



RULES OF PLAY

PLAYERS

2-4

AGE

14+

PLAYTIME

30m

One Billion Users

INTRODUCTION

In *One Billion Users*, players compete to build the biggest, most successful social media network. You'll attract communities of users and influencers to your platform, place blockers on rival platforms, and respond to random events that impact everyone. You'll also need to balance user growth with toxicity – too much toxicity will limit your growth and penalize your score.

GOAL

The player with the most points at the end of the game wins. The majority of points come from **Community** and **Influencers**, but there are other ways to gain and lose points as explained in the *Scoring* section.


CARD TYPES

There are several types of cards in the game, each with a unique role. The full rules for using these cards in play are explained in later sections.

Community Cards (x39)

These represent a number of **Users** in millions, from 50 to 300. Players add these cards to their platforms, growing their total number of Users.

Each  icon represents **100 million Users**, and a  icon represents **50 million Users**.

Some Community cards also have a level of **Toxicity**, indicated by one or more  icons.

*This card has
300 million **Users**... ...and 2 points
of **Toxicity***



Blocker Cards (x18)

These are cards you can play on other platforms to prevent them from adding Community cards.

These include *Low on Funds*, *Toxic Culture*, *Overzealous Mods*, *Server Overload*, and *Bad Press*.

Blockers can be resolved with **Hotfix** cards, by using the **Grind** action three times, or (for some Blockers) with special **Sacrifice** actions.

Blockers and their corresponding **Hotfixes** and **Safeguards** are identified by matching icons



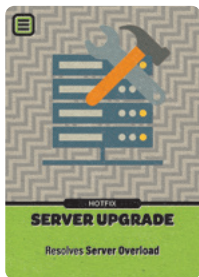
Some **Blockers** prevent the use of any **Community** cards, while others create unique restrictions

Hotfix Cards (x24)

These cards can be used to remove **Blocker** cards so that you can resume adding Community cards to your platform. Hotfix cards include *Fundraising*, *New Advertisers*, *Troll Crackdown*, *Mod Training*, *Server Upgrade*, and *PR Response*.

Each of these cards has a corresponding **Blocker** that it can resolve.

Hotfixes indicate the **Blocker** they can resolve via a matching icon



Safeguard Cards (x4)

These four powerful cards — *Appeals Board*, *PR Department*, *War Chest*, and *Cloud Backup* — each provide permanent immunity to a specific **Blocker** once they are added to your platform.

They can be played preemptively, played in the same manner as a **Hotfix** card, or played in a special counterplay action.

Safeguards indicate the **Blocker** they protect against via a matching icon



Influencer Cards (x9)

These are similar to **Community** cards, each featuring millions of **Users** and sometimes a level of **Toxicity**, indicated by the same 👤 and ⚡ icons.

Unlike **Community** cards, which players choose to play from their hands onto their platforms, **Influencers** interrupt the game when drawn from the deck, and join a platform automatically based on special criteria.

Influencers have millions of **Users** and points of **Toxicity**, indicated via the same icons as **Community** cards



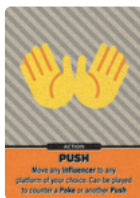
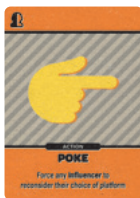
Every **Influencer** has specific criteria when choosing a **Platform** to join

Action Cards (x10)

The **Push** and **Poke** cards can be played to cause an **Influencer** to move to a new platform. Poke cards also increase the number of **Users** associated with an **Influencer**.



Poke adds 50 million **Users** to an **Influencer** it is played on



Event Cards (x13)

When drawn, these cards apply either **!!! Instant** effects that occur once or **🔄 Ongoing** effects that remain in play until a new Event card is drawn.



Milestone Cards (x3)

The *One Billion Users*, *Two Billion Users*, and *Three Billion Users* cards are claimed by the first players to reach these growth milestones, and award bonus points at the end of the game.



Game Over Card (x1)

This card immediately ends the game when drawn.



Network Cards (x8)

As explained in the *Advanced Play* section, these cards can be distributed at random, giving each player some special superpowers and unique disadvantages.



The deck also includes some utility cards that are not used in play:

- **Scoring Reference** cards (x4)
- **Turn Action Reference** cards (x4)
- **Game Information** card
- **Techdirt & Diegetic Games Information** cards

GAME SETUP

To set up a game of One Billion Users, follow these steps:

1. Remove the utility cards, and give a **Scoring Reference** and **Turn Action Reference** card to each player. Remove the **Network** cards, optionally using them as described in the *Advanced Play* section.
2. Set aside the **Influencer**, **Event**, **Milestone**, and **Game Over** cards.
3. Shuffle all remaining cards together (**Community**, **Blocker**, **Hotfix**, **Safeguard**, and **Action** cards).
4. Deal **seven cards** to each player.
5. Each player places one **Community** card face up in front of them. This is their "launch" community. If a player has no Community cards in their hand, return all their cards to the bottom of the deck and deal them seven new cards, repeating until they can play a Community card.

NOTE: HAND SIZE

At this point, each player should be holding **six cards**. This is called their **Hand Size**. Players must always end their turn with exactly that many cards in their hand. When using *Advanced Play* rules, some players may have a different Hand Size which applies in all circumstances.



6. Return the **Influencer** and **Event** cards to the deck, and shuffle.
7. Keeping all cards face down, remove roughly one fifth of the deck (around 24 cards). Shuffle the **Game Over** card into these cards and place them on the bottom of the deck. The Game Over card is now hidden in a random position near the end of the deck.
8. Place the deck face down in the center of the table. Place the three **Milestone** cards in a face up stack next to the deck, with the *One Billion Users* card on top. Leave space next to the deck for the **Discard Pile** and the **Event Pile**.

You are now ready to begin the game!



Whichever player has gone the longest without posting to social media takes the first turn. Play then moves clockwise around the table.

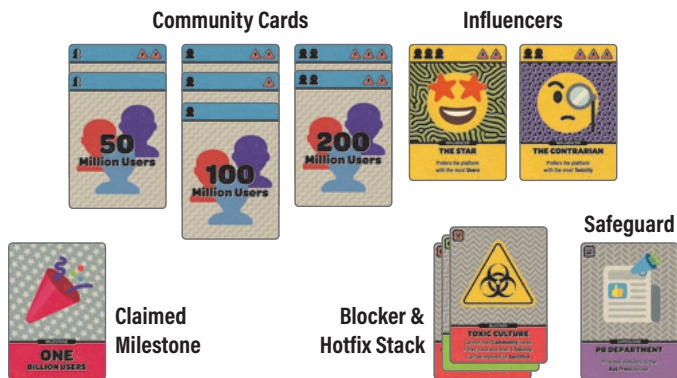
THE PLAY SPACE

The table space in front of each player represents their **Platform**. Cards are placed face up in this space when they are added to the platform.

Community and **Influencer** cards should be organized in the center of the space so players can easily see the amount of  **Users** and  **Toxicity** on each platform. **Blocker** and **Hotfix** cards are placed together in a single stack that grows throughout the game, with **Safeguard** cards placed nearby. **Milestone** cards are placed to the side when they are claimed.

EXAMPLE: YOUR PLATFORM

Each player will need ample space as their platform grows. You should try to keep your **Community** and **Influencer** cards organized, so that you can quickly and easily count up your platform's total  **Users** and  **Toxicity**.



TURN SUMMARY

On most turns you will draw one card and play one card. When drawing a card, you can always choose to take either the top card of the deck or the top card of the **Discard Pile**. Whenever a drawn card is an **Event** or **Influencer** card, do not add it to your hand. Follow the instructions for these cards (explained later) before resuming your turn by drawing a new card.

To begin your turn, draw a card.


NOTE: SHORTHANDED

At this point, you should have one more card than your **Hand Size**. In certain circumstances, you may have started your turn with fewer cards than your Hand Size. When this occurs, continue drawing cards until you reach your Hand Size plus one additional card.

Next, you may optionally remove cards from your platform as described in the *Sacrificing Cards* section.

Finally, **play one card** from your hand. There are **eight ways** to do so:

1. Add a Community to your Platform




Place a **Community** card face up on your platform. The card's  **Users** and  **Toxicity** count towards your platform's total for as long as it remains there. You might be restricted or outright prevented from adding Community by an active **Blocker** on your platform.

If playing a Community card causes your platform to reach or pass one, two, or three billion total users, you may be able to claim a **Milestone** as described in the *Milestone Cards* section.

2. Add a Blocker to another Platform


Place a **Blocker** card face up on a rival player's platform, where it is considered "active" until "resolved". You cannot play a Blocker on a platform that already has an active Blocker, or on one that has the relevant **Safeguard**.

An active Blocker on your platform limits your ability to play Community cards. Here are the specific limitations:

- **Low on Funds** and **Bad Press**: You cannot play **any** new Community cards onto your platform
- **Toxic Culture**: You can only play Community cards with three or more points of  **Toxicity**
- **Overzealous Mods**: You can only play community cards with zero points of  **Toxicity**
- **Server Overload**: You can only play Community cards that have  **50 million Users** (and no higher)

When you play a Blocker, the targeted player might be able to use the corresponding Safeguard card in a special counterplay action as described later.

3. Add a Hotfix to your Platform

If there is an active **Blocker** on your platform, you may resolve it by playing the corresponding **Hotfix** card. Place the Hotfix face up on top of the Blocker, which is then considered resolved. Future Blockers can be placed on top of this Hotfix, forming a stack with just one card visible on top. One Hotfix, **New Advertisers**, has an additional restriction: you cannot use it if your platform currently has the most  **Toxicity** out of all players' platforms.

4. Grind to resolve a Blocker

If there is an active **Blocker** on your platform, and you can't or don't wish to resolve it via other means, you may remove any card from your hand and place it face down, partially covering the Blocker.

You may repeat this action on subsequent turns, placing another card on top of the previous one. Once you have played three cards in this manner, the Blocker is resolved (indicate this by moving the face down cards to cover it completely). Beginning this process does not prevent you from resolving the Blocker in some other way, but any cards used to grind still remain in the stack and are not returned to your hand.

EXAMPLE: GRINDING



When you grind, place the cards to partially cover the Blocker, which remains active

After grinding 3 times, cover the resolved Blocker completely

5. Add a Safeguard to your Platform

There are four **Safeguards** in the deck, each of which protects against a specific **Blocker**:

- *Appeals Board* protects against *Overzealous Mods*
- *PR Department* protects against *Bad Press*
- *Cloud Backup* protects against *Server Overload*
- *War Chest* protects against *Low on Funds*

You may play a Safeguard on your turn by placing it face up on your platform. If the corresponding Blocker is already active on your platform, it is immediately resolved (indicate this by turning the Blocker face down).

Safeguards can also be used for a special counterplay action. If you are holding a Safeguard in your hand when another player plays the corresponding Blocker on your platform, you may immediately counter it. Place the Safeguard face up on your platform, turned sideways to indicate that it was used for counterplay (this awards extra points at the end of the game). The countered Blocker is placed in the **Discard Pile**. Then, you immediately take a full turn. Afterwards, play proceeds clockwise from you.

6. Use a Poke action

You may play a **Poke** action card on your turn by placing it face up underneath an **Influencer** card that is present on any player's platform, including your own. The targeted Influencer then reconsiders their choice of platform as if they were just drawn from the deck, as explained later in the *Influencer Cards* section. Poke cards travel with the Influencer if they move.

7. Use a Push action

You may play a **Push** action card on your turn by placing it face up underneath an **Influencer** card that is present on any player's platform, including your own. You may then move the targeted Influencer to any platform of your choice, including your own.

Push cards can also be used for a special counterplay action. If another player uses a Poke or a Push action that would move an influencer either to or from your platform, you may immediately counter it by playing your own Push card on the same Influencer. A player can react to this by counterplaying another Push card of their own. Players can continue immediately countering in this manner until one runs out of Push cards or decides to stop, at which point the final player to play a Push decides which platform the Influencer moves to. Then, the original player completes their turn as normal.


8. Discard

Place a card face up on the **Discard Pile**. If you can't or don't wish to play a card in any other way, you must discard a card so you end your turn at your **Hand Size**.


SACRIFICING CARDS

In addition to the normal methods of resolving **Blockers**, The *Toxic Culture* and *Server Overload* Blockers can be resolved by removing one or more **Community** cards from your platform. This sacrifice action may be freely taken on your turn if one of these Blockers is active on your platform, after drawing but before playing a card. Sacrificed cards are placed on the **Discard Pile** in an order of your choice, and the Blocker is resolved (indicate this by turning the Blocker face down).

Toxic Culture Sacrifice

Resolve this Blocker by sacrificing any combination of one or more Community cards that have a combined total of at least three points of  **Toxicity**. If this is not possible because the Community cards on your platform have a combined total of less than three points of Toxicity, you can sacrifice all Community cards with any Toxicity. If none of the Community cards on your platform have any Toxicity, you can immediately resolve the Toxic Culture blocker without removing any cards.

Server Overload Sacrifice

Resolve this Blocker by sacrificing the Community card on your platform with the highest number of  **Users**. If there is a tie for which Community card has the highest number of users, you may choose which to sacrifice.



INFLUENCER CARDS

When you draw an **Influencer** card, place it face up in the center of the table. Read the criteria on the card and move the Influencer to the platform that meets it. In the case of a tie:

- If the player drawing the card is among those tied, the Influencer joins their platform
- Otherwise, the Influencer joins the platform of the tied player closest to the player who drew the card, in clockwise order

EXAMPLE: DRAWING AN INFLUENCER

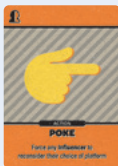
Player A draws *The Investor*, who prefers the platform with the most Users. All players count the number of Users on their platform. **Players B and C** are tied for the most Users. Because **Player B** is seated directly to **Player A**'s left (the closest in clockwise order), The Investor joins **Player B**'s platform.

Influencers can have both  **Users** and  **Toxicity**. These count towards a platform's total Users and Toxicity, just like those from **Community** cards. However, **Blocker** cards do not stop Influencers from joining platforms, and Influencers do not count as Community cards.

When you use a **Poke** action card on an Influencer (and it is not countered by a **Push**), move the Influencer card to the center of the table and then assign it to a platform exactly as if you had just drawn it from the deck.

Any Poke and Push cards that are played on an Influencer card remain un-

derneath it and move with it for the rest of the game. The Push cards have no further effect, but each Poke card attached to an Influencer in this way adds 50 million Users to its value.



The **Poke** cards include **50 million User icons** that should be kept visible in a stack under the Influencer, so all players can see the increased User value of the card.

If an Influencer joining your platform causes your platform to reach or pass one, two, or three billion total users, you may be able to claim a **Milestone** as described in the ***Milestone Cards*** section.

One Influencer, ***The Troll***, has four points of Toxicity, and does not show a standard User icon. The Troll counts as 1 single user, unlike every other card with Users in the deck. That single user might break a tie.

EVENT CARDS

When the first **Event** card is drawn, immediately place it face up next to the deck, forming the **Event Pile**. Subsequent Event cards are placed on top of this pile. Only the event on top of the pile can have an effect.


There are two types of events:

- **!!! Instant Events:** When these are drawn and placed on the Event Pile, immediately apply the effects described on the card. This happens once and the Event has no further effects.
- **🔄 Ongoing Events:** When one of these Events is drawn and placed on the Event Pile, the effects described on the card apply until a new event is

drawn to replace it. For example, if the ***Tech Bubble*** Event is on top, then certain Blockers cannot be played until a new Event card is drawn.

One Event card, the ***Social Shuffle*** (!!! *Instant Event*), initiates a procedure for re-assigning all the **Influencers** currently in play. When a player draws the Social Shuffle event, they collect all Influencer cards from all platforms and shuffle them together face down. One at a time, they reveal each Influencer and move it to a platform as if they had just drawn from the deck. Additionally, if the ***Today's Main Character*** Influencer is on a platform when the ***Social Shuffle*** Event is drawn, remove it from the game permanently.

MILESTONE CARDS

When your platform reaches or passes one billion, two billion, or three billion total  **Users** (summed from **Community** and **Influencer** cards, including attached **Poke** cards), you may claim the corresponding **Milestone** card if no other player has claimed it.

You may claim the card immediately when your platform reaches or passes the required number of Users, even if it is not your turn (such as when an Influencer joins your platform).


If you miss this opportunity, you may claim the card during any of your subsequent turns, as long as another player has not already claimed it. This is a free action that does not prevent you from playing a card.

When you claim a Milestone, place it face up on your platform. It awards extra points at the end of the game.




GAME OVER AND SCORING

When the **Game Over** card is drawn, the game ends immediately; place it face up in the center of the table. Players may then begin adding up their scores as follows:

1. Total Users

Add up all the  **Users** on your platform (from **Community** and **Influencer** cards, including attached **Poke** cards). You receive **1 Point** for every million Users. For example, if you have 1.4 billion users, you receive 1400 points. *The Troll* Influencer adds **1 Point**.

2. Toxicity Penalty

Count all of the  **Toxicity icons** on your platform (from **Community** and **Influencer** cards). Compare this to how many  **User icons** are on your platform (with  **50 million User icons** counting as half an icon).


If you have more Toxicity icons than User icons, **subtract 500 Points** from your score. If you have the same number of each, don't subtract points.

EXAMPLE: THE TOXICITY PENALTY



This platform has 8½ User icons and 9 Toxicity icons — slightly more Toxicity than Users. It loses 500 points.

3. Low Toxicity Bonus

If your platform only contains cards (**Community** and **Influencers**) that each have two points of  **Toxicity** or fewer, add **200 Points** to your score.

4. Safeguard Bonus

For every **Safeguard** card on your platform (not remaining in your hand), add **100 Points** to your score.

5. Safeguard Counterplay Bonus


For every **Safeguard** card on your platform that you played as a counter (indicated by being placed sideways), add another **100 Points** to your score.

6. Milestones

Each **Milestone** card awards points to the player who claimed it, depending on the total number of players:

	2 Players	3 Players	4 Players
One Billion Users:	100 points	100 points	200 points
Two Billion Users:	100 points	200 points	200 points
Three Billion Users:	100 points	200 points	300 points

WINNING THE GAME

After adding up all the scores, the player with the highest score wins. Ties are broken by the player with the fewest total points of  **Toxicity**. Further ties are broken by the player with the most **Influencers**.

ADVANCED PLAY (NETWORK CARDS)

The optional **Network** cards add significant variety to the game, in exchange for some added complexity. We strongly recommend playing your first session or two without using these cards and familiarizing yourself with the basic rules.

To use the Network cards, randomly assign one to each player before you prepare the deck and deal the initial hands. Players should place their Network cards face up in the corner of their platforms.

Each Network card will detail the special rules it applies to that player, typically a combination of advantages and disadvantages. Rules on the Network cards override the normal rules of the game.

Pay attention to other players' Network cards and how they may alter play and strategy. One Network in particular, *The Hellsite*, has significantly different rules than the others. This is an especially challenging Network to run.

Created by **Techdirt** and **Diegetic Games**

Designed by **Mike Masnick**, **Randy Lubin**, and **Leigh Beadon**

One Billion Users is inspired by William Janson Roche's *Touring*, first published in 1906 and now in the public domain.

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Ed Gray, who created the Network card *False Social*

An anonymous contributor who created the Influencer card *Today's Main Character*

Daphne Keller, who created the Network card *Kooperate* as a birthday present for Kongregate founder Jim Greer

Tom Macfarlan Jr., who decided to forego designing a card and just wanted to support the game (thanks Tom!)

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