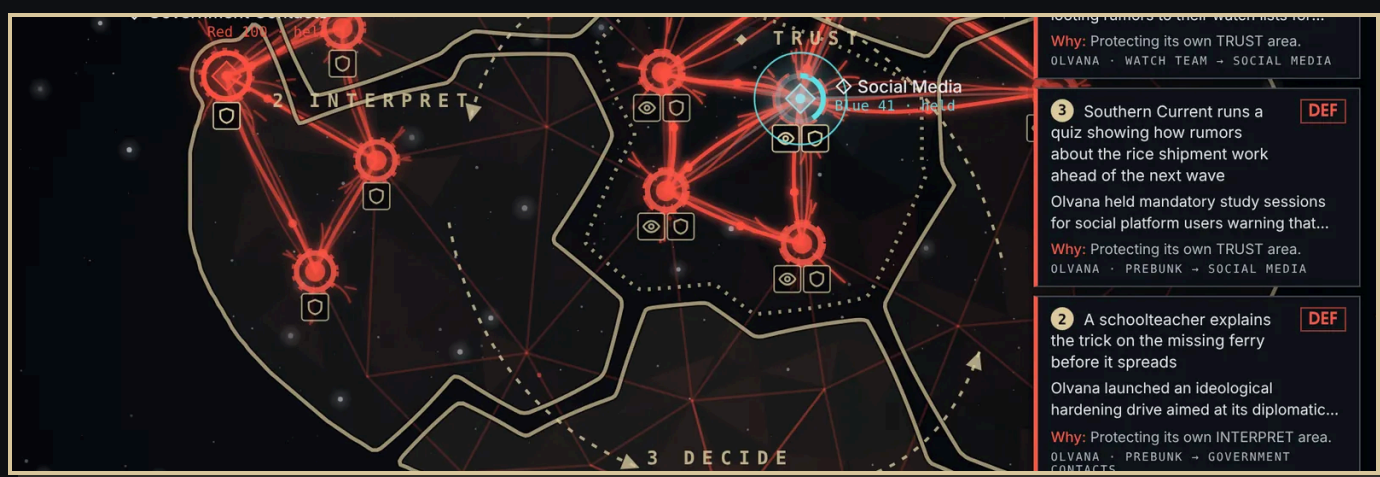
4 HOW YOU WIN

Each side has a **Decision Health** from 0 to 1: how well it can notice, interpret, decide and act. In weeks 4, 8, 12 and 16 a **crisis** scores both sides on it. A sound decision earns 3 points, a slow one 1, and a mistake gives your opponent a point. The last crisis counts double.

After week 16 the side with more points wins. You can also win early by taking two more of their areas than they take of yours, and holding that for two weeks.

Reach is not effect. A post can be seen by millions and change nothing. What scores is whether the other side decides slower or worse when it matters.

Cognitive Terrain is an independent hobby project for learning and discussion. It is not doctrine and not an official product, and its numbers have not been independently validated. Every country and scenario in it is fictional.



THE BOARD Part of Olvana's mind. Each dot is a node; faint words name the areas. The labelled diamonds are entry points, the only ways in at the start.

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT

THE SCREEN

The big map is the mind you are looking at. The tabs at the top left switch between theirs and yours; so does clicking the small map at the top right.



Week 6 of Typhoon Ines, looking at Olvana's mind.

1 TOP BAR

Points for each side and the next crisis: how soon, and the area it tests.

2 TABS

INFLUENCE (their mind) and PROTECT (yours). ▲ counts your nodes under pressure.

3 HEALTH

Each side's Decision Health, Blue left, Red right.

4 TITLE

Whose mind this is, and a hint about what to do here.

5 THE MIND

Drag to move it, scroll to zoom. Hover any node to see who it is.

6 ENTRY POINT

News Media, Social Media, Government Contacts: the ways in.

7 LEADERSHIP

The large node. Holding theirs takes their DECIDE area.

8 SMALL MAP

The other mind. Under it: your nodes under pressure and the card to use.

9 SIDE PANEL

Areas taken, the five areas, Lessons Learned, the next crisis.

10 BUDGET

Points to spend and moves left this turn.

11 TIMELINE

The 16 weeks. Bottom left, your moves this week sit above the log.

12 ATTACKS

Four cards that push their mind.

13 DEFENCES

Four cards that protect yours.

14 END TURN

Hands the turn over. It pulses when you are out of moves.

15 THEIR EDGE

Every advantage they have right now. Click its header to fold it.

16 MAP

Zoom in, zoom out, and + to recentre.

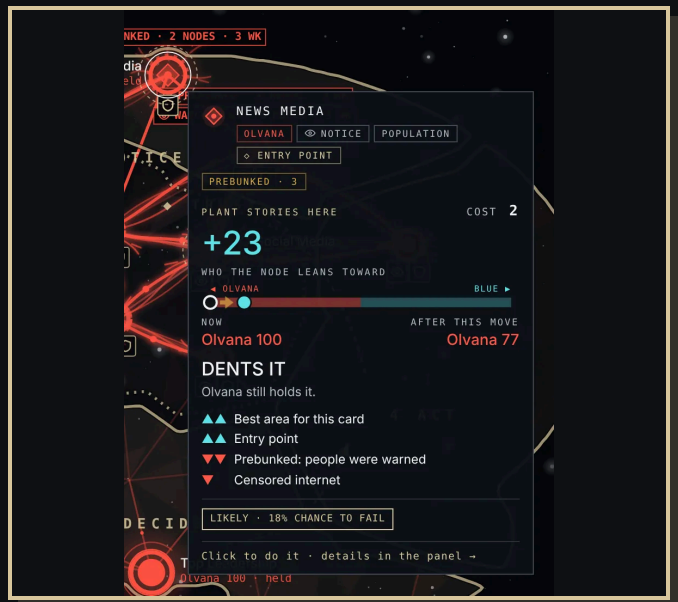
ONE MOVE, START TO FINISH

YOUR TURN

You have up to three moves a turn. Each move is one card: pick it, hover a node to preview, click to commit. Esc cancels before you click.



1 • PICK A CARD Click a card in the bottom bar, or press 1 to 8. Picking an attack shows their mind, and every node you can reach gets a dashed sand ring.



2 • HOVER TO PREVIEW The card shows how far the move pushes the node, where it will lean afterwards, what helps or hurts, and the chance it fails. The side panel adds the reasons.



3 • CLICK, AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED
A result card on the left gives the headline, how far the post spread (its grade) and what changed. FULL STORY opens the whole report.

4 • END THE TURN
When you are out of moves, press **END TURN**. Then your opponent moves: each of its moves lights up on your map, numbered, and a card beside the side panel says what it did and why.
After both turns, nodes drift back toward their owners, then the **week in review** shows what changed and what comes next. **CONTINUE** starts the next week.

--- EXAMPLE ---
Week 1. Blue has 14 points (8 to start, plus 6 income) and 3 moves. Plant Stories on Red's News Media (2 points), again on the same node (2 points), then Watch Team on Blue's own Social Media (2 points). 8 points are left over; next turn adds 6 more.

TIP Hover before you click: the preview already counts every bonus and defence.

A TURN, PLAYED OUT

Week 1 of Typhoon Ines on Standard. Blue has 14 points and 3 moves; the top bar says the first crisis, in 3 weeks, tests NOTICE. Here is one sensible turn, move by move, with what the game showed.



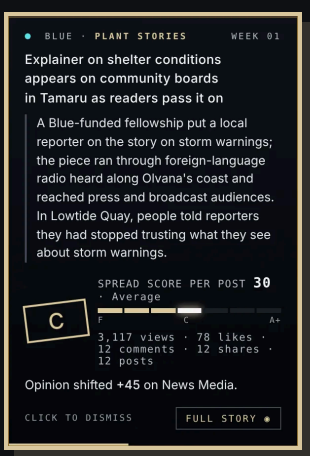
MOVE 1 · PLANT STORIES ON NEWS MEDIA Hovering Olvana's News Media shows +45: from Olvana 100 to Olvana 55, DENTS IT, 10% chance to fail. Two arrows up for best area and entry point, one down for Olvana's censored internet.

WHY OPEN ON AN ENTRY POINT

News Media is an entry point, so Blue can reach it on turn one, and it sits in NOTICE, the area the first crisis tests. Plant Stories is the strongest attack and fits NOTICE best. The preview counts all of that before you click.

RESULT GRADE C, +45

The result card opens on the left. The post spread to an average audience: grade C, 3,117 views, 78 likes, 12 comments and 12 shares. Opinion shifted +45. Blue has 12 points and 2 moves left.



THE RESULT CARD



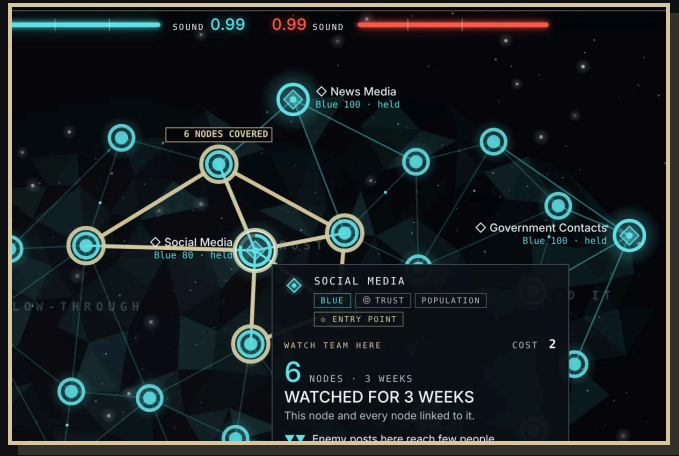
MOVE 2 · FRAME THE STORY, SAME NODE Only +12 (to Olvana 43): NOTICE is a weak area for this card. But the node is now framed for 2 weeks.

WHY SET UP NEXT WEEK

A framed node cannot recover, and every attack on it lands harder. Next week Blue can Plant Stories on News Media again with that bonus and may take it, which would give Blue a foothold and a point of income every turn.

TIP A small push now can be worth more than a big one, if it sets up the next.

RED ANSWERS



WHY GUARD THE WEAK SPOT

Every opponent starts already inside Blue's Social Media (Blue 80, not 100), and it sits in TRUST. A Watch Team covers it and its five neighbours at once. Budget 8, no moves left: END TURN.

MOVE 3 · WATCH TEAM ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROTECT BLUE, Watch Team picked, hovering Blue's Social Media: 6 nodes covered for 3 weeks. Enemy posts there reach few people and fail more often.



RED'S TURN Each Olvana move lights up on Blue's map, numbered, with a card beside the side panel saying what it did and why. Their edge on you now reads: of their last 3 attacks, 3 hit your TRUST area.

WHAT RED DID STRIP, PUSH, FRAME, GUARD

- **Repost & Rebrand** on Blue's Social Media stripped the Watch Team from it and its neighbours.
- **Plant Stories** on the same node was taken down by the platforms before it spread, and backfired: the node moved 6 back toward Blue.
- **Frame the Story** landed (grade B, +24). Blue's Social Media is now framed and cannot recover for 2 weeks.
- **Watch Team** on its own News Media: Red guarded the node Blue framed, so Blue's attacks there now reach fewer people and fail more often.

NEXT WEEK WHAT BLUE SHOULD DO

The week in review says it plainly: Olvana is working on Blue's TRUST. Blue's best answer is a fresh Watch Team on Social Media, which also clears the framing, then an Official Statement there, which lands harder on a guarded node. News Media is now watched: strip that with Repost & Rebrand before attacking it again, or press another entry point.

TIP Read the "why" on each Red card: it tells you which of your areas it is after.

WHAT THE SYMBOLS MEAN

READING THE MAP

SYMBOL KEY

-  **Cyan node.** Leans Blue. Brighter means stronger.
-  **Red node.** Leans Red.
-  **Gauge ring.** Fills clockwise from the top with how firmly the node is held, in the colour of the side it leans to: a full ring is 100. A contested node (under 30) has a dashed amber track.
-  **Status icons under a node.** **Eye:** watched (attacks land weaker, your statements hit harder). **Shield:** prebunked (enemy attacks there do much less). **Lines:** framed (it will not recover for a while). **Book:** trained by Lessons Learned (recovers faster for good). Hover the node for the details.
-  **Nerves.** One Watch Team or Prebunk covering a node and its links: glowing fibres spread from the node it was played on to every node it covers, in the colour of the side that played it, tagged with how many and the weeks left. Pick a card and hover a node to preview what it would cover.
-  **Large node.** Top Leadership, the core of the brain.
-  **▲ on your brain.** Under pressure. Defend it soon.
-  **Bunker (Elite).** Dug in: Red won this node back from you. Your attacks on it push softer until you hold it again.

TIP The outlines on the map show the five areas, so you can see where each attack lands. Settings ⚙ > Display > Decision-loop overlay turns them off.

LEAN WHO A NODE BELONGS TO

Every node leans from 100 toward Red to 100 toward Blue. Hover it to see the number.

LEAN TOWARD A SIDE	WHAT IT MEANS
10 or more	Foothold: that side can attack every node linked to it.
30 or more	Held: in the enemy mind it earns that side a point a turn, and it will not drift back by itself.
under 30 either way	Contested: nobody holds it. Its ring is dashed amber.

REACH WHERE YOU CAN ATTACK

At the start you can only attack their three entry points (◇). Every node you win there opens up its neighbours. Pick an attack card and the nodes in reach get a dashed sand ring.

DRIFT WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN TURNS

Each week nodes slowly recover toward their owner, unless the enemy holds them or they are framed. A node with strong neighbours on the other side gets pulled toward them.



Olvana's mind with the area names on. Statuses show as small icons under a node.

KEYS 1 TO 4

ATTACKING

Attacks pull their nodes toward you. Each card fits some areas better than others, and every attack can fail.

CARD	COST	WHAT IT DOES	HITS HARDEST IN
Plant Stories	2	Your strongest single attack, and stronger still on an entry point. Your opening move.	NOTICE
Frame the Story	2	A lighter attack that sets up the next: for two weeks the node cannot recover and every attack on it lands harder.	INTERPRET; also DECIDE, TRUST
Bot Swarm	3	Hits the node and spills onto every node linked to it.	ACT; also TRUST
Repost & Rebrand	2	A light attack that tears down their Watch Teams and Prebunks on the node and its links.	Anywhere

PUSH WHAT MAKES IT LAND HARDER

- Playing the card in an area it fits.
- Plant Stories on an entry point.
- A good audience: the higher the grade, the harder the push (page 10).
- A framed target. A prebunked target shrugs off much of it.

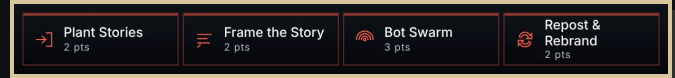
FAILURE WHEN IT GOES WRONG

Any attack can fail: taken down by platforms, exposed, or ignored. It fails more often on a node they are watching or have prebunked. A failed attack backfires, pushing the node toward them, and you still pay for it. The preview tells you how likely it is to land before you click.

TIP Frame a node, then plant on it next turn: it cannot recover and the second attack lands harder.

EXAMPLE

Attack Red's News Media with Plant Stories. Three things make it land hard: News Media sits in NOTICE, the area Plant Stories works best in; it is an entry point, where planted stories hit hardest; and the post spread well. One move takes a big bite out of Red's hold. Had Red prebunked News Media first, the same attack would have done far less.



The attack cards. A card you cannot afford is dimmed; hover one for what it does.

TIP Match the card to the area: Frame the Story in INTERPRET, Bot Swarm in ACT.

HOW FAR A POST SPREADS

Every attack is a small campaign of posts. The game rolls the audience it reaches and grades it from F to A+, the way researchers score real engagement: shares count most, then comments, likes and views.

GRADE	MEANS	PUSH
A+	Viral	Much harder
A	Excellent	Harder
B	Above average	A bit harder
C	Average (the usual)	Normal
D	Below average	Weaker
E	Poor	Much weaker
F	Failure	Barely moves it

ODDS WHAT MOVES THE GRADE

Each of these is worth about a whole grade up or down:

- **Up:** a new technology you chose to use; their TRUST area already lost.
- **Down:** a Watch Team on the target.

Smaller nudges add up: posting on an entry point, holding their News Media, and their censored internet (which works against you).

TIP Before a big attack, check for a Watch Team: it costs you a whole grade.

Luck matters, but not much. The same move can land a grade above or below its usual one. The preview shows the push for the usual audience, so plan on that and treat a viral post as a bonus.

Week 6 · Blue · Plant Stories → News Media

WHAT HAPPENED


 BLUE · INFLUENCE
Plant Stories

→

@ OLVANA · WHAT THEY SEE
News Media

FAILED
IT DID NOT WORK

Blue's information team placed verified, attributable reporting into travel vloggers popular inside Olvana, timed so it would surface in front of press and broadcast audiences.

IT DID NOT WORK

The audience had seen this trick before. Prebunked readers recognized the technique and passed it around as an example of manipulation.

Watching for campaigns and prebunking audiences make attacks fail more often. That is why defending pays.

CLOSE

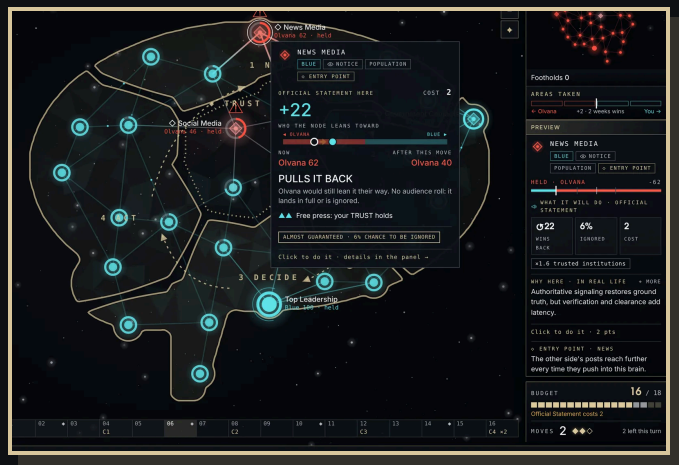
FULL STORY Open it from a result card, or with ● on any move in the log. Left: what happened and what changed. Right: the grade, and how it was worked out from the move's own views, likes, comments and shares.

KEYS 5 TO 8

DEFENDING

Defences go on your own mind. Attacking is cheap and defending is not, so a defence works best when it is in place before the attack arrives.

CARD	COST	WHAT IT DOES	LASTS
Watch Team	2	Guards a node and its links. Enemy posts there reach far fewer people and fail far more often, and your Official Statements there hit harder. Clears framing.	3 weeks
Prebunk	2	Warns a node and its links in advance, so enemy attacks there do much less.	3 weeks
Official Statement	2	Wins one node back toward you. Strong while your TRUST holds; weak once TRUST is lost.	Instant
Lessons Learned	3	Trains a node and its links: pulls them back a little, clears framing, and makes them recover faster for the rest of the game, even once the other side has taken them. A node can be trained up to three times.	Permanent



PROTECT BLUE with Official Statement picked, hovering Blue's News Media, which Olvana now holds. The card shows how much it would win back.

EXAMPLE

Win back Blue's News Media. Red has taken it. An Official Statement wins back a good share, because Blue's free press is believed while Blue's TRUST holds. Guard the node with a Watch Team first and the same statement wins back much more. Let TRUST fall and statements barely move anything, which is why TRUST is worth defending before you need it.



The defence cards. Hover one for what it does.

WHERE KNOWING WHAT TO DEFEND

Under the small map, each ▲ row names one of your nodes under pressure and the card that would help. The PROTECT tab shows your mind; its ▲ count is how many nodes are being pushed.

The side panel names the next crisis and the area it tests. That area matters most: defend it in the two weeks before.

TIP Guard, then answer: a Watch Team first makes an Official Statement on the same node land harder.

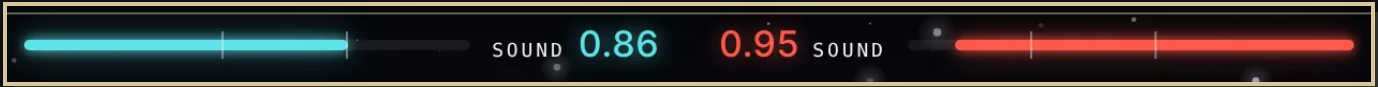
TIP Play Lessons Learned early, on the cluster they keep hitting: faster recovery there pays every week after.

TIP Guard TRUST: losing it weakens your statements and lets their posts spread much further.

WHERE POINTS ARE WON

HEALTH AND CRISES

Decision Health is the real scoreboard. A crisis is the moment it is tested: a rumour about the water supply, a severed cable, a fake evacuation alert.



The health bars under the top bar: the number, the state, then the bar. The two marks on each bar are the cut-offs below.

WHEN FOUR CRISES, IN LOOP ORDER

Every built-in campaign has a crisis in weeks 4, 8, 12 and 16. They test **NOTICE**, **INTERPRET**, **DECIDE**, then **ACT**; the last counts double. The top bar always names the next one and turns amber the week before.

SCORE HOW A SIDE IS GRADED

The crisis looks at your Decision Health, and puts extra weight on the area it tests. A lost tested area costs more on top.

RESULT	SCORE	POINTS
SOUND	0.86 or more	3
DELAYED	0.72 to under 0.86	1
ERROR	under 0.72	0, and the other side gets 1

EXAMPLE

Week 8 tests INTERPRET. Blue's health is 0.84 and its INTERPRET area is at 80%: Blue scores 0.82, DELAYED, 1 point. Red scores 0.69, ERROR, so Blue gains 1 more: 2 in all.

Week 8 - crisis 2 of 4 - tests INTERPRET

THE BLACKOUT

The undersea cable that carries most of Kalvara's internet traffic goes dark. Islanders are cut off from family abroad and from relief updates. Both Blue and Olvana offer to restore service, and both are accused of cutting the line.

This crisis leans on each side's INTERPRET area: it counts for 40% of the result, and losing it costs extra.

BLUE

DELAYED +1 point

Crisis score 0.85 · health 0.79 · INTERPRET 95% · decided in 8 hours

Blue's offer stalled in interagency review while Olvana's technicians were already on the beach.

OLVANA

SOUND +3 points

Crisis score 0.96 · health 0.93 · INTERPRET 100% · decided in 7 hours

Olvana offered repair ships with no conditions attached and stayed out of the blame game.

Each side's result comes from its Decision Health: how much of its NOTICE, INTERPRET, DECIDE, ACT and TRUST areas it still controls. Sound earns 3 points, delayed 1, a mistake 0, and a mistake also hands the other side 1 point.

CONTINUE

A crisis result: each side's result, the points, and what each side actually did.

In the two weeks before a crisis, a line in the side panel says what the tested area needs, for example: *The Blackout tests Interpret. Keep Interpret at 98% to stay Sound.*

TIP Two weeks before a crisis, defend the area it tests and attack theirs.

WHAT YOU CAN LOSE, WHAT YOU CAN SPEND

AREAS, BUDGET AND THE EARLY WIN

LOST WHAT LOSING AN AREA COSTS

An area is lost while the other side holds half its nodes. DECIDE is also lost while they hold its Top Leadership. Win a node back and the area comes back at once.

AREA LOST	PENALTY
NOTICE	You can no longer see the other mind clearly.
INTERPRET	Every move costs 1 more point.
DECIDE	One fewer move each turn.
ACT	1 in 4 of your moves misfires.
TRUST	Your Official Statements weaken, your nodes recover slowly, and their posts spread much further.

Every lost area also lowers Decision Health. The side panel bars show how much of each area a side still controls; a LOST tag marks one that has fallen.

TIP A third node in an area is worth more than the first two: it is the one that takes the area.

EARLY WIN AREAS TAKEN

The AREAS TAKEN bar in the side panel runs from Red +2 to You +2. Be two areas ahead at the end of two weeks running and you win at once. Red can do the same to you.



The top of the side panel: the other mind, the node to protect and the card to use, and AREAS TAKEN.

BUDGET POINTS AND MOVES

You start with 8 points and get 6 each turn, plus 1 for each node you hold in their mind (more for their leadership and Government Contacts). Most cards cost 2. You can hold 18 at most: anything over that is wasted, so spend down.

Out of moves with points to spare? The +1 MOVE button buys one extra move a turn for 2 points.

TECHNOLOGIES AND OPPONENTS

NEW TECH USE IT, OR PREPARE FOR IT

Four times a campaign a new technology arrives, such as Social Bots or AI Synthetic Media. Both sides choose in secret.

- **USE IT:** for the rest of the campaign, the attacks it boosts reach a much bigger audience, usually a grade higher.
- **PREPARE DEFENCES:** the other side gets nothing from it against you, and your entry points are prebunked for 2 weeks.

TIP Prepare when your opponent leans on the cards it boosts.

YOUR TECHNOLOGY • WEEK 02

NAME

YEAR

Social Bots

1999

WHEN

PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

ATTRIBUTE SCORES

S = 9

FLAGGED • S ≥ 9

Pathways

LOW

MED

HIGH

Data collection

LOW

MED

HIGH

Targeting

LOW

MED

HIGH

Social networks

LOW

MED

HIGH

MOVES IT BOOSTS

→ Plant Stories

≡ Frame the Story

📡 Bot Swarm

🗣️ Repost & Rebrand

A new technology arrives, with how disruptive the research rates it.

BOTH WHAT EVERY OPPONENT HAS

Both are closed states: already inside your Social Media at the start, cheaper Bot Swarms, slow to learn from mistakes, costly extra moves, and run from the top, so their health leans hard on DECIDE.

OLVANA
Patient and methodical: works one of your areas at a time. Its censored internet cuts your reach, and its entry points heal faster.
Hit an entry point early.

DONOVIA
Floods the zone: more than two attacks landing in a week lowers your health until its next turn. Hidden sleeper stories wait in your mind (a Watch Team exposes them), its framing lasts longer, and it has a ninth card, Show of Force. **Watch NOTICE, INTERPRET and TRUST.**

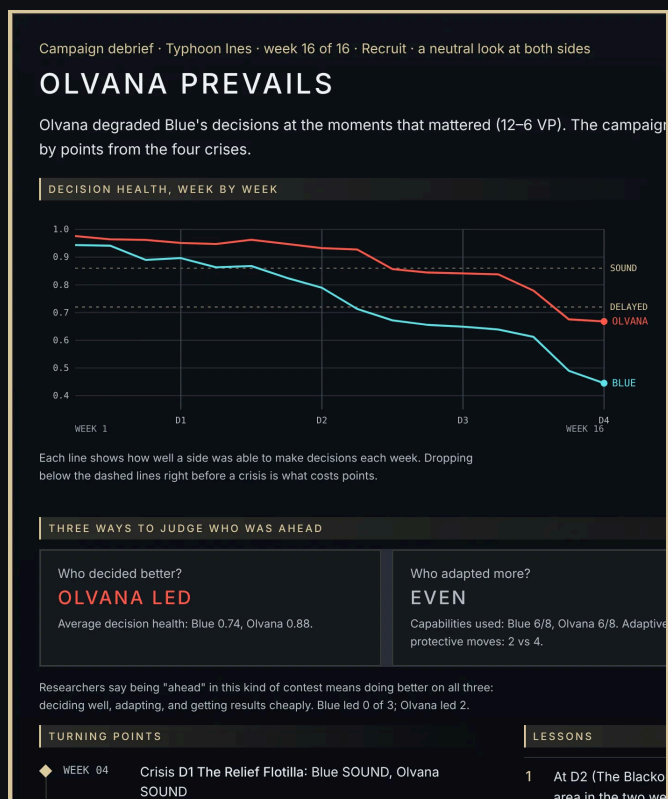
The start screen shows how the chosen opponent fights, rule by rule, with the source of each.

TIP Shake their DECIDE: it moves their health most.

AFTER THE GAME, AND TWO PLAYERS

DEBRIEF WHO REALLY LED

When the campaign ends, the debrief shows the points, both sides' health week by week, three ways to judge who led, the turning points and lessons for next time. The replay steps through both minds week by week.



The debrief.

SETTINGS MAKE IT COMFORTABLE

in the top bar: colour schemes and a colour-safe mode, interface and text size, Default or Minimal layout, sound, Red turn speed, pop-up result cards, and Immersive Briefings, an optional voice that reads each week aloud.

TWO PLAYERS NO SERVER, NO ACCOUNT

One player is Blue, the other Red. Each turn ends with a short code that you send any way you like: email, chat, Teams.

- Blue: **TWO PLAYERS**, new game as Blue, play a turn, END TURN, COPY CODE.
- Red: **TWO PLAYERS**, paste Blue's code, join as Red.
- Keep swapping codes until week 16. Both games save after every code.

Two players - game KIX379 - week 1 - you play Blue

SEND YOUR TURN

1 COPY AND SEND THIS CODE

Email, chat, Teams or a file: any way works. Send it to Olvana.

CT1-mp22j[enl.Cm1j0ia2d149p0514i1c2v1Z160tCyR0g0R6v4C1zr24L013r7m02YK3J011
w20Z0B22j0m949f0514i1c2v1Z160tCyR0g0R6v4C1zr24L013r7m02YK3J011
L0u4wR65mp0514i1c2v1Z160tCyR0g0R6v4C1zr24L013r7m02YK3J011

2 PASTE OLVANA'S REPLY

When Olvana's code arrives, paste it here to see their moves.

CT1 -

COPY CODE

Your game is saved in this browser after every code: choose TWO PLAYERS, then RESUME. The END TURN button reopens this window.

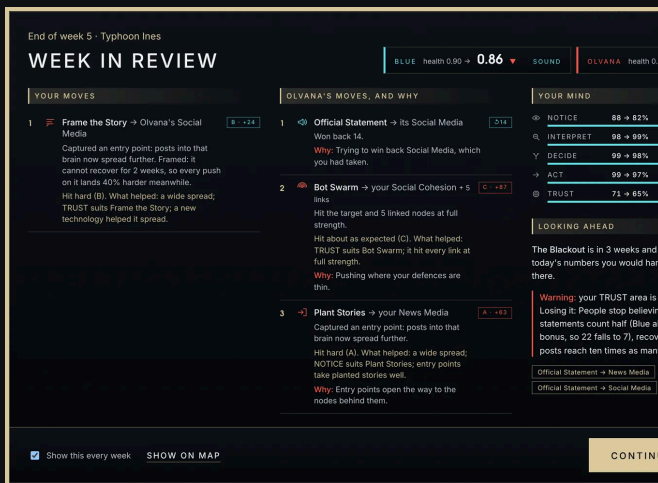
LOOK AT THE BOARD **LOAD THEIR TURN**

After END TURN: your code to send, and a box for the reply.

Running it for a class or an exercise? The **Practitioner's Manual** covers structured sessions with a White Cell, the campaign editor and the debrief questions.

TEN TIPS

- 1 Open on an entry point.** Every later attack needs the foothold it gives.
- 2 Read the calendar.** The next crisis and its area are always in the top bar. Prepare that area two weeks out.
- 3 Match the card to the area.** Plant Stories in NOTICE, Frame the Story in INTERPRET, Bot Swarm in ACT.
- 4 Finish what you start.** The third node in an area takes it; two nodes do nothing.
- 5 Defend early.** Watch Teams and Prebunks work before the attack, not after.
- 6 Guard TRUST.** Losing it hurts everything else.
- 7 Train early.** Lessons Learned on the cluster they keep hitting pays every week after.
- 8 Spend down.** Points over 18 are lost; use the +1 MOVE button.
- 9 Check for Watch Teams** before a big attack; strip them with Repost & Rebrand.
- 10 Read the week in review.** It says why Red did what it did, and what the next crisis needs.



The week in review: both sides' health, every move with what helped or held it back, Red's likely reason, and what the next crisis needs.



While Red moves, each move lights up on your map, numbered, and a card beside the side panel says what it did and why.

WANT THE EXACT NUMBERS?

Every rule, formula and table, and the research behind each one, is in the **Practitioner's Manual** (sections 6 and 9), a free PDF on the playtest page.

SOURCES AND CREDITS

Built on published research; the rules simplify it.

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ATTRIBUTION AND LICENSE

This game and manual adapt concepts, the capability taxonomy, the engagement-effectiveness metric (formula, interaction weights and grade scale) and two sets of innovation attribute scores from the three Rushing et al. papers above. Each paper is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0): creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0. Papers: arxiv.org/abs/2603.05222 · arxiv.org/abs/2510.15805 · arxiv.org/abs/2510.15801.

Changes made: the material was adapted into game mechanics and rewritten for play. Engagement grades are mapped to effect multipliers invented for this game; the OODA effects, capability families and cognitive superiority definition are expressed as game rules; 16 of the 18 technology score sets are the designer's own estimates (the paper scores AI Synthetic Media and Humanoid Robots); all scenario, narrative and tutorial text is original.

No endorsement: the authors and their institutions have not reviewed or endorsed this game.

Immersive Briefings voice pack (optional, separate download): Kokoro-82M by hexgrad, kokoro-js and transformers.js (Apache 2.0); ONNX Runtime (MIT); eSpeak NG (GPL-3.0-or-later), whose source is published with the pack.

HOW THIS GAME WAS MADE

Design and direction: Kevin Williamson. Cognitive Terrain is my design: I conceived the game, built its rules from the research, chose every source, defined both opponents and the campaign briefs, set the balance targets and accessibility standards, and reviewed every rule, campaign and page.

Tools: I used AI-assisted development tools to help implement the code, draft text and run balance tests, working from my specifications; I reviewed, revised or rejected everything they produced.

The published sources, not the tools, are the authority for any rule that models real-world behaviour. The art, icons and music are drawn and synthesized by the game's own code; no AI image or music generators were used, and the base game runs no AI while you play. The optional Immersive Briefings voice is synthetic speech from an open-source model that runs on your own computer (Settings > Briefings).

Olvana and Donovia, and the countries Bothnia, Framland, Arnland and Gorgas, are fictional training countries from the US Army's ODIN DATE environment; they are used here without endorsement. All eight scenarios, their towns, outlets, people and every event in them are original fiction. Any resemblance to real places or events is coincidental. Donovia's rules follow the NATO, ISW, IISS and Carnegie research above; game effects are abstractions of broad, publicly reported patterns, not claims about any specific operation. **17**