

CSM meeting minutes – Iceland 7th to the 9th of December 2011

Wednesday, December 7th

Meeting with the Senior Producer of EVE Online

Present: CCP Unifex, CCP Zulu, CCP Hellmar (CCP CEO)

Following October's messaging from CCP, there have been several changes to the corporate structure of CCP. The most public one was the layoffs, but other organizational changes have been made. Those changes are based on past experiences, retrospectives constructed by those involved in the EVE project and strategic business decisions. This work has been ongoing during the development of the Crucible expansion and the aim was to do this restructuring with minimal impact on current teams.

Following this restructuring of the organization and a fresh scope of the EVE project the plan is to be ready to conduct more detailed future planning of the EVE project by January 2012.

With EVE being an 8 year old product there are many processes that are still 8 years old that need to be revised and modernized. Furthermore, rethinking the project's internal goals in terms of user age – appropriate content and user experience for players who are one month old, three months old, six months, one year, three, five, eight (etc.) needs to be clear in terms of EVE's development. What will those player groups find valuable, how will we cater to those groups? Obviously some of the development plans that will emerge from this will require software engineering efforts, but the aim is to focus on fixing and improving (both internal and external) tools and techniques while delivering much needed 'thousand papercuts' fixes. So, instead of thinking about how we can deliver something new to the game and focus all our efforts on that, we'd think more about what systems can we iterate on to bring value to all the player groups.

The first planned step in this direction (and remember, plans CAN change) is to take a look at War, i.e. what is it about conflict that needs to be iterated on so that all groups of players can enjoy it more? How can we further encourage conflict? Obviously the term 'conflict' is a very broad term, but it does encompass 0.0, factional warfare, low sec, high sec, official war declarations, etc. The technical debt behind those systems is substantial and looking at those systems has become a priority. One particular example of this is the system called 'Crime watch' (an 8 year old system with countless patches and band aids) – the mechanism that handles all aggressions, who is flagged to whom, what timers are running on what characters, etc. Who isn't familiar with the question of 'can I shoot this can thief?', 'can I shoot the logi pilot repping that hostile?' or 'if I fly to this station will the sentry guns shoot at me?' Thinking about it, players shouldn't have to ask those questions, the information should be readily (and easily) available to them.

Going forward into 2012 this will be the mindset: how can we cater to our players by working on a theme (e.g. conflict, resources, PvE, character advancement), fixing things, paying technical debt (both internal tools and user-facing matters) and work on small things that make the life in EVE a much more enjoyable experience – i.e. more Crucible-like.

EVE will be the focus of CCP's efforts during 2012. The most noticeable change will be the CORE group (the underlying-technology team who has in the past been working on all of CCP's projects) is shifting most of its gaze to EVE.

The CSM is very positive regarding this change as more focus on EVE will ensure a better game to enjoy. When asked about what constitutes an iteration versus a new feature CCP responded that the lines are a bit blurry – new ships are within the scope of iteration, while a new game avenue (such as a new feature on the scale of FW or PI) are not. But then the question of when does an iteration change a feature so much that it looks like a new feature rears its head. While no specifics are available, each such task will be evaluated as it comes up. If a new feature is suggested that makes perfect sense to implement, that will not be outright denied just because it is new.

On a related note the CSM also asked about internal tools. The response was that if it takes six months to build tools for content developers that will enable them to create and support a thing in the game for two years, that is a very strong argument for going ahead and building those tools. The point is that smoothing out processes and internal tools to further enable the non-engineering developers to make this better.

CSM reminded CCP that they would continue to serve their role within the new organization and that the cooperation between CSM and CCP should not change as a result of the reorg. CCP confirmed that no change was planned for how the CSM fit into EVE's development as a result of the reorg, the CSM is a very good sounding board for CCP and will be continued to be used as such. The value of the CSM has been seen in the past and there is no reason to disregard that fact on CCP's behalf.

EVE is a very complex product, with multiple interaction points available to players. The billing system, EVE's websites for both potential customers (outwards facing) and current customers (EVE gate, forums, etc.), Customer Support, the gameplay, the user interface, EVE's server structure (to name a few) are all a part of the EVE project. Focusing on the whole of the EVE project, from every angle is a large part of the reorganization (from now on, reorg) ongoing at CCP.

As a part of the reorg, a new Senior Producer of EVE Online has been appointed, CCP Unifex. The former Senior Producer, CCP Zulu, will be taking up another position within the EVE project as a result of the reorg. CCP Unifex is a serious EVE player, has been the Director of the CORE group within CCP for the past two years, and has an extensive and varied background. Coming from (most recently) IBM, he brings great value to CCP and as the new Senior Producer of EVE he is spearheading the changes being made to EVE.

The CSM asked what role the Creative Director will be playing. Within the reorg there will be several roles that will cross the whole of the project in a high-level manner: Chief Technical Officer, Technical Director, Marketing Director, Customer Relations Director, Art Director, Game Design Director and Creative Director. These persons will be responsible for setting high-level standards and directions for EVE, to make sure that things are done the right way. In addition to these people EVE will have segment owners, charged with making sure that things are prioritized and delivered properly. Then there are teams that service the whole of the EVE project, such as Research and Statistics with CCP Dr.EyjoG at the wheel.

Another thing being planned in the reorg is for a 'Live' software engineering team to be formed, a team that is able to perform maintenance on the game, largely independent from game development.

The CSM made a point about the current localization efforts and CCP responded that a greater emphasis will be put on localization efforts and supporting other languages than English. The CSM wanted to know more about future of Incarna. CCP responded that Incarna had not been dropped but was undergoing a review and will be developed on the backburner in a manner that makes sense and will enhance the EVE experience.

CCP wants to emphasize the fact that the reorg looks good on paper, but what is being aimed at should not take precedence over what makes sense and helps EVE. CCP has accumulated many very talented individuals, experts in their areas, and utilizing them to their fullest extent is the sensible way to move forward. Furthermore, implementing the reorg is scheduled to take a whole year – nothing magical will happen overnight. This is a **process** and it will take time, but CCP absolutely aims at coming out stronger and better functioning after it. CCP has operated as a company since 1997 and back then several things that made perfect sense don't make sense today.

The CSM

Present: CCP Xhagen, CCP Diagoras

During this session CCP detailed three changes to the CSM project (all these changes will also be listed in a devblog that will be forthcoming in the buildup for the upcoming election). While these proposals are not very controversial as such, CCP felt it was necessary to include the CSM in the discussion and do this in cooperation with the council, rather than forcefully implement them.

The first change mentioned was that a candidate would need to demonstrate he/she had X supporters to appear on the ballot, where X is a number between 50 and 500. The proposed method of gathering these supporters is to write a nomination post on the Jita Park Speakers Corner and then count the number of supports the post received. If the candidate receives at least X supports, they appear on the final ballot.

The reasoning behind this is to reduce the number of candidates to a more manageable level, down from 70 to perhaps 30-40 (although CCP doesn't have strong preference towards a particular number). The number of candidates can (and does) have an influence on voters, being presented with a huge list of candidates is intimidating and having to form an informed opinion about 70 candidates is daunting to say the least. CCP expressed the desire that the supporters' number should be meaningful without being crippling, and asked for feedback as to what a reasonable threshold might be. The CSM responded in turn that if (for example) a candidate cannot get the support of 50-100 people there is not much chance of that candidate getting the 1500-2000 votes needed to actually get on the council. The CSM did however agree with CCP's concern that the 'little' guys could potentially be excluded from the race, i.e. highsec dwellers might not get the support they needed to be on the ballot. But on the other hand, the members of the CSM (both past and present) have been going to the "guys and gals who know their shit" when they are uninformed about a subject.

That being said, the CSM stated it was not opposed to this change and while the desired number of supporters was discussed, no consensus was reached, with proposed numbers ranging from 50 to 500. CSM also expressed

concerns about using forum likes to poll support, since this could of course be gamed to flood the ballot with candidates with no real support.

CCP responded that usage of the forum was extremely convenient and known to players, and that it would be difficult to develop a new method in the time available.

The second change proposed was to drop the concept of alternate in the CSM, but only fly the top 7 available members to Iceland (instead of the top 9 as with the previous CSMs). If a voting needs to happen within the CSM, the top 9 members available at that time would perform that vote (the CSM white paper states that the minimum of 7 members are needed to hold a legal vote).

The reasoning behind this is that during the term of CSM6 the practical distinction between an alternate and a member has all but vanished, and all 14 elected members have had an equal say in matters relating to the workings of the CSM (both in having an input on issues and with communications with CCP, both on chat and voice). Secondly, with CCP reducing its employee base by 20%, cutting costs is a priority across all projects – the CSM included. Finally, in some cases, the reduced headcount will encourage more focused discussions during summits.

The CSM voiced strong concerns regarding this matter, but understood the decision. To partially address this, the CSM suggested that the meeting would be made available to the members not in Iceland via live streaming and absent members could then be in contact with those in Iceland electronically, thus following the conversation at the summit and having input via the members present. CCP committed to involving the CSM members not present in Iceland electronically so they can listen in if they wish.

The third change proposed was changing the election system from the current form to a single transferrable vote (STV) (i.e. any surplus or unused votes are transferred according to the voter's stated preferences should their highest preference not need them or not make it in). The timeframe for this change would be the election in 2013 (thus, no changes would be made for the next CSM election).

In short, the CSM said that if STV would be implemented it would be heaven for the powerblocks and would basically allow them to dictate every single seat on the CSM. Also, with the current situation the only thing the STV would do is to potentially get a 'smaller' candidate into one of the lower seats. Furthermore, by making the voting system more complicated (as an STV would do) the risk of driving away voters exists. Continuing, the CSM commented that only with a substantially larger number of voters would the STV system be appropriate.

The topic of political parties came up, where candidates would form lists and then voters would choose a list instead of a single person, and once one person from a list has secured a seat on the council the rest of the votes would go to the next person on the list etc. Again, the CSM commented that it would only make the more organized powerblocks more secure in controlling the CSM.

Most of the CSM members agreed that a STV would be manipulated to hell and back and asked whether there was any system that was more efficient than the one is present now.

With the current system, there is the constant danger of if a powerblock wants to get more than one candidate in, the total number of votes needed to secure a seat on the council would not be enough. So the only safe bet is to rally behind one candidate and get him (or her) in.

The CSM wanted more focus put on reducing the voter-pain by making the ballot smaller, consolidating votes behind fewer candidates and thus making it the job of the candidates to organize and gather support, rather than implementing a system that will be exploited. Having more voters is more important at this time as that will most likely generate the desired results than a new voting system.

The CSM suggested that this would be put up for public discussion, as they obviously have a vested interest in the current system (having been elected under it). This discussion would have the aim of identifying the pros and cons of STV and if there is overwhelming support for changing the system, and all potential problems have been identified and addressed in a satisfactory manner, the aim would be to design and implement the system before the 2013 election.

CCP ended the discussion by stating that the CSM is very much a living thing that is being developed continuously. Additionally, the mindset of reform rather than revolution is being held in high regards, although seemingly changes happen slowly this type of social interaction needs to happen slowly.

EVE veterans/loyalty program

Present: Senior GM Homonia, CCP Dr.EyjoG, CCP Alice

CCP started off with the disclaimer that the program being discussed at this meeting was still in the final stages of design and that some details, such as specific rewards, had not been reviewed by everyone that needed to approve it.

The thought behind the Veterans/loyalty program is that CCP wants to earn customer loyalty and in turn, reward customer loyalty. Rewarding long standing customers is just good business and it is time that CCP starts a program like this.

There are many ways to earn customer loyalty, for example Customer Support has been working on simplifying procedures, reprioritization of petitions, revising Customer Support's reimbursement policies and a refocusing of their efforts and providing more frequent information releases about more 'mundane' things in dev blogs.

Rewarding customer loyalty has not been really done by CCP in the past, and when it has been done the target has mostly been the newer players, with small bonuses here and there for older players, mostly in the form of reactivation offers. So the issue CCP wants to tackle is how older players can be rewarded in a meaningful manner. The CSM commented that this approach was a fairly standard in the MMO industry and named City of Heroes as an example. Furthermore, the CSM wanted to make sure that CCP understood that getting players back into the game could usually not be achieved by reactivation offers or trinkets, but by fixing the things that they are unhappy with.

There are currently four things being discussed within CCP at this moment, a Veteran program (i.e. rewards for long-term subscribers, whether they are currently active or not) that is actively being worked on, a Loyalty program (rewards for current subscribers), changes to the Buddy program and implementing CCP master accounts (i.e. lumping your accounts you have for EVE under one single account) – all of which are also in the design stages.

The Veteran program is designed to reward subscribers for their time spent in EVE at certain intervals, based on how many months (non-consecutive) they have been subscribed to EVE. The exact details on the intervals, rewards and other nuances are still being worked on and the CSM will be kept in the loop.

The loyalty program is less developed, but the basic idea is to reward people for having continuous subscription without letting it lapse (with points accumulated over time). The specifics are still being worked on but the aim is to make this fair and meaningful. Again the CSM will be consulted during the development on this program.

Regarding the buddy program (this may, or may not, affect the current buddy program), a significant enhancement is being considered. If a subscriber invites another person to play EVE, the subscriber gets benefits/rewards for as long as the buddy is subscribed.

Regarding CCP master accounts, the goal is to provide a CCP login that provides access to all a player's accounts for all CCP products. The CSM enthusiastically supported this initiative. This system has been on the drawing board for quite some time now, but it is not yet ready and there is still no ETA for its release. The CSM emphasized the value of this idea; for players with more than one account this will simplify character management extensively. In fact the CSM called this a no-brainer in terms of bang-for-buck. A big benefit for the player, beside the simplified management of multiple accounts, is that Veteran rewards and Loyalty rewards could be pooled in the master account and thus players will obtain rewards faster than with just a single account. Further down the line, other CCP products could be added to this scheme, thus letting users of CCP products accumulate points for subscriptions to one game and spending them in another.

There are of course significant security concerns regarding the CCP master accounts, and CCP is expending significant effort to address these.

The meeting ended with some fun data about subscribers – apparently if a user has been subscribed to EVE for three years or more, that user is very unlikely to leave EVE.

EVE players are very loyal customers and the time has come for CCP to properly recognize this.

The economy

Present: CCP Dr.EyjoG, CCP Soundwave, CCP Thomas

The meeting started off with some statistics about player adoption of the new Battlecruisers (the Tornado, the Naga, the Oracle and the Talos); more information can be found in CCP Diagoras' blog here (<http://www.eveonline.com/devblog.asp?a=blog&nbid=3266>).

Both CCP and CSM agreed that the introduction of the new ships was a good one, both in terms of the economy and in terms of more variety for players.

In general the EVE economy is in good shape. All macro indicators are within acceptable parameters, fluctuations are minimal and participation in the economy is going up. Most online games experience constant inflation, where the developers are constantly adding new items at higher prices which end up with devaluing both the currency used in the game and older items. EVE shows a different behavior, where over a few years there was a continued deflation (following the introduction of tech II invention) but over the past year and a half there has been good stability with a mild inflation (around 1% per month). The Consumer Price Index is monitored very closely and due to the amount of information about the economy available to CCP the index is updated monthly. EVE's has a well-functioning economy as people can buy more with their ISK which allows both older players to advance and new players to start off in an easier manner.

It is worth mentioning that the contract system is not monitored nor analyzed to the same extent as the market and as such there is imperfect information about this area of the economy at present.

CCP brought up a discussion point, related to the market and contracts system, that there are currently four markets in EVE; the loyalty point store, the contract system, the market and the NEX. CCP has started to think about how to join all these systems into a common market. Of course there are several hurdles to surpass in this matter and this will not be happening in the immediate future (for example the CSM pointed out the obvious functionality the contract system provides in regards to distributing fitted ships). Other technical issues have to be considered as well, such as how this system will handle researched BPCs. Currently this is just a discussion point, no actions have been planned.

It has also become apparent that PLEX is becoming a bigger and bigger part of the Consumer Price Index and fluctuations in that market have started to have more effect on other parts of the economy.

One interesting metric used is the number of jumps per player. Even though the number of players is increasing the number of jumps per player is decreasing. This could just mean that players travel less in general or perhaps the extensive jump bridge networks available in 0.0 is affecting the number. More research needs to be done in regards to this apparent change in player behavior to determine whether this is a bad change or a good change – but this change has been observed.

Another behavior change relates to missions and Incursions. The numbers suggest that missions completed per character are on a slow downward trend, while Incursions are moving upwards. The CSM commented that this was to be expected, missions are not that fun to run while Incursions are slightly more entertaining. It is furthermore evident that following the Sanctum nerf many people moved to running Incursions. But in terms of

the economy it is very natural for people to change activities as more options become available. It is also worth noting that when the agent quality was removed the rewards jumped up, as to be expected.

Focusing the discussion on Incursions, CSM brought up the point that Incursions are unbalanced in that the easier levels of Incursions are more profitable than the more difficult levels – something that CCP has noted as well and is working on adjusting. The full details of that adjustment are not known at this time as there are several options available. And the issue is not just monetary, the gameplay is also becoming too predictable, and with this predictability, the risk is reduced. Players applying cookie-cutter solutions to the sites, and running some in just a few minutes, is a problem that needs to be addressed. Both the CSM and CCP agree on that Incursions are good in terms of gameplay and ISK payout, but the time for adjustments based on player behavior data is at hand – adjusting the distribution of the sites and adjusting the payout being highest on the list. But this is a positive problem, these issues are cropping up because there are so many people running Incursions. Such changes will be another example of the iterative approach CCP is committing to.

The changes brought about in Crucible to the Insurance system reduced the amount of ISK coming into the economy but the number of ship losses that are not eligible for insurance payout has remained steady and in fact show a slight increase.

The CSM reminded CCP that any changes done to game systems purely in terms of graphs and ISK consideration (i.e. in a vacuum) usually had some side effects on player behavior that resulted in increased player dissatisfaction. The CSM stressed that when game systems are to be changed, it has to be done in a holistic manner and in consultation with the playerbase. The CSM also wanted to make the point that such public discussions regarding Incursions, like the one taking place at the summit, were exactly the steps that needed to be taken to prevent these mishaps. CCP accepted the criticism and was also glad that the steps of discussing changes before implementation (another example is the hybrid balance done in Crucible), to prevent dissatisfaction in the future were accepted by the CSM.

The PLEX

Present: CCP Dr.EyjoG, CCP Thomas

CCP started the discussion by showing that PLEX is becoming such a large part of the EVE economy that changes in PLEX prices have started to affect price indexes. Furthermore, PLEX is one of the biggest subscription methods in EVE. The question this raises is: how can (and should) CCP react when fluctuations in the PLEX price reach such levels that players reduce their use (either too low, which discourages purchase for RL cash, or too high, which discourages funding of accounts by buying PLEX on the market)? What should CCP do if an individual or cartel corners the PLEX market in EVE and drives the price to unbearable levels? Furthermore, how will that affect EVE's subscriber numbers? Or consider what might happen if someone decided to spend wads of RL cash on PLEX and dumped them all on the market. How should CCP react in these circumstances? Is there a need to regulate the PLEX market?

CSM was quick to point out that while PLEX is of course tied into the EVE economy, fluctuations within that particular subset of the market would not necessarily impact the rest of the economy. The CSM does however realize that should the price of PLEX go too high, it could very well mean less players and thus bad effects on the overall health of EVE.

CSM also pointed out that ISK is not tied to PLEX in any fashion, and the amount of ISK does not change in the overall economy due to PLEX use. Therefore the CSM wanted to know more about the reasons why CCP wanted to be able to react, and what they would do, to price fluctuations on the PLEX market – barring of course a possible steep decline in subscriber numbers should players not be able to afford PLEX for ISK.

CCP noted that in monetary theory it is possible to have inflation, or deflation, in an economic system even though the amount of money in the system is stable. This is due to the velocity of money – how often cash is changing hands. Therefore it is very important not only to monitor money supply in EVE but rather the entire economic value produced within the system, and imported into the economic system via PLEX. A large influx of economic value via PLEX could potentially have damaging effect on the economy, at least in the short and medium term.

(Interested readers may find this article useful: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantity_theory_of_money.)

CCP stated that while there were no indications of problems currently, the fact remains that individuals can manipulate the PLEX market, given sufficient funds (ISK or RL cash), and thus creating the danger of EVE losing subscribers or causing extreme changes in PLEX prices. Therefore, CCP believes that having tools that permit them to react when such situations occur is preferred over having to develop the tools after the fact.

It must be stated that contrary to public perception, it is in CCP's interest to have the PLEX prices low (as opposed to high) because of the number of users using that subscription method. There is no guarantee that those users will switch over to other methods could they not afford PLEX with ISK. Nor is it in CCP's interest that users have to grind more in order to maintain their subscription method should the price of PLEX go up – using more of their time in the game to pay for PLEX and not to enrich the EVE environment.

CCP is therefore closely monitoring both the PLEX trade and the economy in general, very closely.

The meeting continued onwards into deeper discussions about PLEX that are strictly NDA bound but further public disclosures regarding the subject matter will be forthcoming from CCP in the next 3 months, including a follow up at the Economics session at the next Fanfest.

It is worth noting that due to a human error, all pie charts shown during the discussion added up to 110% - the CSM noted that this was yet another case of CCP turning things up to 11.

Security

Attendees: CCP Sreegs, CCP Unifex

CCP Sreegs detailed the evolution of the security division at CCP, its new structure and focus, his beliefs concerning accessibility and security, and the prevalence of botting/RMT'ing in EVE. He informed the CSM that a new security team was being organized, with a renewed focus on infrastructure. Although the focus is shifting away from strictly punishing botters, the tools used to combat botting are still working. CCP Sreegs assured the CSM that botting/RMT'ing is still being handled with the same frequency as it has been in the past, and in fact there is no significant increase (or decrease) in the frequency of bots.

The CSM was surprised that CCP Sreegs was not planning another “unholy rage” (a highly-public mass-banning of botters during a specific time period). Instead, Sreegs explained that “unholy rage” events, while effective, are not his preferred standalone solution to botting activities; instead, he would like to create an iterative process to deal with EULA-breaking activities. The focus should be on long term solutions and a sustainable process to reduce the footprint of botters; large events such as “unholy rage” are resource intensive and don't scale well.

While CCP Sreegs was adamant that banning is in fact very successful, and will always be a major tool for dealing with botting, he would rather work on infrastructure and processes to limit the way that unauthorized programs can interact with the EVE client.

The CSM inquires as to the role a new security division would play. CCP Unifex explained that, in EVE, security was a priority and would continue to be given the resources needed to operate effectively. One resource that CCP Sreegs brought up was the Eve Security Task Force (ESTF), a multi-disciplinary group from various areas of the game that will give insight into various security-related problems and act as an advisory board for the new EVE security team – as there has now been established a team that is tasked with handling security. Game masters, game designers, web designers, and discipline directors were but a few parties expected to have an active role in the ESTF. The members would ideally include all people interested in security.

The CSM suggested using behavioral analysis (similar to spam-detection) to identify botters. While CCP Sreegs did not dismiss its potential effectiveness, he strongly asserted his preference for a technical approach – at the very least relying on technical solutions more than behavioral ones. He argued this would prevent customer support from being inundated with false-positives and fringe cases brought about by the behavioral-flagging. It must be noted that there isn't a dichotomy between technical solutions and behavioral analysis, both methods allow you to be more effective than relying solely on either one. And when it comes to a decision of banning an account, Sreegs prefers a technical solution over behavioral analysis.

One CSM strongly dissented, pointing out that years of experience has shown that technical arms-races are rarely, if ever, cost-effective, and that behavioral detection systems can achieve very low false positive rates and quick adaptation to new botting practices. CCP Sreegs respectfully disagreed with the statement.

The CSM questioned if dealing with certain types of bots should be given priority – specifically null-sec ratting bots. The CSM argued that null-sec ratting bots greatly affect the state of null-sec PvP, as null-sec ratting is an important component in null-sec PvP. CCP Sreegs did not dismiss the notion of prioritization of one bot over

another, but he and CCP Unifex cautioned that relying on anecdotal data was dangerous. To properly prioritize bot-hunting, they argued, it would be necessary to better quantify the effect of various bots.

The CSM then broached the subject of communication, or rather the lack thereof, between the EVE Security team and the EVE community. The CSM and CCP Sreegs agreed on the importance of communication, both as a deterrent to botting and because it's just good community relations. Sreegs was very interested in communicating more effectively and has been actively communicating when he has something to communicate about, but was hesitant to release raw data without a broader sense of context just for the purpose of publishing something. The CSM strongly argued that the EVE community would greatly prefer data without context to no data at all.

The subject of accessibility/security tradeoffs was then raised. CCP Sreegs' major concern when dealing with security-related issues is the ease of play for the average user; thus there would, for example, never be a CAPTCHA-code type solution to the problem of ratting, missioning, or mining.

With this notion in mind, Sreegs explained how he plans to handle what he believes to be a pressing problem with Eve-related security - identity authentication, or IDAuth. IDAuth, simply put, is CCP knowing who owns an account within EVE. While two-factor identification would be effective, Sreegs noted that the EVE player base would be reluctant to give more information to CCP than required, and such his solution is simply e-mail verification.

The "Sreegs Mantra", he explained, states that when the security team is effective, the end-user has no indication that anything untoward is happening. In a perfect world there's balance and security isn't an impediment to access.

Thursday, December 8th

Crucible wrapup

CCP Unifex, CCP Soundwave, CCP Ytterbium

CCP solicited feedback from the CSM about Crucible. The CSM praised Crucible as a much-needed expansion, because it addressed the concerns of existing players, and expressed the view that CCP should make more Crucible-like expansions in the future. The discussion was wide-ranging, covering many 'Little Thing' suggestions as well as Crucible's supercapital rebalancing.

Little Things:

The CSM noted an uptick in lag after the expansion's launch and reiterated the need for Team Gridlock to be restored. The CSM also reported some frame rate issues.

The CSM and CCP discussed the delay in implementing POS fuel blocks.

The CSM noted that the new T2 Triage module was functionally useless. CCP acknowledged this and is working to iterate on it.

The CSM noted that if an alliance has more than a certain number of beacons, the capital navigation window breaks.

CCP noted that they are considering reducing the session change timer again.

The CSM noted that the asset window lost the functionality to remotely repackage items, and suggested that CCP not only fix this, but add remote stacking through the asset window.

The CSM praised Crucible's addition of implants on pod killmails, and noted a desire to see 'insufficient clone' notifications on killmails as well.

The CSM asked for more than 250 corporate bookmarks, and for alliance bookmarks to be added. The CSM suggested that jump bridges be automatically added to alliance bookmarks to free up space for more tactical bookmarks. CCP noted that they are looking to make bookmarks easier for players to save and share.

The CSM spoke critically of the technetium bottleneck and the need to rebalance moon income. The CSM noted that alliance income should be tied more closely to actually possessing territory rather than sov-independent income sources like moons.

The CSM reiterated its desire for CCP to implement a partial skill respec, especially in the aftermath of major changes to ship classes such as the removal of drones from supercarriers.

CCP and the CSM discussed the new Tier 3 battlecruisers. CCP noted that the Talos needs adjustment upwards; the CSM noted that the Naga is too powerful compared to the Talos. CCP acknowledged this, citing the difficulty of finding a role for blasters as well as the power of passive shield tanking.

Supercapital Rebalancing:

The CSM noted that Crucible had not adjusted the tracking of Titan guns, which allow Titans to destroy subcapital ships with relative impunity when in a large group. The CSM mentioned allowing Electronic Attack Ships to impact ewar-immune vessels as a possible fix.

The CSM suggested that supercarriers be allowed to dock in outposts which have an appropriate upgrade. The CSM noted it that it did not wish Titans to ever be able to dock, but that supercarriers were now less powerful and more common and should thus be treated more as regular ships rather than special snowflakes.

The CSM noted that due to the reduced session change timer, it was now possible to jump a capital ship with a travel fit in and out of a system before the invulnerability timer ends, making caps fit in this way completely untouchable in bubble-free lowsec.

The CSM and CCP discussed of the idea of a capital jumpdrive 'spool up' timer as a possible fix this type of rapid travel. The CSM supported the idea of having a spool-up timer of approximately 60 seconds as a hedge against alliance power projection, preventing capital fleets from crossing from one side of the galaxy to the other in mere minutes.

The CSM advocated adding a supercapital-tackling point on Supercarriers, given the fragility of Heavy Interdictors in a supercap fight and the need to see supercapitals dying in combat more often.

Incursions

Present: CCP Soundwave, CCP Bettik

This session started off with a discussion of overall site balancing. The main issue identified and reiterated many times through the session was that the site classes are very unbalanced. The CSM pointed out to CCP that at present, almost all of the activity and issues with Incursions relate to the fact that Vanguard class sites are substantially easier and more profitable than any other class site. They have the highest payout for the time investment and the minimal risk involved, so these sites are causing overpopulation in Incursion areas and as a result other class sites are not run much at all. While it was generally agreed that Vanguard sites may need to be adjusted down by slightly increasing the risk or decreasing the rewards the other class sites (Scout, Assault, and HQ) need buffs to bring their risk/reward more in line. Everyone agreed that the value of the site should scale according to the effort, number of people you have to coordinate, and the time spent in the site. The end

result should be the people who can coordinate the larger groups for larger sites should be rewarded properly for their time and effort.

More detailed conversations were carried out in the following specific areas:

* Individual site variations – The CSM identified that more variety and diversity in the individual spawns of wave/site would be welcome. They were careful to point out constraints in these variations should be kept in line with the site class. Each class site should have a min/max variation that can be determined by players, but each spawn may vary more towards DPS or more EWAR for example. CCP agreed that if individual sites were less predictable it may put some of the original challenge back into incursions, and potentially reduce the number of pure faction ship fleets due to a potentially higher risk. This would in turn help competition and population issues by allowing more players to compete on a more level playing field. While no timelines were set, CCP indicated a strong desire to implement changes along these lines, and that they already have most of the tools needed to implement them.

* Site DPS – It was pointed out that, while more DPS or more ewar in sites may be a welcome challenge, the CSM advised CCP to be cautious about significant changes to alpha. The mothership sites were cited as a specific example where bomber waves almost exclusively target a certain type of logistic ship and they are insta-popped. Both CSM and CCP agreed that risk in these sites should exist, but the CSM felt this specific case might be a bit extreme. CCP acknowledge this issue and would keep it in mind when working on site diversification.

* Fleet consistency across sites – The CSM raised concerns about how some Incursions sites force fleets to completely reshuffle in order to complete them. They pointed out that while this is an interesting concept, in practice, players want to be able to put together a fleet for a certain class of sites and be able to do them with only minor fleet setup variations. Players are more willing to adjust modules but most do not like having to reshuffle completely. The further contributes to why these sites and even class of sites become very unpopular and are not run. CCP generally agreed and stated they are interested in adjusting this fleet splitting when player acceptance is not what they expected.

* Bugs and exploits – Prior to the Winter Summit, the CSM polled key members of the public incursion community, and with their assistance the CSM was able to present to CCP a list of the top player concerns, bugs, and known exploits within the incursion feature. The game and dungeon designers were very interested in these details and asked that CSM continue to pass them on. If players encounter bugs or exploits, they are encouraged file bug reports and/or reach out to a CSM representative to help focus attention on them. Overall CCP showed a strong desire to address known bugs and exploits and has already started to address some through the Crucible expansion.

* Site competition mechanics – In this topic, the CSM voiced some minor concerns that have been received from players that the site competition mechanics may benefit from more variation, more than simply “more dps = win”. The idea of more sites spawning at a time came up as a means to reduce the need for competition, but there was no consensus whether that would be a good thing in the long run. The population issue may also affect this topic but the CSM felt (based on community feedback) that in general, more sites would not solve any specific issue and would likely compound existing problems. It was pointed out that, increasing the risk and unpredictability (as previously discussed) might lower the number of ‘shiny fleets’ and in turn help level the

playing field, so the pure DPS mechanic was more even and fun for players. Both CSM and CCP acknowledge this might be an area to look into, but that it's a challenging balancing act. No specific direction was set as a result.

* Population density – Population density and overpopulation was a continuous topic through this session, and there were many suggestions tossed around in order to help it. When all is said and done, the main point is that population issues are likely best handled by addressing specific points of concern that are causing the population to be focused in certain areas. By increasing the number of Scout, Assault, and HQ sites that are run by players, and making them more worthwhile, the population will naturally spread out. By creating more variations and a bit more risk, the playing field may become a bit more level, making competition for sites more fun and meaningful. Overall CSM and CCP seem to agree that no direct action would be taken to specifically attack population issues, but they would be kept in mind as a byproduct of all other decisions made.

* Incursion Spawn rate too fast – It was brought up that many in the community feels that the overall Incursion event ends too soon. It was noted that the mothership site can be spotted in a very short time causing the actual incursion to only last a few days in high sec. Both CSM and CCP expressed a desire to increase the duration of an incursion. CCP was clear they want to keep the completion of the incursion event as organic as possible rather than putting in arbitrary tasks that have to be done, as that forces content on to players rather than allowing them to do it themselves. The CSM agreed with this sentiment and that perhaps some simple minimum timers on certain things could help extend the duration of a single incursion as needed.

* Geography of incursion spawn rate – Since many in the incursion community has raised this issue, the CSM questioned if anything would be done to spread out the Incursions to more regions, as today they mostly spawn in Amarr space. CCP stated, as many players already know, that the system is working as designed. It's just that Amarr space is so large, that statistically it's more likely to get an Incursion. While CCP acknowledged the fact of the matter, there were no specific action items taken to make changes at this time.

Miscellaneous – A few other miscellaneous topics that came up were:

* Tagging: The tagging feature is used a lot in incursion fleets but the ability to tag items in the UI is painful. CCP acknowledged this issue and agreed it needs to be improved because it's an important part of leading Incursions fleets.

* FC management: it was stated that FCs in larger Incursions fleets would like the ability to better monitor things like fleet numbers because it's tied tightly to rewards

* Eve Voice: it was stated at another point in the summit that Eve Voice was a valuable Incursion fleet tool and any improvements that can be made here would be appreciated by the players.

To close the meeting the CSM stressed how the social aspects of Incursions are one their most valuable components and the Incursion feature has become very popular. CCP agrees that this is a successful feature and they strongly support iterating it now in order to improve it, rather than letting it get old and stale. CCP promised to keep CSM and players updated as they develop plans in this area.

Null sec – stations, sov, resources

CCP Soundwave, CCP Greyscale, CCP Unifex

CCP and the CSM discussed nullsec issues at length in this session, focusing on destructible outposts, NPC nullsec stations, supercapital balance, and general tweaks to improve the value of sovereignty.

General Sovereignty Balance

CCP asked the CSM for feedback about the possibility of replacing Drone alloy drops with bounties. The CSM approved, noting that the drops from drone rats have flooded the market for high-end minerals and are largely responsible for the decline in mining as a nullsec profession. The CSM also noted that the ease of production in the drone regions due to alloy drops has had an influence on the rampant proliferation of supercapitals. CCP added that in addition to changing drone rats to having bounties instead of dropping alloys, CCP may need to adjust the truesec of the drone regions, as they have significantly better truesec than any other region. CCP stated that they did not want the sovholding 0.0 economy to be one where an alliance leader gets all of an alliance's ISK, but rather one where everyone at the member level in an alliance gets more income as a consequence of holding space. The CSM pointedly noted that nullsec income had once been more like this - before CCP nerfed anomalies in March 2011.

The CSM stated that a sovholding alliance's primary income should stem from the territory itself, such as the taxation of line member's ratting income or Planetary Interaction, rather than from sovless income sources such as moons. The CSM noted that there is too much emphasis on moons particularly technetium, as a source of alliance income. The CSM proposed adding R32 Alchemy as a possible fix for the Technetium bottleneck. CCP asked if moon rebalancing might remove a motive for alliances to go to war. The CSM replied that war in EVE is mostly driven by hatred and grudges, and that moons are primarily small-to-mid-level conflict drivers. The CSM noted that if moons were medium-value sources of income they would still drive conflict, but not have an overwhelming imbalance like technetium presently does. The CSM noted that line members do not particularly enjoy fighting over moons.

The CSM described Infrastructure Hub upgrades as a forgotten mechanic; the CSM called on CCP to add more types of upgrades to Infrastructure Hubs.

The CSM noted that if CCP intends to focus more on line member income generation as a method of alliance-level income, CCP will need to add a mechanic for alliance taxation like the existing corporate tax mechanic.

Supercapitals

The CSM praised the memory of older capital battles where engagement was forced by use of the siege mechanic. In the past, capitals would cyno in, siege, and then death - of some kind - was certain. The CSM spoke harshly of how slippery modern supercap fights are, and how rarely supercapitals are destroyed due to a lack of siege mechanic or sufficient tackling. The CSM offered a variety of solutions.

The CSM suggested siege mode for supercaps, and also that ewar immunity be removed from supercapitals, giving them instead a high (~20ish) bonus to warp core strength to allow small fleets of subcapitals to tackle them even without an interdicator.

The CSM reiterated its position from the Crucible Feedback session (immediately prior to this session) regarding supercarriers: that they should be able to dock in an appropriately upgraded outpost and be able to fit a hictor-style focused point.

The CSM also reiterated that there should be a jump spool-up timer on all capital ships to mitigate rapid capital travel and alliance power projection.

The CSM stated that supercapital proliferation is an escalating problem, and however the problem is solved - be it with a supercapital point, supercapital siege mode, or a new capital ship class - the core problem is a lack of combat losses to match the ever-increasing production of supercaps.

CCP offered the idea of a new capital ship which specialized in tackling supercapitals. The CSM expressed reservations, citing CCP's dodgy record of capital balancing. The CSM was not strongly averse to the concept of new capital ships in general, but expressed skepticism that the 'tackling capship' idea was an ideal fix compared with less development resource-intensive solutions - supercapital points, siege mode, et cetera - to the problem of supercapital proliferation.

The CSM flatly stated that there should never be new supercapital ship designs added to the game, as CCP had erred so badly with their introduction that, years later, they are still not under control. The CSM noted that new 'regular' capitals might be less risky, but that a new ship role is a large and difficult balancing problem, compared to smaller iterative tweaks such as the EHP and logoff changes added in Crucible. The CSM wants to see more small iterative changes of this type as the preferred balancing method.

CCP noted that new ships with new roles drives gameplay more than the existing system where one hull type does everything, and that having more specialized roles and varied capitals would make for a more interesting dynamic. CCP noted that players shouldn't have to wait years for new ships, and that the game is the 'thinnest' in terms of veteran goals when it comes to capital ships as there are only four types. CCP stated that veteran players are running out of things to train, and that long-term end-game goals will not come from frigate hulls, realistically, thus the idea of adding new capital ships.

Destructible Outposts

The CSM reiterated its desire for destructible outposts. The CSM noted that prior to Dominion, punitive wars of conquest were possible and occurred regularly, yet due to the costs of the Dominion system alliances cannot engage in punitive conquest. (Under Dominion territory must be occupied and paid for, rather than razed and claimed with only a minimal POS footprint, as under the previous sov system.) The CSM believes that destructible outposts would allow alliances to burn each other's territory down without needing to occupy and inhabit that territory.

The CSM is completely united in its desire to see destructible outposts, and views the question as a “when,” not an “if”. The CSM noted that there are a number of ideas about how to best implement destructible outposts, ranging from complete destruction to a repairable wreck to a system that moves the assets in the destroyed outpost to the nearest NPC station.

CCP asked for ideas about how to handle asset distribution from a destroyed outpost. The CSM offered the idea of a ‘forced fire sale’ initially conceived by CSM Two Step, where the assets lost in a destroyed outpost are automatically put up for auction, ensuring that the victim gets compensation for the lost assets as a large part of the auction fee would go to the owner of the items. CCP suggested that as an alternative, the lost items could be impounded in the nearest NPC station, or some equivalent.

The CSM recognizes that the question of lost assets must be handled with sensitivity and that in the modern gaming environment CCP cannot just blow up everything in a station and have it vanish forever.

CCP asked if this feature might be a disincentive that inhibits players from moving to nullsec; the CSM noted that outpost destructibility should not be implemented in a vacuum, but rather as part of a package of other improvements to sovholding nullsec.

CCP and the CSM agreed that the question of asset destruction or distribution must be handled with extreme care.

Station Services on NPC Nullsec Stations

The CSM noted that the most optimal alliance type in terms of income and power projection presently has no sov at all; the so-called ‘Iceberg’ alliances which live in NPC stations, amass supercapitals, and hold high-value moons for income. (This is because the largest sources of income available to alliances are technetium moons, which have no requirement of sov-holding, and these income sources are easily defended by a large supercapital fleet. By contrast, holding sov is a drain on alliance income.)

The CSM noted that if outposts are going to be destructible, it is important for CCP to balance NPC nullsec stations as well. The CSM advocated adding station services to NPC nullsec stations which can be disabled, like the services on a conquerable station. Unlike a conquerable station’s services, which need to be repaired by players, these NPC station services would regenerate over time.

The CSM stated that something like this is necessary so that sov-holding alliances can retaliate against non-sov alliances using NPC stations as risk-free launchpads for invasion against sovholders. The CSM noted that it doesn’t wish to have an entire region of NPC stations disabled, which is why regeneration of disabled services on NPC stations is needed. The CSM is concerned by the use of NPC stations in large-scale alliance warfare, but at the same time does not want retaliatory attacks against the stations to unduly impact small-gang activity.

CCP offered a suggestion of having a capital-only docking service added to NPC stations that could be disabled. The CSM agreed that this might work, as long as the service would regenerate over time.

CCP asked if station service hitpoints are too high. The CSM said they are fine, as they are supposed to be difficult to disable. CCP asked if they should be turned into a target for small gangs, with lower EHP; The CSM said no.

Little things – Factional Warfare, Wormholes

Present: CCP Soundwave

Factional Warfare

CCP has begun some concept work on how they want FW to evolve in the medium- to long-term. Some iterations to FW may be possible as soon as summer 2012. They would like to merge the FW and 0.0 sov system capture mechanics somewhat, but are not happy with either of the current mechanics.

CCP would like to inject some of the drama that surrounds the CSM election system into FW, by having some sort of in-game election of militia leaders/admirals. This would help move some of the 0.0 style politics/revenge/spying into FW. Another important addition to this system would be some real power/consequences for system ownership, such as the elected leaders being able to set things like tax rates in lowsec stations that they control (and having some of this tax ISK flow to the faction). The leadership would be able to set strategic goals as well as adjust settings for the new FW benefits.

Some of the CSM members expressed some concern that FW issues would greatly impact pirate organizations that live in the area, and wanted to make sure that non-FW entities would be able to neutralize FW control in some way (by blowing stuff up, preferably). CCP agreed to take that into account when designing the system, but that the important thing was to make FW meaningful and fun.

CCP mentioned that letting alliances join FW was supposed to be a Crucible feature, but was not completed in time. It will be released in the very near future, so that groups that want to participate in FW don't need to break up their existing social structures in order to join. Some CSM members noted that this, in addition to the election mechanics, would allow nullsec entities to co-opt FW groups.

On the question of where FW revenues would go, CCP suggested that they would be able to be used for system upgrades; an example was to increase LP payouts or something similar.

The CSM suggested that one of the major issues with lowsec was the large increase in risk with a much smaller increase in rewards. It was suggested that allowing FW upgrades to decrease risk, such as making probes less effective in a system, would help draw people into lowsec. This brought up a side conversation about how the current probing mechanics has negatively impacted tactics like sniping, which is an issue CCP is aware of.

CCP suggested that in the long term, they would like to see the possibility of FW folks taking over nearby high and nullsec systems, and turning them into FW-controlled systems. Some CSMs suggested that FW could be used as a testbed for new capture mechanics, since FW would be smaller scale than nullsec.

The CSM presented a list of smaller issues that were raised by the FW community. CCP promised to look at the list, but pointed out that issues that had to do with Crimewatch (the system that manages aggression timers, security status hits, criminal flags and other lowsec mechanics) were unlikely to be addressed without the Crimewatch rewrite that CCP is planning.

Wormholes

Some CSMs pointed out that wormholes were generally working well, and wanted to make sure that CCP didn't consider the wormhole-specific aspects of them a broken mechanic in need of major work.

The CSM pointed out that living out of a POS is very difficult, due to the weak security system and lack of real personal storage space. CCP is hoping that several small changes can be made to POS mechanics, and that at some point in the future the POS system will be re-written/re-designed.

CCP and some of the CSM members brought up the difficulty of invading a large established group in a wormhole as one of the biggest current issues with w-space. The idea was raised of having some sort of ship or module that would allow more mass to pass through a wormhole. One of the CSM members explained the defensive mechanic of leaving your static wormhole at critical mass and collapsing it when invaders were close to entering.

One CSM stated that "If you build a fortress in there it is impossible to invade". The mechanics of infiltrating capital ships into wormholes was discussed, as well as the "chain-collapsing" mechanic. CCP expressed some concern that as long as you were with a group of people, wormhole space is too safe. CCP was worried that the introduction of some sort of wormhole stabilizer would remove some of the everyday safety that people have grown to expect. Some CSM members raised an objection to the stabilizer, as they thought it would remove some of the main constraints from wormhole space that help to keep it different than known space.

Two Step's list of smaller wormhole fixes was presented to CCP, most of which are generally applicable to POS life. Some small scanning tweaks were also mentioned. It was also requested to allow Rorqual clone vats to be usable to allow players to switch clones (and implants) within the wormhole. This led to a general discussion of clone vat bays and how they aren't currently useful.

This was followed by a discussion about removing learning implants, to encourage more risk taking. This was generally unpopular with most of the CSM at first. The discussion turned towards clone costs, which were widely agreed to be too high for high SP characters, which discourages high SP players from going on random suicide Rifter roams. One CSM stated a point in favor of removing learning implants, as that would be a nerf to highsec income, and he is always in favor of those where possible. Other members of the CSM were quick to object to that suggestion. Another CSM objected to "his peeps being thrown under the bus". It was suggested that CCP look into the implant losses in PVP, to try to determine the amount people are currently risking in implants.

There was some final discussion about making sleeper (and Incursion) spawns more variable, which CCP agreed would be a good thing. Some CSMs suggested that Sleepers should attack POSes, and/or pod people.

Game balance

Attendees: CCP Tallest, CCP Ytterbium, CCP Soundwave, CCP Unifex

This was a detailed session covering a range of ship and module balancing issues which included a lot of brainstorming by both CCP and the CSM. The CSM began by expressing approval that CCP now has two developers - CCP Ytterbium and CCP Tallest - working on iterative ship balancing, a priority issue identified by the CSM in the past. The following subject areas were discussed:

Crucible Iteration: In the aftermath of Crucible, CCP is considering iterating on the new Tech 2 modules introduced in the expansion, particularly the T2 Triage module. CCP is also working on issues related to shield fleets such as the way that leadership bonuses impact shield health. CCP has been closely reading the balancing feedback threads on the forums.

Frigates and Cruisers: CCP wants to boost tech one Frigates and Cruisers so that they are viable options for new players, rather than the current system where new players are often told to skip over them towards tier two Battlecruiser or even tech two ships. CCP noted that Cruisers should generally be more mobile than a Battlecruiser, but that this is not currently always the case. Furthermore, CCP added that the higher velocity of Cruisers was not often viewed as being worth the loss of EHP and slots. The CSM agreed and was pleased, noting that there are a large number of ships in these classes that have long needed iteration.

Battlecruisers: CCP wants to do a balancing pass on tier one Battlecruisers, which are problem hulls. The CSM agreed that these needed examination.

Electronic Attack Ships: The CSM would like Electronic Attack Ships to impact ships that are immune to electronic warfare, such as supercapitals. The CSM noted that to rebalance EAS properly, EAS will need more survivability and combat functionality, in addition to being able to impact ewar-immune ships.

Electronic Warfare: CCP and the CSM agreed that remote sensor dampeners have been rendered useless and need rebalancing. CCP wants to look into this, as well as the damping ships themselves. The CSM also discussed the merits (or lack thereof) of ECM.

Assault Frigates: CCP didn't have time to fit Assault Ships into the Crucible release, but they are being worked on now. CCP acknowledged the imperative of a second midslot on the Retribution. CCP noted that adding slots to ships requires a significant amount of upgrade testing, which is why these changes didn't make it into Crucible.

The Drake: The CSM and CCP both acknowledged the need to rebalance the Drake, which 'does everything too well'. CCP is considering giving it a more offensive role like a Raven or Caracal where it would lose the shield resistance bonus and the 5% Kinetic damage bonus and instead gain a rate of fire bonus and a missile velocity bonus. The CSM vehemently approved of this idea. CCP and the CSM also agreed that this possible change to the Drake would help add more uniqueness to the Nighthawk, which is presently overshadowed entirely by the Drake.

Command Ships and Warfare Links: CCP suggested that Command Ships should have their attributes looked into and have their utility expanded by adding two races of leadership bonus to each hull, instead of one; for example, the Eos might offer both bonuses to Information Warfare and Armor Warfare. The CSM was excited by this idea. CCP and the CSM discussed the power of Strategic Cruisers vis a vis Command Ships; both CCP and CSM agreed that the Strategic Cruisers are overshadowing Command Ships in terms of their link bonuses. CCP suggested, and the CSM agreed, that Strategic Cruisers should have a lesser but more versatile bonus to Warfare Links than Command Ships, as versatility is a core concept for Tech 3 ships.

For example, Strategic Cruisers presently offer a 5% bonus to a single leadership bonus, where Command Ships offer a 3% bonus; under the discussed system, Strategic Cruisers might offer a lesser leadership bonus, but that bonus could apply to multiple (or all) types of leadership.

CCP also acknowledged that some Command Ships are in need of some love, the Eos for example. The Command Ships in whole will be receiving a rebalance in the near future.

Nosferatu: CCP and the CSM discussed methods of making Nosferatu more viable, having again begun with the problem of the Pilgrim. The CSM suggested that one of the reasons Nosferatu are not broadly viable is that their drain is all-or-nothing; it shuts off entirely if the aggressor has more capacitor than the victim. The CSM proposed a 'trickle mode' instead, where Nosferatu continue to drain capacitor from the victim even if the aggressor has more cap, but at a reduced rate.

Cloak Hunters: CCP brought up the possibility of a future cloak-hunting ship or mechanic as a hypothetical; this was described as 'more like finding a submarine than pulling a blanket off' a cloaked ship. The CSM was cautiously positive about the idea of a cloak-hunting vessel of some kind.

Future highlevel discussions – War

Present: CCP Soundwave

CCP started off by stating that this was a high-level discussion (as per the meeting's subject), more of a brainstorming session in fact. The broad scope of future iterations of the War system is to cater to people that want to do wars, as a profession, and it should cater to people that don't want to do wars. And then the question is, how to achieve that?

The changes to the War system are currently being designed and have already changed after the meeting was held due to being actively worked on and because of CSM input. Because of that the details cannot be revealed of the discussion, simply because some of it is already outdated (and therefore incorrect) and others will most likely change. CCP will however communicate publicly about the changes when it has a stronger view of how the system will be changed.

While the CSM appreciates CCP's position, they believe that including the discussion in the minutes would have been helpful and would have promoted discussion in the community. They regret the decision to not permit the release of the minutes of this meeting.

It must also be stated for the record that the CSM voiced concerns that CCP would be fiddling with one of the fundamental things of EVE, i.e. sometimes shit happens to you (like war is declared on you) and you just have to deal with it and any changes to the current system could potentially have negative effect over all. The CSM was however not unanimous in this concern.

After back and forth discussion the CSM ended up being positive about this change although some concerns of the finer details that have to be hammered out. This is definitely something that requires community input and a devblog will be released detailing the changes once they have become clear.

Future highlevel discussions – Fixing broken systems

Present: CCP Soundwave

CSM made the joke that CCP Soundwave drew the short straw and had to listen to the CSM bitching and whining about game problems. This was a very free-format discussion, so this report is mostly a list of items touched upon and important comments that were made. As this was session was more about CSM commenting on what was broken, with CCP making counter comments, everything mentioned is the CSM making comments unless otherwise specially noted – and often individual CSM members are making the comments.

Some ideas that were put forth by the CSM:

- Using faction warfare as a test-bed for nullsec sov?
- Problem with 0.0 is there is no answer to "why do you want to go to 0.0?".
- References to industrialization, moving t2 production to 0.0, interdependence of regions, market hubs in nullsec. CCP commented that player built stations should always be better than NPC stations.
- Neglect of expansion of IHUB system -- customization of space. Allowing alliances to personalize their space to increase space diversity.
- Better (or different) intel system for nullsec.
- General industrial boosts would be good. Such as adding more slots in stations or increasing invention chance in nullsec with an IHUB upgrade? This would then lead to a greater demand for datacores which would partially boost those who run exploration sites.

CCP views it as a problem that most often only one person handles the IHUB, that it's rarely a communal activity. CSM responded that there is collective effort to get the upgrades in.

- With the proposed drone alloy change (mentioned in the nullsec session), mining will become profitable again, and coupled with other industrial changes will bring industrialists to nullsec. This change may also boost wormholes as well.
- IHUB upgrades that would reduce fueling costs? Problem with this is, price of low-end moon products is directly related to fueling costs, so if costs go down in nullsec, this will trash lowsec moon mining.
- Are sov bills too high? They would not be so annoying if you got some benefit from them. But the point of them was to put a limit on empire sizes. And originally, they were supposed to scale. Why didn't that happen? CCP replied that it is distinctly un-sandboxy, and puts a leash on ambitions (which drives conflicts).
- Nullsec is stagnating because punitive spite-wars are nearly impossible which is why we have "non-invasion" pacts where people shoot each other but don't take territory. For example AAA vs. CVA war was over in 3 days, then 52 stations to grind through. The point is that taking territory involves too much grinding. Delve is now a ghetto that nobody cares about!
- It would be nice to have some way to make a region of space "yours", distinctly different from regions owned by other groups. There needs to be reasons for war. There needs to be emotional reasons to hurt people. How can mechanics handle this? Dynamic truesec? The longer you occupy use space, the better it becomes? Would this be a conflict driver? On a small scale, perhaps... but on a large scale?
- Perhaps something you could install in YOUR space that messes with other people's space?

CCP mentioned something that could be called a "Sec status vampire" idea, installing a structure or an upgrade that messes with other people's space, such as by reducing the truesec of the neighboring systems. The question of the range of such a device will be difficult, since you want to be able to keep allies close. So a significant range will be needed. On the other hand, if you could improve your own space and degrade buffer space, then maybe you wouldn't need allies so close. One comment was made that this might provide crappy space for new nullsec entrants. But it would also concentrate people into smaller areas of space, which was one of the goals of Dominion. Depending on vampire range, the best systems might be at the edge of an alliances space.

Other effects using the same projection mechanic were mentioned such as Incursion or stealing bounties. Several CSMs didn't like the idea of affecting spaceships directly (such as Incursions, ship effects, etc.) What about remote tax imposition? "Taxation without representation!" Or perhaps hurting production or mining. Increase POS fuel consumption in the affected systems? And if these vampires were relatively easy to kill, they might be small/medium gang conflict drivers.

A question is raised by the CSM was whether it is a better use of developer time to do this kind of small patch to the current system, or address the larger issue of how timers, fixed targets, etc., that are impediments to war?

CSM suggested that given the track record of unintended consequences with sov changes, it might be lower-risk to do small tweaks to current system while testing more radical changes in a smaller scale system – such as factional warfare. Then CSM asked point blank whether CCP is going to just iterate on the current sov system or take a shot at a revamp? CCP replied that there were no plans for a revamp at this time, only iterations.

CSM emphasized that "nullsec is about hate and cruelty". Ideas like the vampire would foster conflict. More conflict drivers are needed.

Turning to lowsec the CSM simply stated that little enjoyment is currently to be found there. There are rewards there but only if players are not interrupted by other players, which happens all the time. Some sort of risk mitigation is needed via better situational awareness (intel) tools. The problem is that you get a little more reward but most of the risk of nullsec (sometimes even more risk than in nullsec). Perhaps by adding lowsec-exclusive resources (say, some minerals)? Also, a reference was made to the lowsec/FW discussion where lowsec sovereignty would permit better intel, monitoring gate traffic, etc. CSM asked whether lowsec sov could not be tied to FW but a counter point was made that there are tons of people who want to be in lowsec but not in FW.

CCP responded that Factions should not be independent of their hisec empires. CSM followed up with the question of whether or not to extend FW to all of lowsec which would turn pirates into proper pirates that are disrupting one faction's space things and activities in another faction's space. Then the question of expanding the bounty system to promote PVP conflict in lowsec was brought up.

Another thing brought up in connection to lowsec was contraband. It's a pain in the ass, can it just be removed? It makes contracting difficult -- you can't contract Plutonium or Prostitutes! It furthermore removes the usage of boosters in highsec, thus decreasing the overall demand for it. CCP replied that it wants to make it enforced by players, but then we have the issue of catching people in Empire. CSM's response was to encourage CCP to kill the current system, then add player enforcement when CCP has the time.

CSM continued to the point of how does risk versus reward scale? "Badly" (followed by laughter) was the response from some of the people in the meeting. The CSM suggested that rebalancing prices of modules so that average cost of modules versus cost of hull would be reasonably constant. Right now looting a frigate wreck gives you a good fraction of the value of the ship (because most of the value is in the modules), vs. larger ships where this isn't true. Right now T2 is so cheap that it's a no brainer, if you can use T2, you use T2. Following this train of thought, the CSM said it's hard to make money by PVP'ing, most people now grind money so they can PVP. By adjusting somehow the drops from PvP, it could be possible to make it viable to only PvP, ISK vice. PvP-ing in a frigate means that you only need to kill a few ships to break even, flying in a Vagabond means that a player needs to kill 100 (in the ballpark at least) to pay for that ship. One CSM member pointed out that that buying a ship to fight in is not an investment in making more ISK (like when a player invests in his mission running ship), it is an investment in fun. CCP asked in turn whether it wasn't a bit depressing to have to run content in the game that a player doesn't necessarily wants to run, in order to be able to have fun. The CSM responded that all activity added to the game, there wouldn't be ganking of helpless miners if there was no one mining.

Another possibility is more passive income. Or some sort of income generated by conflict (alliances get moons, for example, but what about smaller groups and individuals)? CCP liked the sentiment, but price balancing of things related to this would be a nightmare. Maybe a solution would be to allow the killer to get a cut of the

insurance payout his victim gets? CSM liked this idea, perhaps a payout to 10 or 20%? One CSM comment was that if a player gets shot down by Concord, he shouldn't get a cut of the payout from the poor guy he just ganked. The CSM was not unanimous in that sentiment.

Nearing the end of the meeting the discussions focused on the chat system; chat limitations in Alliance chat (where you just see 100 people), and use of chat as an intel tool (like it is used now where the listing of people in local gives you intel about who is in the system). It is CCP's desire to fix the chat system but currently there are no specifics available as lots of intel components in local would need to be split into new tools, etc. The CSM warned that there will be a huge opposition regarding any changes to the local chat but both parties agreed that using a chat channel as an intel tool is not ideal.

Friday, December 9th

Web cell

Present: CCP Alice, CCP Illurkall, CCP Unifex, CCP Seagull, CCP Priya

Starting off with EVE Gate, CCP went over how in the past the definitions were pretty clear; ‘the game’ has been what was in the client and everything else (in this case the EVE websites) were sort of attached to that without being ‘the game’. But as soon you start putting game features, (i.e. allowing you to change the state of ‘the game’, such as allowing you to send EVE mails from the web or changing your personal standings) on the web the lines start to get blurry. So it was necessary to take a step back and look at what CCP wants to do with from the web-side of things from a higher level – what is being done exactly and what purpose should each component serve.

To describe this high level web view, the EVE universe is at the core, surrounded by multiple layers (in both web and client) that let you interact with the universe – modifying the game (in a ‘serious business’ manners such as changing/adding market orders, corporation management, things like that), then organizing change to the game, i.e. in a ‘non-serious business’ manner (EVE mails, calendar, chat and likes), then talking about the game (forum posting, commenting on dev blogs, etc.) with other players , surrounded by an outer layer that communicates to people that don’t play EVE (yet).

This high level view is of course more of a guideline, rather than how things will be nailed down, but it helps with slotting in functionality and analyzing specific software development use cases. An example of where layers are crossed (and thus potentially creating development problems) is the broadcast system (status update) on EVE Gate, as it uses ingame standings to determine to what characters should receive the broadcast. There exists a technical limitation to potential additions to the web, as the game/server coding assumption has always held that a user interacts with the game through the client, which complicates the task. In short, there hasn’t existed a logical or a scalable way to communicate between the webservers and the game server.

CSM commented that if/when additions would be made to the website that would allow you to change the state of the game through the web, keeping them in the loop would be a clever move – as many of the CSM members do significant amounts of out-of-game-work for their corps and alliances.

CCP concluded this high level view by stating that it is their objective to allow you to interact more with EVE and other players through EVE Gate, and after lots of hard work over the past year the option now exists, although some more improvements are needed before this becomes fully operational functionality.

CSM jokingly commented that the ‘true endgame’ was to not log into EVE, so that any functionality added to the web to influence the game universe would be a godsend to them. In all seriousness though, the CSM did state that being able to send ingame mail to people or interact in any way while logged into EVE Gate while at work is a big deal for many players, and any additions to such features would only enhance the player experience.

The web team present did add the caveat that anything that would be added to the web site that allows a player to interact with EVE would have to be assessed against the principles that underpin EVE, so nothing

would happen tomorrow – but CCP iterated on the point that it is now firmly on the road of investigating how more avenues can be added to interact and influence EVE ‘the game’.

When asked for clarification, CCP responded that they would mostly be focusing on web additions that only CCP could provide, such as allowing you to view your corp chat on EVE Gate – the aim was not to step into the realm the API and third party development of tools that use that. However, CCP revealed that basic corporation forums hosted by CCP have been developed but rigorous testing still had to be performed on that feature. CSM asked if CCP had considered adding coalition style forums, where multiple alliances would have access to the forums as that would add authentication that was not possible using third party forum software; the answer was that CCP would begin with corp forums and then perhaps expand further on them as time goes on. More information will be forthcoming about this in a devblog.

Moving on, CCP showed CSM the new eveonline.com website it has been working on over the last few months. Although not much detail can be revealed about it, the emphasis will be on distinguishing more strongly between the outwards facing part of EVE, the expansion web sections, marketing campaigns, landing pages from banner ads, ‘what is this EVE you are talking about?’ sections and the like versus the ingame, ‘serious business’ section that will be focused on EVE Gate, the alternate pathway (other than the game client) to the EVE universe. But more information about the new website will be supplied as it gets closer to being deployed.

One concept that the CSM hammered on again and again is the ease of using web based tools to bot/cheat, and that any interaction with the in game universe via web site must keep this in mind. On that note, but unrelated to cheating or exploiting, the CSM suggested to CCP that it would keep in mind exposing as much information via APIs as possible when it comes to the development to allow third party development. CCP is very aware of both the cheating/exploiting possibilities and the 3rd party development possibilities.

One joyous moment during the show and tell of the new website was when CCP asked, “How do you explain space ships?” and the answer was “You just show them!” – and lo and behold, there was demonstrated ship spinning on the website!

When asked about mobile devices, CCP replied that they were focusing on browsers (and thus enabling most mobile devices) for now, and they were avoiding using Flash so no mobile devices would be excluded for that part.

So, all in all, the CSM was positive towards the new websites and the thought behind them and while no delivery dates are available yet, more information will start to come out as things progress.

Microtransaction Microsummit

Present: CCP Unifex, CCP Flying Scotsman, CCP Nerf Herder, CCP Dr.EyjoG

The CSM started off by asking CCP for a briefing on their current plans for microtransactions (MT), in the aftermath of the development shakeup. CCP replied that their position has not changed since the Emergency Summit in June. No game-affecting MT's will be introduced -- only vanity items (in-game) and perhaps some carefully chosen services (such as character transfers).

It is necessary for CCP to look at the mistakes done in the past and learn from them.

Currently there is limited, spaceship vanity related work being done at CCP, and the company is keeping it firmly in their minds to only offer services or vanity items in a manner that make sense. For example V3-ing the ship models is a key component in offering ship-skinning in the future.

The CSM wanted to make sure that CCP realizes that MTs have to be handled very carefully in order to avoid offending the players; that only has to happen once. Furthermore, the CSM pointed out that CCP already has a well-functioning MT system with the PLEX and building on top of that, and adhering to that system's paradigm, would perhaps be a logical step. CSM stressed that Aurum is a discredited concept and that any further use of that would most likely be unsuccessful. Additionally the CSM said that being able to buy clothes without being able to show them off makes them pointless.

CSM continued by suggesting to CCP that any and all things that CCP is considering in terms of MT to be offered for ISK only – if players really want to buy new pants (or any other thing) and lack the necessary ISK, they can (and most likely will) go and buy a PLEX and thus participate in the MT model that is working for CCP. CCP responded with the question of if a player wants to buy (for example) a paintjob for his Thorax, what should the price be in ISK? Essentially, where do the price points lie in terms of vanity items when being bought for ISK? CSM responded that they would be more than happy to sanity-check price points for CCP.

Another point raised by CCP regarding vanity items for ISK was that by having it all for ISK, ISK would be sinked out of the game while PLEX would simply stockpile up, as currently there are so few methods to sink PLEX out of the game. This could adversely affect the PLEX market.

One idea that came up was a micro-PLEX (not Aurum), for example allowing the option to break down PLEX to 30 micro-PLEXes which could in turn could allow you to pay subscription for one day, 10 days or 30 days in addition to spending it on vanity items. Micro-PLEX might also possibly be convertible back into PLEX, though there was some debate as to whether this was a good idea. Then the option of trading micro-PLEX for ISK would be the most obvious solution. While nothing was decided, the discussion was received positively by both parties.

CCP again stated that no active development was going on in regards to MTs and given the experience accumulated by CCP on that subject every single step will be carefully considered. Furthermore CCP will be consulting the CSM on this matter and the mantra of 'we'll push it out when it is ready to go out' will be recited quite frequently by CCP when development efforts will be directed this way. CCP will probably not get a second chance on this front.

CSM described their ideal scenario for CCP; remove Aurum and declare it a failure and start again with a proper plan that will not lead to obvious troubles. While CCP wasn't unreceptive to that strategy, there hasn't really any thought gone into that matter and thus no definite answer could be provided at this point in time.

One point was brought up about the NEX store – CCP has a lot of assets for the NEX store that haven't been released yet. CSM's reaction to that was the advice to CCP to save them for another time as diverting the focus from spaceships and to clothes was not the best thing to do at this time or in the near future. Once CCP has figured out what they want to do with Aurum, it could use these assets as part of the rollout of their new plan. CCP reiterated that the focus IS on spaceships and there is no one actively working on MTs, either to develop new avenues or to add new things to the NEX store.

The CSM suggested adding the option of allowing two (or three) characters to train on the same account for the price one PLEX per month for one extra character training. CCP responded that while having the option was a good idea it still would mean that less value would be gained from that PLEX than paying for a full account, as it would not be possible to use two characters on the same account at the same time. The CSM responded that it didn't matter, this would be a valuable thing, especially since it would mean characters would not need to be transferred between accounts.

Yet another idea floated up, the option of buying things from the EVE Store with PLEX. While not a trivial thing to accomplish, this idea was well received by CCP. On a higher-level note, CCP stated again that these ideas would accomplish the objective of adding more sinks for PLEXes (i.e. a way to counter the possible increase in supply). Also, new uses for PLEX should be introduced one at a time in order to allow the market to recover from each new addition – should such additions come out.

Turning the discussion to Corp- and Alliance logos adorning the nose of ships for a small fee, two major points floated to the surface. One is that the CSM stated that many people don't care that much about the corporation logos and thus the option of charging a fee for having that in the game would be silly. A better move could be to offer pre-made decals to decorate the exterior of their ships. Regarding the Alliance logos, where the attachment to the logo is much stronger (people have been known to get Alliance logos tattooed onto their skin), the CSM stated that people would gladly fork out, on an Alliance level – not character level – a fee to have those logos on the nose of their ships. Again, nothing is being actively done in this regard but this is now a very real option with the new textures (V3) that has been rolled out on some of the spaceships (with the rest coming out as fast as CCP can manage).

CCP responded that should this be done, it would have to be an option for everyone; perhaps a better way to think of this would be in terms of 'Social group logo', whether that is a Corp logo, Alliance logo or a logo outside of that framework. Furthermore, any and all logos created by the community has to go through Art approval before they appear in the game – much work has been put into streamlining that process for the Alliance logos so a similar (or the same) process could be used for this.

The CSM concluded the meeting by stating that CCP has to be careful with any future moves about MTs, and while they feel that CCP understands the concerns of the community they will continue reminding CCP that fire is hot and it burns.

New Player Experience

Present: CCP Endboss, CCP Flying Scotsman, CCP Feyhr, CCP NerfHerder, CCP Unifex, CCP Dr.EyjoG

The overall goal of the NPE team is to make EVE more accessible to new players, because "it's a little bit hard sometimes."

As part of the restructuring, a NPE team is being assembled and improving the NPE has become a higher priority for the company.

While the recently redone NPE has proved to be an improvement over the previous implementation, the team is coming to the conclusion that the overall tutorial structure does not work. They are starting to do a lot of research aimed at identifying ways to make the new player experience (defined as the first six months playing the game) better.

At the present time, they are still in the research and data-gathering stage, although they have identified some obvious issues, the biggest one being the fact that the early player experience (the tutorials) is very linear and then... they get dumped into space. This isn't very true to the sandbox nature of the game.

CSM: So you want to dump them into space from the very beginning?

CCP: (laughs) Yes. Well, we want to teach them to be independent as quickly as possible.

CCP then asked CSM members how their organizations teach newbies.

Techniques used included:

- * Mentoring, with both general newbie help channels and 1-on-1 mentoring.
- * Newbie squads, so that newbies help each other.
- * Newbie operations.
- * Giving them a bunch of ISK and items.
- * Telling them to suffer through the tutorial, and that the game gets better after they complete it.
- * In general, a lot of hand-holding.

However, some of these would be difficult to do on a game-wide basis.

Another point that was brought up was that a good mentor can help focus the new player on the things he needs to know, and the things he can safely ignore. Some of this could be handled by a vastly expanded wiki.

In general, CSM members felt the tutorial was a necessary evil; it was painful to run but useful. However, one thing that was considered missing was help setting up a good skill plan.

Senior Producer CCP Unifex chimed in with an interesting observation, that all of the feedback was saying the same thing: "The process is significantly easier with a social support structure."

He posed the question: "How do you build the initial relationships that will enable new players to stay in the game?" A CCP staffer raised concerns that this -- if taken too far -- would be leaning too hard on the existing community. Unifex agreed, but pointed out that often, the key relationships don't happen for months. Some way needs to be found to get people there faster.

A side-discussion ensued about why people try EVE. CSM pointed out that the unique attraction of EVE was "you can grief people" and "it's not a game for wusses". It was also pointed out that the broad scope of the sandbox was both a selling-point but also a negative -- it was easy to get lost.

Lack of guidance about skill plans was cited as a problem for newbies, in that they could waste a considerable amount of time training for something and then find out it's not as cool as they thought. But at the same time, new player skill plans needed to have lot of intermediate steps where new players would "unlock" new abilities. A new player presented with a T2 skill plan would recoil in horror when he saw how long it would take.

Certificates were cited as a good attempt to address this issue, but did not go far enough. It was suggested they be combined with "career paths" with various milestones. Also, some certificates needed to be adjusted so that they were more realistic.

Another suggestion was some sort of questionnaire that would generate a sample skill plan. The profession certificates were mentioned as something already in the game that touches on this but does not go far enough. CCP noted that this is something they have already been discussing internally. The point was made that people expect EVE to be challenging, but they don't want it to be tedious.

The discussion then broadened with individual CSMs and CCP staff proffering opinions and ideas. Some of the more interesting comments included:

- * The NPE should start on the website, not in the client. This also ties in with WebCell's desire to move more client functions out to the web, mobile devices, etc.

- * The education process could also be integrated with the download process.

- * There was a consensus that reworking and expanding the certificates and doing a better job explaining how to use them would be a good step.

- * CCP recognizes that the social connection is a big selling point for EVE, but they aren't doing a good job of helping players make this connection.

- * Having GMs lead newbie fleets, although this would probably be impractical due to resource limitations. An alternative might be some sort of volunteer program, but then the issue is asking too much of existing players.

- * Having a "newbie incursion" (an idea originated by CCP Soundwave in a previous summit) might be a way to help new players socialize, at least with each other.

* CCP Dr.EyjoG pointed out that all of the discussions and comments were assuming that the EVE skill point system was in itself correct. He wondered if it might be fruitful to question this assumption.

CSM replied that they felt the skill points system -- and the reduction in grind -- was one of the features that set EVE apart, and that *if you know what and how to train*, you can be a useful part of a fleet and happily murdering people within a few hours of starting the game. But that depends on social support and guidance.

One issue is that large alliances, with good newbie programs, take away a lot of the headaches of being a newbie, with free ISK, free ships, and so on. And new players attracted to the game by an existing player usually get a care package to help them get started. But raw newbies that don't have these support mechanisms, while they can get what they need relatively easily (again, in particular if they are shown what to do) have a more difficult time. This underscores the importance of the social connection.

* The problem of new ways to organically foster mentoring relationships was discussed. This is a difficult problem unless supported by a major organization like an alliance.

* CCP asks, "given that there are a lot of corps that will help newbies, how do we better connect the newbies with those corps?" The idea of CCP-approved training organizations was floated by CSM. It was acknowledged that there would be concerns about any perks such organizations might get (they could not convey in-game advantages) and there would have to be heavy vetting to avoid griefing, but finding ways to point new players to organizations with a proven track record of mentoring newbies was deemed worthy of future effort.

CCP then described some backlog issues that they were working on with regard to bettering the NPE; for example, revamping certificates, as discussed earlier, and integrating them into the new EVE website.

The concepts of corporate skill plans and an interactive ship skill-tree were broached, and the CSM indicates its approval. Branching off on the concept of a ship skill-tree, the CSM suggested that perhaps integrated into the new forums was a sort of "ship user review" feature. It would have to be moderated, but the CSM pointed out that it could greatly help new players since so many entry-level ships aren't all that great, and with a limited wallet it's very frustrating to waste time and ISK on a ship that is just plain bad.

The session wound down with both CCP employees and the CSM members sharing hilarious anecdotes about how they started with Eve. It was agreed that the tutorial system in its current state isn't the final solution, and that a unified NPE vision starting with the EVE Online website and transitioning in game would be more effective. CCP was satisfied that the CSM was in agreement with regard to the NPE strategy.

Additionally, the CSM stressed that it was available to the NPE team for consultations, and in turn the NPE team agreed to keep the CSM informed as their plans became more developed.

A meeting with the Art department

Present: CCP BasementBen, CCP Huskarl, CCP Mannbjorn, CCP t0rfifrans

CCP started off by going over how the reorganization was affecting the Art department, what changes had been made and how the future looks like. The largest change is that in the past Art has been split up in three sections, each section handling their specific area - Space Art, Interiors (CQs and establishments) and the Characters. Each section had their own backlog and their own Project Managers. After the reorg and with the emphasis on spaceships, these sections no longer exist. There is now only one backlog for the entire department and one Project Manager.

CCP then continued by going quickly over what they were doing presently; Crucible fallout, planning, continuing the V3 project (focusing now on Minmatar and Amarr sub-capitals - there is no nailed down ETA of delivery for that, but the basic work will be pretty much done in Q1 2012), rework of assets, effects (both creating new effects and redoing the old ones) and research and development of future eye candy.

CSM was shown some preliminary work of the redesign of the noob ships, and expressed their great pleasure. At the May 2011 summit, the CSM raised the issue of revamping the newbie ships as they are the first thing new players see of EVE, and thus they are a significant retention issue.

CSM also got to see some very early work of new missile effects currently being researched for implementation. Other effects (we don't want to spoil the surprise) were looked at as well. To put it mildly, the CSM was extremely excited about what they were shown. It must however be noted that the effects are still in the research phase and no performance testing has been performed - meaning that this could be quite different from these early prototypes if the pretty stuff gets in the way of FPS. The CSM pointed out that these were good examples of features that should be optional and possible to turn off in the game preferences.

The CSM members emphasized that one of the more gratifying things about EVE was its visual aesthetics and it was very important to both keep it pretty and up to speed and the current work being done by Art was wonderful in that respect.

Some time was spent on covering matters that are not ready to be publicly discussed, but overall the CSM was impressed by the work Art has done.

The latter part of the session was spent on getting CSM feedback on a priorities list that the Art department assembled on their own; things the Art people wanted to work on to make EVE prettier - regardless of what the current design schedule might demand from them. The list was split into four categories; "what assets do you feel is most important to develop in the near future", "what graphical effects do you feel is most important to work on in the near future", "what technical work do you feel is most important to work on in the future" and "what game design affecting graphics do you feel is most important to work on in the near future".

Obviously, Art and CSM disagreed on the prioritization on some things, with the CSM focusing more on the practical matters and Art more on the environment - for example the Art team ranked adding more objects in to space to make it feel less 'empty' quite highly, while the CSM ranked modular starbases/stations higher. On

other things Art and CSM agreed, such as with redoing the explosions in EVE (of objects, ships, missiles, etc.) and adding missile launchers on ship models.

This discussion was useful to Art and helped them put some things into perspective in terms of practicality and priority of the players.

Because time was running out in the session, CSM provided the Art group with a list of questions that they felt the players would want explained in more detail. The answers arrived a few weeks after the summit, courtesy of CCP BasementBen.

* What is the ETA for Amarr and Minmatar V3?

The V3 process is flowing pretty well and we have a couple of months of work to finish the sub-caps for the two races. Once the whole batch is technically ready they need an arty fine-tuning pass before we can push them out. Like we did for Caldari and Gallente, we would prefer to get them out in one package. March 2012 is the first possible milestone from a production point of view; the exact date will depend on the project-wide release plans and other factors within the EVE project.

Once we are done with the sub-caps, we will start other classes, as well as all the assets existing in-game. It will take many man-months to get them all done and is an ongoing process that we want to keep going as regularly as possible.

* Is Art still the bottleneck for stuff like the POS rewrite?

Art is a bottleneck by nature depending on how you look at it. Because the art assets creation process is rarely a short one, we often look like the ones slowing down some implementations. But is a subjective point of view depending on how you look at it. If a team comes up with a design idea overnight and manages to balance the design concept rapidly, it doesn't change the fact that any required assets will likely take several weeks to produce. There is unfortunately no silver bullet to fix that. The assets creation process is usually quite linear and waterfall-like, so throwing more people at a particular task doesn't shorten the cycle by the same factor. Like my grandmother used to say, "You don't make a baby in one month by putting nine women at it". Or perhaps it was Torfi, I always confuse them. Also when it comes to implementing something like the POS rewrite, some technical work and a dash of R&D is required between design and assets production. At the end of the day, Art is never a blocker as such. It is all about time prioritization of assets needs, and game design usually has priority on these requests.

* Missile effects! We loved the anime style missile swarm demo you showed us. Make it happen.

We're on it, and you know it :) I don't know anyone that is not enthusiastic about this. It is a delicate matter as it could easily affect performance. It is also part of a broader project that we are looking at, around how missiles look and act; which also needs technical work so we don't kill performance. But yes, we do love the idea of a nice missile chase!

* What is the ETA on skinnable ships? Also what are the possibilities for player customization? Would it be possible to let player pick colors or patterns for ships?

Skinnable ships are a typical benefit of the V3 process. When the new shaders operate on all the ships, we will be able to implement such features by being able to tweak values in the shaders without touching individual texture files. The ETA would be the same as V3 ships followed by some interdisciplinary feature work including design, usability, UI, engineering and black magic. Technically, the ideas you are mentioning are feasible once it is green lighted beyond art.

* What does Art have in its backlog, and what are the relative priorities thereof?

The un-prioritized and WIP backlog content was presented during the CSM session. Art is pretty much entirely focused on space. We are looking at a range of items including effects, V3 process, revamping existing key assets, more effects, more V3, new assets whenever required by Game Design or other groups such as marketing. We also have tempting ideas about getting the nebulae even better than they are now, as well as improving performance everywhere we can. We are also undertaking quite a lot of technical work within the art group to optimize the production tools and process, which in the short run consume technical resources, but on the long run will help everyone to deliver improved and more optimized assets in a more timely manner.

* How has Art been restructured?

The recent cutbacks reduced the size of the EVE Art team by 20%, and touched all areas of art production. It was an extremely difficult process for all of us, as we had to regroup and reorganize with a new focus while dealing with this on a personal and professional level. The current Art team is over 20 people strong. The team dedicated to Art also include graphic programmers and testers, and is one united and tenacious group of experts sharing a common backlog.

* Describe the Art approval process; who decides, who vetoes?

There are basically two ways for things to make their way into the Art Backlog: from within Art and from other teams. Once they are in the backlog, the prioritization belongs mainly to the Product Owner of the team (currently the Art Producer). What makes it to the top of the list and what goes down depends on him and the team itself. Items can go up the list depending on dependencies from other feature teams, so we seek input from other stakeholders when a collision occurs (Art Director, Creative Director, Segment Product Owner, and Senior Producer if necessary). No individuals have a veto power per-se, we are trying to keep it as collective as possible, but the thought that is uppermost in our minds is "what's the value for the player?" We believe that it crucial to make sure that we don't embark on work that doesn't focus on the richness of the EVE universe. When it comes to actual art creation, the Art Director works in close collaboration with the Creative Director and then with the team itself. At the end of the day, the Art Director has the final say on an asset being green lighted for TQ. But as he is involved throughout the whole creative process, assets coming out of the pipelines always have his seal of approval. The last point to mention in terms of validation is of course a technical one. If the experts on the team consider that an item will be too risky to implement, it can be rejected from the backlog.

* After V3 is completely installed, will Art work on V4?

We want to enjoy the benefits of the V3 shaders for a long time. They will be the standard shaders of EVE when we're done with all the content. But EVE will last forever! Technology evolves, hardware performance increases constantly, software capabilities open new doors every day... so one day, for sure, we'll have the opportunity to take it one step further. However, the amount of work is quite massive so as with the Trinity renovation and now V3, we will look into it only when the benefits will justify the effort. I wouldn't expect a "V4" project to come up too soon.

* What resources are being allocated on non-spaceships (Incarna)?

Within the Art and Graphics group, we have a minimal amount of resources dedicated to the non-space part of EVE. The character artists have items on the backlog that go more into the direction of improving existing assets rather than creating new ones. At the end of the day we are looking at pushing for more Incarna content only in parallel with progress made on the Game Design front; we have "what's the value for the player?" firmly in mind. We do have interesting features and content that is quite ready on an art standpoint, but would require technical and implementation design support.

* Some players have a perception that Art sometimes appears to go overboard on "quality for quality's sake", which might result in a feature delay due to art bottlenecks. How would you address such concerns?

As explained above, Art is not a bottleneck as such, and the level of quality and polish are definitely not to blame. The bulk of production time is relative to the overall look of EVE and its visual aspect. If we were doing a low-poly casual type of game we could churn out assets every day. EVE is just not that type of universe, so creating a ship for example, takes several weeks. There is no way around it except by rebooting the whole universe from scratch, which none of us wants I think :) We do allocate polishing and fine-tuning time in our plans, but a lot of the "magic" happens during unplanned hours such as night and weekends.

It is during these deep, intense but enchanted moments that people who step-up to "give it a little more love" take things from "good enough" to "fantastic". So overall I don't recall features being blocked by someone shouting "not good looking enough!" Many other factors come into account, such as testing periods, stabilization, optimization and such.

* We'd like to hammer again on the rookie ship redesign. The rookie ships are the first impression newbies have of the game. It is not a good impression. This continues to be the case, and now CCP needs newbies more than ever.

We're on it, and you know it! :)

UI discussions

Present: CCP Arrow, CCP Punkturis, CCP karkur, CCP Optimal

The UI group presented a number of works-in-progress for CSM feedback.

Unless otherwise noted, the CSM's response to these ranged from "We like this a lot" to "We really, really, like this".

First up is the new Neocom. The first iteration will improve the Neocom structure, with custom icons and positioning; the second will improve the icons themselves. In the future, windows will minimize into Neocon items, and this requires icons for all window types.

The next item was Unified Inventory. This is an item that has been on CCP's wish-list for a long time, but required back-end infrastructure improvements before it was feasible.

The goal is for all items in a player's possession, no matter where they are located (even places like drone bays and inside containers), to be viewable, searchable and manipulable through a single unified inventory interface. However, inventory windows will still be stackable and splittable, so players more comfortable with the current metaphors will not be forced into a new way of working.

Drag-and-drop will be fully implemented, and the overall functionality is very similar to the Macintosh Finder "Column View" with a dash of "Smart Folders" (Filter searches) to provide ways to organize items without explicitly placing them in containers (as players often do in the current UI). Also, when you've drilled down to certain types of specific item (such as a ship), you will get a 3D view of the item without having to make an extra click (again, Mac users will feel very comfortable).

CSM suggested that wherever possible, tooltips should be available for items. For example, when you hover over a BPC, you should be given info like # of runs remaining, as opposed to having to Show Info on the item.

One interesting thing that the group hopes to be able to implement is an expansion of corporate hangar divisions, adding a standard set of pre-defined divisions to the current player-defined divisions.

In addition to the column view metaphor, the new UI will have breadcrumbs showing you where you are in the folder structure; this will be helpful if you have the root level minimized.

Also, the team hopes to be able to implement task buttons inside the UI, so that after you select item(s), you can just click "Repair", "Reprocess", etc.

Another planned improvement is a Universal Search that permits a single search that spans multiple domains (such as item names, planets, player names, and so on) and returns categorized results.

CSM pointed out that this feature would tie into a long-standing suggestion that any time the game provides a list, there be a filter option -- including the overview. CCP Arrow responded by nodding and murmuring "definitely".

It was also suggested that there be a better cue that a filter is active, because currently this is easy to miss.

Discussion then turned to various mockups of new UI concepts. Obviously these are hard to describe in words, and CSM hopes that CCP will make them the subject of a devblog series and solicit feedback from the community.

Ideas that are currently in the concept design stage -- which does not mean they'll surely appear in-game -- included:

- * A much improved character selection page.

- * Moving drone control into the HUD (like guns) and improving grouping options. Switching drones should be like switching ammo, and state of the drones (returning, idle, etc.) should be indicated by different animation effects.

- * Improving the overheating interface, and possibly simplifying the mechanics of overheating at the same time. There are many possibilities and this topic is very much up in the air right now. CSM mentioned that there is an existing CSM proposal that contains some suggestions.

- * Any identical active modules could stack, not just guns.

- * New HUD effects to indicate EW being used by and inflicted upon the player.

- * New overview concepts; multiple overview types (say, one optimized for logistics pilots that only lists fleet members that meet some criteria like "<20% shields"), multiple overviews, multiple overview styles, moving the watchlist into the overview, and so on.

- * Possibly merging overview and target list in some way, and providing a "picture-in-picture" view of the current target.

- * Improving brackets, and linking them to the overview -- so that only ships that appear in the overview have in-space brackets.

- * Improved in-space information displays -- similar to what we keep seeing in the EVE trailers -- that give useful information about in-space objects (not just ships) in targeting halos around the objects.

- * Bringing scan results into in-space information displays.

- * Improvements to the ESC menu; better grouping, better differentiation of basic and advanced options, increase size of the popup window.

As part of the discussion, CSM made many small suggestions for improvements. A few of the more interesting ones:

- * Making damage type obvious from the icon.
- * Multiple simultaneous overviews.
- * Redesigned ("less baroque") overview programming.

* CSM repeated its request that the UI should provide more options for color-blind players. In addition to the suggestion that some standard, but user-editable "EVE colors" be used in informational displays, it was mentioned that other channels (for example, varying the rate and rhythm at which glowing objects pulse) could be used to convey the same information as color.

* In response to a CCP comment that certain information in the overview could be color coded -- for example, the color of entries in the range column could indicate whether the object was in range, in falloff, or out of range of the currently selected module -- one CSM pointed out that this information could be condensed to a single colored dot, and that information about multiple parameters (range, transversal, etc.) could be combined into a single "traffic light" display that would increase situational awareness. Another CSM vehemently disagreed with this concept, pointing out that it would reduce the edge skilled players have in combat.

The CSM and Hilmar CEO

Present: Hilmar CEO, CCP Unifex

The CSM began by stating that spaceships sure are nice, that more Crucibles are desirable, and there is a very strong preference on CSM's part to never ever ever repeat what happened during the summer and autumn of 2011. CSM said that more players have regained the hope that EVE will continue to be a very good game, than at any point in a long time.

The CSM has been reporting to CCP, over the years, what the players want and that is up to CCP to decide whether to act on those things. However, the CSM has been also been conveying what players absolutely do not want, and they feel it is very important that CCP pays attention to this. CSM continued that while Incarna was not a mistake as such, it felt that an inappropriate amount of efforts and attention – at the expense of the core gameplay – was spent on something that was not going to be well received by the players. The CSM then concluded by asking Hilmar, "What have you learned from this, and are there any new procedures in place to make sure that this will not happen again?"

Hilmar's response was that his position on this was very well known and has been well documented. Any additions to that would most likely just be repeating what had already been said. CCP as a company has been working according to roadmaps and strategies that were designed to add value to CCP's products, and it is clear

that the focus on those plans was very strong, perhaps too strong. If Incarna had been released with everything that was planned for it, the situation would be different now. But releasing just one room meant that CCP's ability to execute on its ambition was way behind what it perceived it to be. This has become very clear during retrospectives done within the company with the people on the floor.

The reorganization is aimed at addressing this mismatch between the perceived ability to execute plans and the real ability of the organization, by giving the people on the floor the foundation to plan their work properly and the accountability of delivering their work as opposed to having handed to them 'stone tablets' with a mandate to achieve X on a deadline.

Of course, exclusively going a Crucible route, iterating the product 'to death', is not viable when thought of in terms of years – but it absolutely makes sense for the immediate future as the debt from the last three years (the Jesus-feature era, where a magic feature for EVE will turn five loaves of bread into 50.000 new customers) has to be paid. Ensuring that EVE is coherent and consistent after all those massive features has become a priority.

CSM stated that they were not opposed to new and 'shiny' features, but they stressed that CCP had to carefully weigh and measure what the new features would bring in terms of value for the customers, both new and old – and pointed out that they, the CSM, were a very good sounding-board for such contemplations. Obviously the CSM aren't game designers, and they fully admitted that, and coming up with new features is not their expertise, but providing feedback – on new feature ideas and iterations – is what they are here for.

Hilmar said that it has become apparent that Incarna was not being developed for EVE, although a lot of time was spent trying to justify it for EVE, but for CCP as a platform to release future games on. That being said, it has always been Hilmar's concern that if a platform for new game was or will be built that is not a part of EVE, EVE will get left behind and stagnate when it comes to technologies and game environment. By having the technology available to all of CCP's projects, and the ability to transfer it between them, EVE will be able to keep up and not fade away as an old and outdated product. And Incarna wasn't ever presented as such. If Incarna had been presented as "here is a technology platform that we can develop further down the line, please try it and let us know what you think" the reception would have been much different. Instead, Incarna – as it was when deployed – was branded as a full feature when it was in fact obviously not. And that is a fundamental failure on CCP's part.

CSM bluntly asked, by rephrasing their first question of "what have you learned?", why Incarna was rammed through with such force when many, many signs indicated trouble on the horizon?

Hilmar responded that on a very macro level, this was a classic example of company growing pains. Having the employee number double every year for some years in a row means that what grew organically in the past now has to be much more structured.

When he saw EVE take off and applied pressure to make it successful with new features (as opposed to working on a new game), people got assignments that were not necessarily playing on their strengths, people got hired and thrown at the problems, and all of this just snowballed. This can of course be analyzed to death, however the main point is that CCP has admitted the problem, created a plan to address it, and will now move forward to execute that plan – while fully realizing that the plan might have to be modified as it proceeds.

The CSM reminded Hilmar that something like this had actually happened in May (2011) and back then the CSM bought into it, yet everything went haywire. While they are supportive of the reorganization and what has been shown to them, but they will reserve judgment until they see more results. Hilmar completely agreed, and admitted that in the past CCP has made plans and then stuck to those plans, regardless of if those plans were actually viable. This time around CCP is mindful of its past and is very much ready to learn from it. The plan will change based on realities.

Hilmar wanted it also to be perfectly clear that the main focus over the next year is to fix EVE the project, not just EVE the product. When the management of the project is in the state that it has been in, the prognosis is bleak – but by fixing the project, by enabling people to apply their expertise and strength properly, the product will inevitably gain from that. In fact it could be said that it was realistically impossible to improve the EVE product (with other than Jesus-features) under the old structure of the EVE project.

Hilmar stated that the bottom line is that the reorganization will provide the incredibly smart people that are working on the EVE project with the tools, the company structure and the working environment to properly work on the EVE product. And trusting the people to do so is the way forward. CSM agreed and stated that they would they would do everything they could to support this.

Hilmar also commented that after a decade of running CCP he had heard so much naysaying (a team of noobs making a computer game in Iceland is never going to work, it will never work to make everyone play on the same server, you'll never get more than 200.000 subscribers, there is no way you can develop the same game for 8 years, etc.) that eventually he became married to his own opinions – "all those people have been wrong in the past, so they are wrong now and I know better." Of course, in hindsight things should have been done differently and it is very sad that in order to learn from the experience friends and customers had to suffer.

"I wish I had been smarter to not get it wrong; damn it, I shouldn't be able to get it wrong after 15 years", Hilmar said, and he is very aware of the fact that he will most likely make mistakes in the future.

The CSM made the comment that it looks like CCP is now migrating from being a small garage company to an actual, large company – with managers in manager positions and product owners in product owner's positions.

CSM also complimented CCP on the increased communications leading up to Crucible, and strongly encouraged the company to go even further. This included not just the devblogs, but also the increased presence on Facebook, Twitter and on the EVE Online forums. Hilmar replied that when the people are handed the opportunity to do their jobs with the accountability that comes with it (by seeing and understanding the value they are adding), people are more comfortable in their positions and more comfortable and willing to communicating about their work.

One thing the CSM mentioned was that the word "accountability" was not something that they had heard before coming from CCP, and expressed their pleasure upon hearing it. A follow up question to Hilmar was "What are you now going to be doing?" Hilmar responded that in the past 10 years he has done many things within CCP: coding, marketing, COO, and as such he has substantial background knowledge of how things are done. As a result he has been pulled into many things, and gone into many projects as an authority. And it is hard to keep people accountable when they feel they have to do things exactly like you tell them to do it or when you are a co-contributor to a thing. So Hilmar is consciously removing himself from either being put into

or going into a micromanagement situation, and in turn is devoting himself to making sure that the structure of delivery and accountability is holding up on a macro level. Hilmar's goal is to see that both employees and customers are happy.

CSM expressed their pleasure in how tight the feedback loop had been with CCP during the development of Crucible, and that the CSM were faced with the odd situation that most of their agenda had been accomplished.

CSM also wanted, before the end of the summit, to urge CCP to be very careful in regards to the EVE/Dust link – no discussions were held about the link during the summit, so the CSM laid this out as a general advice – as repeating a version of the Incarna debacle would not benefit anyone. Hilmar acknowledged this and commented that CCP would be mindful of treading carefully in that territory.

CSM ended by expressing their pleasure with the overall tone and results of the summit, and of the level of cooperation between the CSM and CCP over the past few months, and that they were glad to see tangible evidence that they were being listened to.

CSM minutes credits

Initial session drafts:

Meeting with the Senior Producer of EVE Online _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
The CSM _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
EVE veterans/loyalty program _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
The economy _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
The PLEX _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
Security _____	<u>Elise Randolph</u>
Crucible wrapup _____	<u>The Mittani</u>
Incursions _____	<u>Draco Llasa</u>
Null sec – stations, sov, resources _____	<u>The Mittani</u>
Little things – Factional Warfare, Wormholes _____	<u>Two step</u>
Game balance _____	<u>The Mittani</u>
Future highlevel discussions – War _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
Future highlevel discussions – Fixing broken systems _____	<u>CCP Xhagen/ Trebor Daehdoow</u>
Web cell _____	<u>Vile Rat</u>
Microtransaction Microsummit _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
New Player Experience _____	<u>Elise Randolph/ Trebor Daehdoow</u>
A meeting with the Art department _____	<u>CCP Xhagen/ Trebor Daehdoow</u>
UI discussions _____	<u>Trebor Daehdoow</u>
The CSM and Hilmar CEO _____	<u>CCP Xhagen</u>
Final Minutes Editing _____	<u>CCP Xhagen/ Trebor Daehdoow</u>