Council of Stellar Management Meeting With CCP 2.2

Meeting Minutes

Saturday 21st March 2009
Present: Ankhesentapemkah (Vice Chair), Bunyip, Darius JOHNSON, Issler Dainze, LaVista Vista, Omber Zombie (Secretary), Pattern Clarc, Tusko Hopkins (Vice Sec), Vuk Lau (Chairman), Meissa Anunthiel (Alternate), Extreme (Alternate), Sophie Dagneau (Alternate), CCP Abathur, CCP Chronotis, CCP Diagoras, CCP Dr.EyjoG, CCP Greyscale, CCP t0rfifrans, CCP Wrangler, CCP Xhagen (Meeting Chair)
Apologies: none
Absent: none

1. **Apocrypha – Capital Ships Collision Mechanics**
   http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/Apocrypha_-_Capital_Ships_Collision_Mechanics
   in raw text from [2009.03.21 16:08:15]

   CCP Chronotis started by telling CSM that the issue was a defect and it had been resolved internally.
   Vuk asked about replicating desync.
   Ankh thought it was very good that this was getting fixed, but wondered why it entered the game in its current state.
   Issler wanted to know when the fix would enter the game.
   CCP Greyscale answered that the fix will be part of the next patch, which will be coming very soon. CCP will be monitoring it just to make sure the fix works as intended and will tweak it if necessary.
   Tusko and *Darius* were curious as to how exactly CCP 'fixed' the defect. What was the new mechanic/equation?
   CCP Greyscale responded that one of the CCP programmers did some 'physics-math' to deal with capital masses at close proximity which was the best explanation he could give based on the change notes he had.
   Omber asked if there was an answer to Ankh's original question.
   CCP Greyscale answered that in a nutshell, CCP changed the underlying physics code so that rookie ships (and other small ships) were unable to bump titans, and this was a knock-on effect that was not caught in testing.
   Ankh asked why capital-capital bump tests weren't tested as this would be a fairly obvious effect.
   Ankh was still unhappy with CCP's testing procedures.
   CCP Xhagen asked *Vuk* to send the Desync report to him and he would walk it to him and loom menacingly.
   Issler wanted to know why the Desync issue wasn't followed up after the Iceland meetings.
   CCP Xhagen added that to the list of things to menace CCP Explorer with.

2. **Apocrypha - Epic Mission Arcs**
   http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/Apocrypha_-_Epic_Mission_Arcs
   in raw text from [2009.03.21 16:25:33]

   CCP Greyscale got to answer this initially:
   A) Branching – CCP BDO is noted as saying that this was a new player Arc and the lack of branching was a design decision to make sure players didn't feel intimidated by the feature.
   B) Rewards – it is a level 1 Arc, it is not supposed to pay out massive rewards. He thought there was supposed to be a faction standing gain at the end, but he will check up on it.
   C) Boringness and Storyline – this is subjective, he personally thought that it was pretty cool for a level 1 mission. Feedback has been passed on to the writers and designers anyway.
   D) Why only one arc – the content creation team had been overstretched through the Apocrypha production cycle and there was no time for more. AS for the future, now that the toolset is developed they are keen to use it, and there is at least one more Arc sketched out already and there will be more to come.

Ankh pointed at a devblog stating that there would be unique rewards at the end of each chapter and at the completion of each arc. She also confirmed that there was no standing gain. She also wanted a medal for making the Nidhoggur explode.

Bunyip could understand the lack of branching, but thought players should have been told. In regards to reward, the missions say that you will receive nice rewards, but you never do. The rewards are better for the 10-mission new player arc. In addition, while boringness is subjective, the consensus seems to agree with 'us'.

Issler wanted to know how frequent mission additions would be with the new system, would they come in more often than just the major expansions.

CCP Greyscale was seeking clarification on the faction standing gain, and quoted the devblog regarding rewards "Finally, while the rewards for Epic Missions won't be vastly greater than those for normal missions, they will tend to give out cool new toys (or at least exceptional rewards) at the ends of chapters and, of course, at the end of each complete arc." He noted that the words used were 'tend to' and that that was not a promise. He will be following up the rewards in general with CCP Molock. Regarding frequency of new missions, he noted that CCP add missions regularly outside of the 6 month expansion cycle and he didn't see that changing. The frequency is subject to a whole range of factors. As a final note he wanted to mention that most of the time spent in the Apocrypha production cycle was building the tools to create the Arcs, and this Arc was basically the 'test arc' and CCP is still figuring out the best way to use the tools and what can be done with them.

Omber wanted to know if CCP considered using the epic arcs to flesh out the EVE storylines and backstory rather than just new stories.

CCP Greyscale answered that yes, the current arc had a few story hints in it, and one of the goals for it was to take players on a tour of the 4 empires and give them a rough picture of the background stories of them as well as some of the pirate factions. The team working on Epic Arcs is very keen to add more story hints and stuff along the way.

LaVista commented that if a pirate faction arc was created, how likely was some form of pirate factional warfare?

CCP Greyscale had no comment, not because of NDA, but because he had no answer to give.

3. Apocrypha - Sleeper Loot
http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/Apocrypha_-_Sleeper_Loot
in raw text from [2009.03.21 16:43:12]

CCP Greyscale said that the sleeper loot was added to the game because having the entire value of w-space contingent on the T3 market at this stage was a big risk. There was no roleplay reason to have bounties there, so they did 'tags' instead. It is an extension of the well established bounty/tag paradigm, so he didn't see it as an issue bit it is something they can revisit.

LaVista and *Omber* wanted to know if CCP were looking at removing bounties from empire space and change to this system for all NPC's.

Ankh noted that tags can't be cashed in for ISK from NPC's they're often sold to players or used in LP shops, so there is a difference.

Meissa thought that the tag-bounties should be kept as the salvage value is going to be low (requirements are too low to make them valuable) and the tag-bounties are an incentive to fighting the sleepers due to the difficulty of obtaining relics.

Pattern asked if CCP had considered usable modules rather than tags so that it remained a player based economy. One of his ideas revolved around heat sinks.

CCP Greyscale noted that the problem with removing tag/bounties was what to replace them with. Bounties are a major income source for a lot of players, so whatever was put in instead has to have a huge demand in order for it to work. Doing this with an existing product was tried with rogue drones and that didn't work out well. That is the reason CCP settled on this system this time around, anything else would require a massive demand for a new product which is hard to guarantee, or for it to muscle in on another production area, which tends to work out badly.

CCP Greyscale also noted that faction NPC tags can be cashed in with the faction's enemy already.

LaVista wanted to reiterate that the idea was to have empire NPC's to drop items like the sleepers do. Removing a major ISK faucet overnight would be funny, but really bad for the economy. He hoped that CCP Dr.EyjoG could update the players on the current monetary inflation and his thoughts on if this would be a desirable thing. He also agreed with Pattern that high-end content should provide loot which is used in a player driven market rather than cashed in.

Issler noted that she didn't have an issue with the current state of play, unless a direct negative impact to the economy can be identified she'd leave it as is.

Ankh wanted the loot to be in demand from the empire weapons development, make them contribute to faction warfare in some way (victory points/LP/standing). These are just alternatives of demand for players. She also noted that a previous issue was standing gain outside of missions which this could address.

Meissa noted that the issue with rogue drone loot was that it was bulky and that haulers are required for NPC-ing in drone regions. That didn't compare with bounties. He thought this system

worked well as the sleeper 'tags' are not too large and sleeper items would work well if not too bulky considering the collapsible nature of wormholes. However if the alternative to tags was bulky items, then it would not work.

Tusko wanted to know if this was a temporary solution only. If later on the tech 3 market flourishes would changing the loot to tech 3 production items not have a huge impact as it would be absorbed by the player market.

CCP Dr.EyjoG commented that deflation had turned into low inflation mostly due to the increase in tech 2 materials which was basically an aftershock to the POS exploit.

LaVista wanted to know if he was talking about price or monetary inflation as he was interested if this was a desirable increase since sleepers were a new ISK faucet and is that good for the economy overall.

CCP Dr.EyjoG continued that the monetary supply continues to increase at a steady rate so they are not seeing inflation due to an influx of ISK but that is always a concern and they keep an eye on it.

Bunyip noted that he had no problem with the current system but if Wormhole Space is 0.0 space, shouldn't the rewards be on par with 0.0? The moons have nothing minable, and the asteroid belts have low to mid grade ore only, he thought it did not bode well for travelers interested in non-PVP in wormholes.

LaVista wanted to make clear that only monetary inflation/deflation was being discussed and wanted to know if the rate that ISK was entering the economy at present was a good thing.

CCP Greyscale responded to Tusko's question that CCP were opening to revisiting the loot in the future, and in response to Bunyip that they were looking at asteroid belts with an eye to making them more appealing.

CCP Dr.EyjoG noted that CCP currently see the rate of growth in monetary supply as satisfactory. The EVE economy is growing both due to increased activity, increased investment and increased numbers of players. CCP aim to maintain a balance in these parameters and have tools to increase the ISK sinks if needed.

CCP Chronotis noted that sleeper tags is not more ISK, it's alternative ISK. The effort required to obtain the sleeper tags is much greater than the effort required to obtain a higher volume of ISK in the existing older sources.

LaVista thought that CCP Chronotis missed a major part of the argument that w-space is attracting a different audience than those who do level 4 missions.

4. Apocrypha - Probing
http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/Apocrypha_-_probing
in raw text from [2009.03.21 17:09:32]

CCP Greyscale went through the issues in order:
a) No context menu in system map is a bug and being fixed
b) Centering the view on result dots – added to the backlog
c) Not centering on inactive probes is a bug – please file a bug report
d) Wireframes – he didn't understand what was being asked for and asked for clarification
e) An indicator for conflicting probes is already on the CCP "would like to do in the next sprint" list
f) Better filtering of results and the gravimetric site issue – CCP is revisiting belts this week with an eye to cut down on the numbers. They are also adding some kind of 'mark this result as something I don't want to see' feature in the next sprint or two, plus a mechanic to show any previously found site as a green circle on repeat scans until you leave the system
g) Some sites can't be found without skills is by design and he was interested to see it listed as an issue as most of the feedback received is that people don't like people being able to find things without skills or expensive toys
h) Ship probing is not something CCP want to fiddle with until players get used to the new system. CCP is very aware that it is not well balanced currently but tweaking the system at this point is asking for trouble as they do not know how good people are going to get at it in the future
i) Warping to sites de-cloaks you is a bug and ships should be able to warp to 100km properly with the next patch
j) Directional scanner and right click menu are bugs and on the to-fix list
k) Adding probes to overview – this was a legacy balance decision and is not being looked at currently

In general, CCP Greyscale asked people to bug report these issues as they get fixed faster that way and this is not the best use of the CSM.

Pattern noted that in the latest Sisi patch it looks like CCP is looking to nerf the strength of Deep Space probes. He wondered that since they require Astrometrics lvl 5, wouldn't a better solution be to make them worse at finding people.

Meissa pointed out that he recently found a site with a signal strength of 10% with high level skills and equipment and wondered if there were any minimal requirements for finding those types of sites or any sites in general.

Bunyip thought that covert ops should be able to remote bookmark sites as they are currently of limited use.

CCP Greyscale confirmed that that current Deep Space probe strength on Tranquility was a mistake on his part, he did some math badly. Their design function was to replace the old observatory probes and they are built on the same premise – long range, bad strength, Astrometrics 5. Currently there isn't code support for making them 'worse' at finding ships, and he wasn't sure it was worth spending programmer time currently.

Regarding Meissa's questions CCP Greyscale noted that he saw occasional reports of these uber-hard sites and he was not entirely sure why it was happening. CCP Frellicus made some minor tweaks in the strength equation recently to tidy up some confusing strength results but he's unsure whether that was related to this issue. Unfortunately CCP don't have any reproduction cases for these rogue results so there is not a lot that can be done to fix them. The listed configuration Meissa gave should be able to find everything without too much trouble, so yes, there is a bug there somewhere.

In regards to Bunyip's suggestion and comments about covert op's, CCP acknowledges that due to them making exploration more open they have lost a little of their speciality, but are looking into making harder to find content for dedicated explorers where the bonuses that those ships grant will be needed. They have no solid plans for that yet. Bookmarking remotely was something they are going to add for all ships as it seemed obvious to CCP once they started playing around on Tranquility.

Omber stated that he was completely against remote bookmarking as it removes risk from the game. Vuk agreed with Omber

CCP Greyscale wanted to know if that was a PVP or PVE consideration.

Vuk answered both, PVE should involve risk too.

Meissa could be against remote bookmarking for PVP, but finds a lack of remote bookmarking in PVE totally frustrating. Maybe limit it to sites only, not ships/drones.

Tusko did not see why people should not have a chance to scout out a site first. The learning curve currently is very steep or they need to go to a web resource and read about the mission.

Omber answered both PVP and PVE and gave the example of covert cloaking scan ship remote bookmarking an enemy, reporting their exact configuration and then customizing the ships to fight that encounter or avoid it entirely. It would remove any element of risk.

Pattern did not mind either way, if warp to 100km comes back then it's not needed, if not then remote bookmarking made sense.

Meissa noted that remote bookmarking adds functionality to covert ops ships whose primary function is to probe, not fight. The risk lament comes from the actual fight.

CCP Greyscale mentioned that he had been talking to CCP Hammer about this and neither could see the risk reduction in remote bookmarking as you could already initiate a fleet warp and then cancel warp. He saw the scenario where you could remote bookmark a site and then want to swap ships, but as warp to 100km is working again and he did not think warping to a site ad instantly de-cloaking and exploding was a good risk to have.

Omber pointed out that you didn't have to use a ship that would instantly explode to probe out a site, and if warp to 100km is working, why is remote bookmarking even being considered. He also wanted to know that if bookmarking was initially causing large amounts of lag, wouldn't this just add more?

CCP Greyscale explained that the reason it was being considered was because it was pretty much removing a step in the process of bookmarking sites in the pursuit of a more streamlined experience. It is not considered a critical thing, but as far as he was aware it was a pretty simple thing to add. If the CSM really considers it a bad addition, they will rethink it.

Meissa just wanted to reiterate that covert ops are non-combat ships and bookmarking was an essential part of probing.

Ankh thought it was convenient and understands some of the concerns but doesn't agree with them.

5. New Format For Dev/Player Communication
http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/New_Format_for_Dev/Player_Communication
in raw text from [2009.03.21 17:36:53]

CCP Wrangler liked the idea and will be sitting down with CCP Xhagen and others to try and iron out the details.

CCP Xhagen has already approached the GM's handling Evelopedia to use their processes to help in this task. He also mentioned that he would explore what could be done with the COSMOS web project once it goes live.

Pattern questioned whether CCP had considered his points on the importance of the medium being used for this.

Ankh is happy that this was so well received and liked that it would be integrated into COSMOS. She also raised the option of having it part of Walking In Stations as connecting to the people that don't read the forums is an objective.

CCP Wrangler noted that it wouldn't only be put on the Evelopedia, it would also go out to the ingame news.

CCP Xhagen agreed that the medium is important but thinks that the wiki format has a lot of weight behind it. The Evelopedia can be made to be an important medium and it might not happen overnight, but dismissing it as a viable option because of its 'ranking' as a medium was not the way to go.

Pattern replied that the wiki is a good medium, but it's just a library not an alert service and it isn't something people just go to unless they know what they are looking for.

CCP Xhagen pointed out that that is why it would be linked to the news service as CCP Wrangler suggested. Other possible alert services are the official CCP Facebook page and Twitter service.

CCP Wrangler clarified that the news is published as an RSS feed which is used both by fan sites and media outlets so it is only a matter of them picking up that information or not.

Ankh wondered if it was possible to keep CSM in the loop on these discussions.

CCP Xhagen answered that yes, there will be some email back and forth between CCP and CSM about this.

6. POS Onlining/Anchoring Queue

http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/POS:_Onlining/Anchoring_Queue
in raw text from [2009.03.21 17:53:45]

CCP Greyscale noted that this was something he asked one of the programmers about a few weeks ago. From a technical standpoint, he said that an anchoring queue was very fiddly but an onlining queue was very straightforward. That said, CCP are going to be revisiting Sovereignty later in the year, so this will probably come out as part of that process, at which point they are free to rebalance a lot of things in order to reduce this type of grind without breaking other things.

Vuk wanted to highlight the fact that regardless of Sov, anchoring and unanchoring and onlining POS's is the biggest time sink in game, so even if sov is completely removed, they need some love.

Darius just wanted it noted that this issue has been raised multiple times in various guises so it is obviously a concern for many people.

CCP Greyscale agreed.

7. UI S&I Interface Improvements

http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/UI_S%26I_Interface_Improvements
in raw text from [2009.03.21 18:03:53]

CCP Chronotis noted that this is the same issue as raised by the 1st CSM and it was still on the to-do list. It will be done as soon as priorities allow.

LaVista wanted to know if this was in the backlog or not as he assumed it was scheduled for Quantum Rise (the industrial patch), so was this another soon™ thing?

CCP Chronotis – backlogged.

LaVista was still puzzled.

Ankh thought the answer was very vague and was not a satisfactory answer.

LaVista agreed. He understands that when something is backlogged and that is where things are placed which CCP want to do eventually, but this is an issue that effects more people than POS Queues or the like.

CCP Chronotis unfortunately had no further concrete information

8. Unfinished Expansions

http://evajobse.net/csmwiki/index.php/Unfinished_Expansions
in raw text from [2009.03.21 18:15:38]

CCP Greyscale explained that CCP agree that there are things that need revisiting, and sometimes some things fall by the wayside when it shouldn't. It's often a balancing act between keeping up momentum and keep pushing things on. CCP need to strike a balance between the two, but for the overall health of the game, cutting back too aggressively on new stuff is just as dangerous as neglecting old content.

In terms of the specifics mentioned, CCP is pushing strongly for the Blackops overhaul to happen in the near future, but Apocrypha efforts derailed that otherwise it would have been done already. He had no solid info on Faction Warfare but it is on the list of things to re-visit.

Cosmos (the system, not the web interface) is unlikely to be revisited in the near future, it was considered a good idea but he thought it is incredibly manpower intensive to implement which is why it hadn't been revisited. Epic Arc's could deliver more and better content so it is likely that that is going to be the spiritual successor to it. Following up on ideas that ended up not working out the way they hoped was not a good use of time, however that doesn't mean that something similar won't resurface in another form sometime in the future.

The UI is still being overhauled as part of an ongoing process depending on having UI designer and programmer time to work on it. That is basically a resource limitation.

Sov and Starbases are definitely on the to-do list, CCP Hammer has mentioned that in several interviews recently.

Bounty hunting is not considered a pressing issue, while the feature as it exists is very limited; it is such a vestigial thing that he doesn't see it as core functionality in need of urgent revisiting.

The Epic arc will continue, new effects work is ongoing, Tech 3 subsystems are ongoing, and probing as discussed earlier is being tweaked.

Vuk pointed out that if CCP keep pushing things on with the current pace in a year or two they will have a wreck of a game. There is already too much faulty, buggy, and unfinished content in game. He understands the lack of resources but that is a problem CCP needs to solve or balance.

Ankh thought that in regards to FW and Cosmos that these things took a lot of developer time and were then implemented in a broken state. In the current state they are in game they weren't worth the dev time, so implementing new things in a broken state is wasting resources and most of all leading to dissatisfied players.

Ankh believes that Empyrean Age, Quantum Rise and Apocrypha were overhyped and even though new content was delivered, it was broken and that lowers the companies' reputation and leads to demotivated staff. She believed that if more time was spent on polishing then the new content delivered wouldn't get 'old' so quickly. She understands why these decisions were made, but strongly suggests CCP reviews their internal processes and make an expansion both the players and they can be truly proud of next time.

Vuk agreed.

Bunyip wanted to know what happened to the Industrial Expansion that never occurred. Are CCP going to revisit this as a large part of the player base (70% according to the QEN) is not happy about that patch that didn't really happen?

Pattern wanted to know why T3 was released without any player testing.

Darius pointed out that that topic was raised at CSM level and rejected and was not intended to be raised.

CCP Xhagen pointed out that Tech 3 was only released 11 days ago and that calling it unfinished is a bit harsh without it being used yet.

Pattern pointed out that they still could not be tested on the test server.

CCP Xhagen wanted to know if the issue was really that they couldn't be tested.

Pattern replied it was one of them.

Issler wanted to point out that leaving these things unfinished really gives the impression of a total lack of concern for quality and it creates a situation where players can't have any confidence that a new game element will ever be brought to a state that approaches the vision. She couldn't think of another MMORPG that had as much half finished or broken content that EVE has. If something doesn't work it should be removed, for example CCP should stop implying that there is some sort of POS lab access across an alliance with permissions. Every time someone sees that they are reminded of yet another mechanic that is needed but has not appeared.

CCP Greyscale responded to Vuk that it is unlikely they will have a push as big as Apocrypha any time soon, right now CCP is hoping to slow down a little and get on with fixing exactly the sorts of issues; black ops, nullsec, maybe FW.

In regards to Ankh, as he said with Cosmos, it ended up being sufficiently manpower intensive that nobody is keen to revisit it right now. He hoped that she would agree that revisiting things that they know are an insufficient use of resources, and which are not actually broken, is a bad use of resources. With regards to FW, they are fully aware of the situation it is currently in, and nobody is particularly happy about the lack of iteration that happened. There just hasn't been a free slot in the development schedule since its launch, so while not ideal, we don't live in an ideal world.

CCP Greyscale thought Ankh was entitled to her opinion of Apocrypha, but it has been the best received expansion CCP have released for years and to suggest that CCP are somehow demotivated after working on it is incredibly wide of the mark.

Regarding Bunyip's question, he had no solid information to give.

CCP Greyscale agreed with Issler's comments about the POS Lab sharing, and in general they would like to revisit and polish things. The discussion with CSM while in Iceland has pushed them in that direction, but the mandate for Apocrypha put everything else on hold, now that is done he hopes that they will be able to really get on and implement the things they agreed they would like to do back then.

CCP Xhagen wanted it noted that the next meeting would be exactly 2 hours long, CSM should prioritize their topics with that in mind.

Meeting End.