An Introduction to:
COMBAT REVISION 2.0

Are you ready for a whole new combat system in The Matrix Online?

CR2.0 WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU PLAY MXO

Gone are the days of zero-sum combat and 20-second Stun timers. Combat Revision 2.0 brings you a more standardized and fast-paced combat experience to The Matrix Online.

It's no surprise that a game like *The Matrix Online* features one of the most exciting and richest combat experiences in any MMO to date. MxO introduced *Interlock*, a system of scripted fight scenes that produced a cinematic quality to combat that no other game in its genre could match. Interlock was revolutionary in that players could recreate their favorite fight scenes from *The Matrix* trilogy with thousands of other players around the globe.

As the game approaches its one-year anniversary, both veterans and newcomers to the game will be introduced to a fresh, new version of the combat system in *The Matrix Online* — one that keeps all the cinematic quality of Interlock, but now with a more standardized method of calculating damage, chance-to-hit, and much more.

One of the biggest changes in CR2.0 is the removal of "multilock", in which more than two players or NPCs are involved in an Interlock session. Interlock is now limited to one-on-one encounters to make combat faster and more fun. To classes that are heavily dependent on Interlock, a new Melee Free-Fire system was added, where Interlock-dependent classes can now do similar damage outside of Interlock.

Another major change was the removal of zero-sum combat, where there was always a clearly-defined winner and loser for every round of combat. Now, each player has a chance to be hit or missed during a round of combat, resulting in a more even fighting experience.

There's a whole lot more to CR2.0, and we'll cover the most important aspects in this article.

Combat Circles
The targeting reticles underneath your character reflect who is getting hit while in Interlock.

Let's take a look at the basics.

Whether you've been playing MxO since its launch in March 2005 or if you're just picking up the game for the first time, it's important to know the basics of the new combat system.

Combat Tactics were the deciding factor under the old combat system. It essentially determined who would win a round of combat. Under CR2.0, Combat Tactics have been abstracted to several factors, including offense tactics, melee defense tactics, and ranged defense tactics. Whereas before taking a Tactic Booster would easily change the outcome of a fight, there are now many determining factors as to who would be the victor in a battle.

Attributes and Influences. Conversely, with the old combat system, attributes like Focus and Perception made little difference, they are now the most important influences to your performance in combat. Each of the five attributes provide a significant bonus to several of your *influences*, like melee damage, movement speed, viral defense, and weapon accuracy.

Enhanced items were another deciding factor under the old combat system. Under CR2.0, enhanced items are still valuable, but they provide a much less significant contribution to your overall performance. In general, the usefulness of an enhanced item's buffs now scale to level. A level 50 item now provides much better bonuses than a level 16 item. (Compare a rather useless level 50 +30 IS item to a very powerful level 16 +9 MCT, +200 HP item under the old system.)

Hotbar. Your hotbar is the area at the top of your screen that grants you quick access to your most frequently used abilities and items. Under CR2.0, a new "double-hotbar" interface was added, giving you 20 slots for your abilities and items. Additionally, an extra 10 hotbar rows were added, giving you a total of 20 hotbars.

Stances are your four main tactics: Speed, Power, Grab, and Block. Each of these stances provide several buffs and debuffs, and are useful in their own situations. For example, Speed gives you a bonus to your accuracy, but you suffer in defense. Grab is great for defense, but it lowers your damage output.

Combat styles include Kung-Fu, Aikido, and several weapon styles. New styles like Hacker Style and Spy Style were added, allowing these trees to be more effective in Interlock combat.

Double-hotbar

The new Interlock interface

Targeting reticles

COMBAT OUTCOMES

Player gets hit.

Opponent gets hit.

Both get hit.

Win-win? Win-lose? Lose-lose?

Under CR2.0, you and your opponent both have a chance to hit each other every round. Your random offense score is compared to your opponent's random defense score, and vice-versa. Depending on the outcome, one of you may land a strike while the other misses, both of you can hit each other, or both of you might miss each other.

COMBAT AND RESISTANCES

One of the most important attributes in CR2.0 is your damage resistance.

In general, the buffs system under CR2.0 was greatly simplified. One of the most important attributes in CR2.0 is your damage resistance. There are four types of damage: melee, ballistic, viral, and thrown. These damage types are dealt by different ability groups, and are split up and explained in the chart below.

Your level and your Awakened ability in particular provide a good contribution to your base damage resistance, and give you a foundation to build up your resistances to one or more types of damage. Additional damage resistance comes from two sources: your attributes and enhanced clothing. The fun comes in when you decide where to put your attribute points and what outfit to put together to suit your play style.

Consider your resistances!

So what types of damage do you want to resist? Obviously, you want to focus on the types of damage you are suffering the most. NPCs tend to use ranged attacks a lot, so Ballistic Resistance is a good one to focus on. If you are victim to a lot of Assassin or Hacker attacks in PvP, focus on Viral and Thrown Resistance.

When creating an outfit, consider the benefits in focusing on one type of resistance versus having an even amount across all resistances. At level 50, 100 points of damage resistance is average, while 200 points is excellent, though hard to achieve. Do you feel better about being heavily resistant to one type of damage while being weak against another, or would you rather be somewhat resistant against all types?

DAMAGE TYPES	MELEE	BALLISTIC	VIRAL	THROWN
	Consists of damage done by physical attacks using Kung Fu, Aikido, Karate, or Self-Defense	Caused by ranged weapons such as Rifles, SMGs, and Handguns.	Dealt by any attack found in the Hacker tree, such as Code Bomb and Logic Blast, as well as certain Coder abilities.	Caused by attacks found in the Spy tree, including Assassin and Knife Thrower attacks.

MELEE FREE-FIRE

Martial Artists Rejoice!

The removal of multilock left many Martial Artists concerned about how they could be effective in combat. Melee Free-Fire solves that problem by allowing players to attack others outside of Interlock.

Using Melee Free-Fire is simple. Just select your combat style from the Free-Fire menu, just like you would select a ranged weapon as a Gunman.

When close to an opponent, just click the Free-Fire button (hotkey is =), and you will attack them. Simple as that!

Select your combat style from the Free-Fire drop-down menu.

Click the Free-Fire button when close to an enemy to attack them!

Understanding the new interface.

While the new user interface for CR2.0 isn't much different than the previous interface, there are a few elements that are very important and are essential to how combat under CR2.0 works.

First and foremost is the double-hotbar. The new hotbar works the exact same way as the single hotbar worked, except that there are now two rows. Simple enough!

There are now a total of 20 hotbar rows that can be saved, all of which can be accessed by either of the hotbars. The shortcut of Shift + 1-0 still works to access hotbars 1-10 on the upper hotbar, but there are currently no shortcut keys to switch to hotbars 11-20 on the first row, nor are there any shortcuts to switch the lower hotbar.

Shortcuts to use your hotbar abilities and items are also the same. Just press 1-0 on your keyboard to use any of the abilities or items on your upper hotbar, and use CTRL + 1-0 to use anything on your lower hotbar.

With the removal of the Interlock queue UI, the new hotbars now tell you which attack is currently being used, and which one is queued for the next round of combat.

Your currently selected stance will appear with an outline and will have scan lines moving vertically across the icon. Pending tactics will have the border around their icon flash until they become the default stance.

Pending abilities and items will have the text for their shortcut key flash yellow and red. When the ability is locked in for the next round of combat, the text for its shortcut key will turn solid red.

When an ability is used in Interlock, an animation will play to show whether it was successfully used or not. If the ability is successful, it will glow with a green crosshair. If the ability fails, it will glow red. Whether or not the ability was successfully executed, the ability timer and all other abilities that share its timer will enter their cooldown period.

Interlock combat in general is much more fast-paced than under the old system, so you have to be quick to get your proper stances, tactics, and abilities lined up. Learn the shortcuts and use them to your advantage. The difference of a second can often determine the outcome of a fight under the new combat system!

Melee combat with Interlock and Free-Fire!

Combat States

One thing carried over from the original combat system is Combat States.

There are three combat states that are caused by normal attacks:

Dazed – Dazed is caused by Speed attacks and causes an overall reduction in damage output.

Staggered – Caused by Power attacks, Staggered causes a reduction in damage resistance.

Off-Balance – Grab attacks can cause Off-Balance, which increases the IS cost of abilities.

Many special attacks require your opponent to be in one of these states. Plan your attacks!

STANCES AND STYLES

Stances determine important factors inside and outside of combat.

Speed, Power, Grab, and Block, collectively known as Stances, are a very important aspect of combat under CR2.0. Each stance provides its own set of upgrades and downgrades, and their effects are always active.

These stances provide a bonus (or reduction) to several of your influences, so depending on your loadout, where your attribute points are spent, and what abilities you have active, they can provide a larger or smaller bonus.

When considering which stance to use, you must first understand the benefits and downsides to each stance. The upgrades and downgrades from each stance are listed in the chart below.

Pick the stance that works best for you.

Styles like Karate and Kung Fu tend to favor one kind of tactic. For example, many of the Karate special abilities require your opponent to be Staggered, which is caused by the Power attack.

Other new styles, like Hacker Style and Spy Style, don't really favor any stance. Choose what works for you.

In combat situations, find which stance works best for you against your opponent. If you find yourself getting hit a lot, try using the Grab tactic to raise your defense. If you are missing your opponent a lot, try using the Speed tactic to raise your accuracy

TIP: Try using the Grab tactic when trying to initiate Interlock against an opponent who has an Evade Shield.

STANCE	SPEED	POWER	GRAB	BLOCK
	Upgrades: Accuracy: 15% **Downgrades:** Force Combat: 20% Defense: 10%	**Upgrades:** Damage: 20% **Downgrades:** Evade Combat: 20% Accuracy: 10%	**Upgrades:** Force Combat: 100% Defense: 30% Accuracy: 5% **Downgrades:** Evade Combat: 65% Damage: 15%	**Upgrades:** Evade Combat: 60% Defense: 50% **Downgrades:** Force Combat: 400% Damage: 100% Accuracy: 100%

STATS AND INFLUENCES

The defining factor of your character's performance comes from their stats.

Focus, Perception, Belief, Reason, and Vitality. Under the old system, they really didn't make that much of a difference. With CR2.0, however, they are *the most important factor* in determining your character's strengths and weaknesses.

What are stats and influences?

Every time you reach a new level, you have the opportunity to spend one point in one of the five different stats (formerly known as Attributes). Each of these five stats grant a bonus to a group of what are called *influences*. Influences affect the upgrades that you receive from abilities, as well as outside upgrades and downgrades (also known as buffs and debuffs) from other players and NPCs.

Unlike the old system, where only very small bonuses were granted from attributes, and really made very little difference in a player's performance, your stats now provide the largest overall bonus to your abilities. Every point spent in an stat grants an additional 2% bonus to all of the influences affected by that stat, up to a maximum of 50%.

How do influences work?

As their name entails, influences *influence* your abilities. All influences are represented as percentages, and are added to any abilities that grant bonuses to these influences.

For example, the Focus stat provides bonuses to several influences, including Ballistic Accuracy, Ballistic Resistance, Melee Damage, Defense, and more. For every point spent over 5 in this stat, each one of these influences gain an additional 2% bonus.

These influences are important, especially at higher levels, where influences can begin to provide large bonuses. Say you spend 25 points in Focus. 20 of those points will affect all of the influences granted by Focus. At a 2% bonus for each point, a total of a 40% bonus will be applied to all of these influences.

Influences come into play when the player activates an ability or upgrade that provides bonuses to their attributes. One such upgrade is known as a *title upgrade*, which is granted by abilities at the bottom of an ability tree, such as Duelist, or Kung Fu Grandmaster.

As an example, the Handguns style grants a 65-point bonus to Ballistic Accuracy, among other attributes. If a player has spent 30 points in Focus, they would get a 50% bonus to the Ballistic Accuracy influence (25 * 2%). 50% of 65 is 32.5, so an additional 32 points (bonuses are truncated) of Ballistic Accuracy will be granted by the Duelist Upgrade, for a total of 97 points.

On top of stats, many enhanced clothing items can also provide a small influence bonus. High-level enhanced items, as well as unique and rare items can provide as much as a 4% bonus to an influence, so keep your eyes open for them!
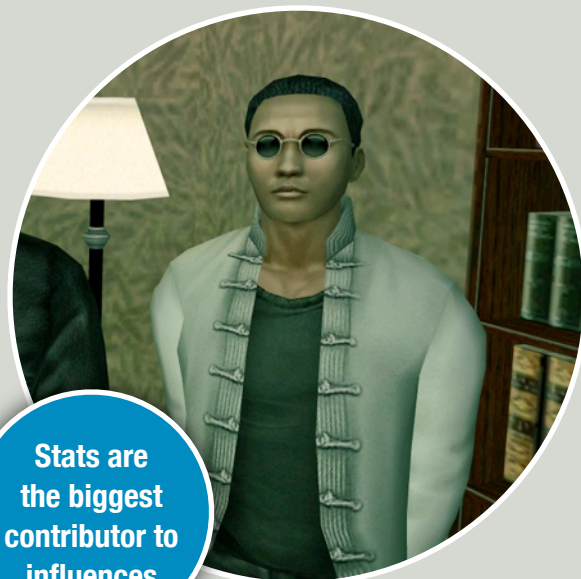
Stats are the biggest contributor to influences

Where do I spend my stat points?

The good thing about each of the stats is the wide variety of influences each one of them provide. One stat may provide a bonus to accuracy and resistance to one type of damage, while providing a bonus to damage and defense of another type. Putting points into several stats can give you a very good combination of influence bonuses that are suitable for several different ability sets.

Experiment with different combinations of stat point assignments and see where your strengths and weaknesses are, then work out a strategy to make the best out of them.

How do I reset my stat points?

Thankfully, you can reset your stat points with just a little effort. Just visit your organization's Archivist, and purchase a mission ticket from him. Complete the mission, and you'll get an item that will let you reset your stats!

FOCUS	PERCEPTION	BELIEF	REASON	VITALITY
Ballistic Accuracy	Thrown Accuracy	Melee Accuracy	Viral Resistance	Maximum Inner Strength
Ballistic Resistance	Thrown Resistance	Melee Resistance	Viral Accuracy	Maximum Health
Melee Damage	Ballistic Damage	Viral Damage	Thrown Damage	Health Regeneration Rate
Melee Defense	Ballistic Defense	Viral Defense	Thrown Defense	HP Sitting Regen Rate
Force Combat	Evade Interlock	Movement Speed	Inner Strength Cost	HP Standing Regen Rate
Heal Damage	Sneak Movement Speed	Buff Area Radius	Powerlessness Duration	Determination
Root Duration	Invisible Movement Speed	Debuff Area Radius	Confuse Duration	IS Regeneration Rate
Stun Duration	Sweeps	Blind Duration		IS Sitting Regen Rate
		Pacify Duration		IS Standing Regen Rate
				Contested Withdraw
				Initiative

Q&A with CR2.0 developer HCFrog:

For someone who just started playing MxO and will be experiencing CR2 for the first time, what tips can you give to help them get oriented quickly?

Play through the tutorial, which will give you a very brief overview of combat. Once you enter the world, there are some characters who will give you a little further intro, along with some gear to help you out. They'll have you fighting some low-level enemies, which is a great way to learn the system through experimentation. But whatever you do, remember this: the best source of really good information is always other players. They know the system better than anyone and they're always learning more each day.

For someone who has been using the old combat system for a long time, what would you suggest to them as the most important thing to know about the new system?

A lot has changed with CR2. So, what I consider the four most important things:

1. Probably the first thing to forget is how important your hit rolls are. Under the old system, if you got your Combat Tactics high enough you could be pretty much guaranteed a hit, and guaranteed domination in Interlock. With CR2, there are no such guarantees.
2. The stance you choose (power, speed, grab, or block) has a much larger effect now, and it affects abilities both in and out of Interlock.
3. Damage output and damage resistance have become much more important, especially in your choice of clothing… more about that later.
4. Your stats (the things formerly known as "attributes") are much more influential under CR2. They now cap at 30 rather than 50, and are the single most important element of any loadout. There is a way in-game to get an RSI Hack to change your stats, but it takes a little effort to get it.

Since much of the good enhanced clothing under the old system were low-level items (i.e. the +9 MCT pants required level 16), how would you suggest people upgrade their gear to items more beneficial for their level? (i.e. Where can people find the best items for their level?)

Clothing is still important under CR2, but the importance has changed. You most likely won't see anyone standing around, flagged for PvP

wearing the +9MCT pants, Troll's Hide, and Direwolf coat… and if you do, they're about to get pwned. Enhanced clothing and collector loot is still valuable, but clothing is also very important for resistances. All of the existing Armored and Shielded clothing has become much more potent – a person with their resistances maxed out (mostly from clothing) at level 50 will take about half the damage that a person with no resistances will take. Combine this with the fact that you're going to get hit a lot more often in CR2, and clothing with good resistances will most likely make up a decent amount of your fighting wardrobe.

Currently, you'll have to get this clothing the old fashioned way… killing lots and lots of NPCs, or getting copies from other players.

What is your favorite feature about CR2?

I think the inherent balance and designability (if that's a word). As a designer, I have a lot more variables I can tweak and change to get sweeping (and predictable) changes, either throughout the system or just to one character. The fact that duels are no longer won by the first person to hit their Stun ability is pretty nice too. Oh and no multi-interlock. Uh, and how Martial Artists don't have to cripple their tree to load up Viral Deflection if they want to PvP.

How valuable was player input during the public testing phase of CR2?

MxO players are a rather extraordinary group, which you can easily see by visiting any other MMO's forums. You'll soon come rushing back with greater respect for our players.

The kind of feedback we received was fantastic, especially as we got nearer to release. We have some outstanding players with a real eye for balance, as well as some who are excellent advocates for their particular play style, and it all added up to an improved CR2.

During the balancing phase, what were some of the key considerations when balancing NPCs?

The primary consideration was that combat versus NPCs should be about as challenging as it was pre-CR2. A caveat was the difficulty as you level up… in the old system, the game was rather difficult in the low to mid levels, and once you got to 50 there wasn't much of a challenge left in missions. I think a lot of new players got put off by how difficult combat got within the

first ten levels and never stuck around to the "fun" levels.

With the new system, we've attempted to reverse that trend.

I think the ideal gameplay is that you kick some serious butt as a new player, while you're still learning the system. As you level up, you become more comfortable with the system, more focused on the new abilities you get, and you're ready for the challenge to be turned up a little bit. That's been our goal: Very similar difficulty to the existing game, but easier at low levels and a little more challenging at high levels. Three blues should always be fairly easy, three yellows should be a good fight (especially depending on how many chevrons they have), and three reds should be serious trouble.

Also, what were some of the key considerations when balancing the Pandora's Box NPCs?

The first thing we did when we balanced the Pandora's Box NPCs was to strip out all the special enhancements they had before that allowed them to be a challenge. Previously, they had specific amounts of Combat Tactics and Viral Deflection added to them, and it had to be precisely tweaked. Too low by ten points, and a well-aimed Despoiler made them no challenge at all. Too high by twenty points, and they were gods of combat who would mow down all opposition.

To rebalance them for CR2, we stripped away all of the modifications, adjusted the level, and then tweaked just a bit on top of that to get them where we wanted them. The process now gives us nice gradual results, rather than small changes resulting in a huge swing in difficulty. And we now have some good experience tweaking high-level NPCs that should come in very useful in the future.

After CR2 is released, do you have any immediate plans to add more new features/ abilities to CR2?

I think that the number one combat system priority after CR2 will be balancing the system once a lot of players have been using it. The feedback we've received from the test server has been invaluable, but it's inevitable that with more time, people will learn the system better, find new builds or tactics to use, and generally push CR2 farther than we've seen it pushed yet.

Appendix: Influence Definitions

Ballistic Accuracy
Ballistic Accuracy affects your tactic points when attempting to fire a weapon at an opponent.

Ballistic Damage
Ballistic Damage affects the amount of damage you cause when you successfully hit an opponent with a ranged weapon (Both in and out of Interlock).

Ballistic Defense
Ballistic Defense affects how easy it is for an opponent to hit you using a ranged weapon (Both in and out of Interlock).

Ballistic Resistance
Ballistic Resistance affects the amount of damage you take when hit by a firearm.

Blind Duration
Blind Duration affects the amount of time your Blind effects last on an opponent.

Buff Area Radius
Buff Area Radius affects the area your buff Abilities cover.

Confuse Duration
Confuse Duration affects the amount of time your Confuse effects last on an opponent.

Contested Withdraw
Contested Withdraw affects your Defense score when attempting to Withdraw from combat.

Debuff Area Radius
Debuff Area Radius affects the area your debuff Abilities cover.

Determination
Determination affects the duration of negative status effects on your character.

Evade Interlock
Evade Interlock affects the potency of your Evade shield.

Force Combat
Force Combat affects how quickly you take down an opponent's Evade Shield.

Heal Damage
Heal Damage affects the potency of healing Abilities.

Health Regeneration Rate
Health Regeneration Rate affects how quickly you regain Health after taking damage.

Health Sitting Regeneration Rate
Health Sitting Regeneration Rate affects how quickly you regain Health while sitting after taking damage.

Health Standing Regeneration Rate
Health Standing Regeneration Rate affects how quickly you regain Health while standing after taking damage.

Initiative
Initiative affects the Accuracy of all Interlock Abilities.

Inner Strength Cost Modifier
Inner Strength Cost Modifier affects the potency of Abilities that reduce the Inner Strength cost of using Abilities.

Inner Strength Regeneration Rate
Inner Strength Regeneration Rate affects how quickly you regain Inner Strength after taking damage.

Inner Strength Sitting Regeneration Rate
Inner Strength Sitting Regeneration Rate affects how quickly you regain Inner Strength while sitting after taking damage.

Inner Strength Standing Regeneration Rate
Inner Strength Standing Regeneration Rate affects how quickly you regain Inner Strength while standing after taking damage.

Invisible Movement Speed
Invisible Movement Speed affects how quickly you move when using an Invisibility Ability.

Maximum Health
Maximum Health affects how many total Health points you can have.

Maximum Inner Strength
Maximum Inner Strength affects how many total Inner Strength points you can have.

Melee Accuracy
Melee Accuracy affects your tactic points when attempting to hit an opponent while using a Melee Style (Both in and out of Interlock).

Melee Damage
Melee Damage affects how much damage you cause when hitting using a Melee style (Both in and out of Interlock).

Melee Defense
Melee Defense affects how easy it is for an opponent to hit you using a Melee Style.

Melee Resistance
Melee Resistance affects the amount of damage you take when hit by an opponent using a Melee Style.

Movement Speed
Movement Speed affects your base movement rate.

Pacify Duration
Pacify Duration affects the amount of time your Pacify effects last on an opponent.

Powerlessness Duration
Powerlessness Duration affects the amount of time your Powerlessness effects last on an opponent.

Root Duration
Root Duration affects the amount of time your Root effects last on an opponent.

Sneak Movement Speed
Sneak Movement affects how quickly you move when using a Sneak Ability.

Stun Duration
Stun Duration affects the amount of time your Stun effects last on an opponent.

Sweeps
(Not implemented yet.)

Thrown Accuracy
Thrown Accuracy affects your tactic points when using a Spy Ability.

Thrown Damage
Thrown Damage affects how much damage you cause when hitting using a Spy Ability.

Thrown Defense
Thrown Defense affects how easy it is for an opponent to hit you using a Spy Ability.

Thrown Resistance
Thrown Resistance affects the amount of damage you take when successfully hit with a Spy Ability.

Viral Accuracy
Viral Accuracy affects your tactic points when attempting to hit an opponent with a Viral Ability.

Viral Damage
Viral Damage affects how much damage you cause when hitting using a Viral Ability.

Viral Defense
Viral Defense affects how easy it is for an opponent to hit you using a Viral Ability.

Viral Resistance
Viral Resistance affects the amount of damage you take when hit by a Viral Ability.