



NOVEAN DREAMERS
ALMANAC

3 | *SECRETS & SERVICES*

Image courtesy of Novaquark

Hello Dreamers!

It took a while, but issue 3 of the Almanac is here. This time we'll have a look at espionage and counter-intelligence in the Dual Universe community (page 3) and talk to some "space truckers" and other entrepreneurs of the game's developing service industry (page 24). As always there is also an overview of media releases of recent weeks (page 23) and a snapshot of Dual Universe's organizations (page 35) - plus a little bonus at the end.

In the Almanac I usually focus on the community and not the actual game development, but Novaquark just released Dual Universe's official roadmap. With it came the announcement, that the NDA will stay active during the complete Alpha stage. For the Almanac and all other media in the community this means: No public talk about in-game content until the beginning of 2020.

What is Dual Universe?

To quote developer Novaquark: "Dual Universe is a Continuous Single-Shard sandbox MMORPG taking place in a vast Sci-fi universe, focusing on emergent gameplay with player-driven in-game economy, politics, trade and warfare. Players can freely modify the voxel-based universe by creating structures, spaceships or giant orbital stations, giving birth to empires and civilizations."

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| <p>Publishing information: This is a Dual Universe fan-production not affiliated with the game's developer Novaquark. All in-game images are Pre-Alpha renderings courtesy of Novaquark.</p> | <p>Responsible for the content: Daniel Nusser Munich, Germany</p> <p><u>Agilulf</u> Discord: Agilolfing#8694 <u>www.spaceshipdrama.com</u> Release date: August 9th 2018</p> |
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At the end of July, the relatively new organization Dark Star Imperium became the 10th largest player group in Dual Universe. Recruiting mostly from the PVP scene of the game Space Engineers, they brought a massive influx of new players to the DU community. But that was not all they carried over from their old home: persistent personal conflicts, rivalries and animosities jumped communities as well. Immediately after celebrating the successful conquering of the Top 10, Dark Star Imperium's leader Primarch announced the uncovering of an attempted coup.

All images courtesy of Novaquark

Primarch released Discord chat-logs of the conspirators, in which the group talked about carrying out a disinformation campaign against Dark Star Imperium's leadership, including the use of faked screenshots. (This information comes from chat-logs released as - of course - screenshots.) The coup apparently failed due to an insider staying loyal to Primarch and betraying the betrayers. To top it all off, the conspiracy seems to be orchestrated by a "puppet master" making the jump from Space Engineers as well - at least according to members of Dark Star Imperium.

It is a recent example of the "spy-game" already happening in Dual Universe, a world of espionage and counter-intelligence that started months before the Pre-Alpha. It's a meta-game that doesn't need planets and cities and space ships, it only needs people. Leaked chat-logs and the actions of a malicious agent in a position



of power contributed to the downfall of the Cinderfall Syndicate. Many splits and shake-ups of organizations were caused by similar means. And, on a smaller scale, most organizations tell of attempted infiltrations by more or less competent spies.

This is only the beginning and everyone knows that. Games like Eve Online have shown how much of an impact espionage has on the rise and fall of organizations. In Dual Universe's current early stages of development there is nothing to steal and nothing to destroy - but that doesn't keep players from preparing for the inevitable. We talked to many of the influential organizations of Dual Universe's community about the coming storm, the risks and rewards of espionage and the dark underbelly of the game.

Live and Let Die The impact of espionage

Being the biggest organization in the game, Terran Union already had its share of turmoil, including the secession of several dissatisfied player groups. The behemoth kept on growing anyway. But in a group of close to 850 players one might suspect a colourful collection of secret agents, enemy informants and saboteurs. "Ultimately an organization's strength comes from the resolve of its community. You can fight a war and have everything devastated, but still be able to rebuild", FleetAdmiralCoke of **Terran Union** says. "But if there are people in positions of power that want to use it for selfish or nefarious purposes, that can have a far more lasting impact and corrupt the entire system." It's the reality, FleetAdmiralCoke knows that - but the wilful destruction of communities is a "terrible thing" to him nevertheless.



Looking at events, that have already happened in the Dual Universe community, most big organizations expect espionage to have a huge effect on the game sooner rather than later. But Kytuum of **Empire** has a different idea: "I believe espionage will play a minor role in the future of Dual Universe", he says. His expectations are, that anyone with the intention

to secretly cause damage would be easily discovered. Kytheum effectively puts much stock in the work of his fellow leaders. "I could see the security of most organizations being too tight. And with the possibility of an infiltrator causing infrastructural damage - whether it be to a vessel, system or even strategy - it would be very rare, risky and difficult to pull it off", he reasons. To him it's a strategy reserved for times of desperation.

"Player espionage will range from kids wanting to play spy to actual real life hired sleeper agents", Shockeray of **Soul Nebula** says. The politics of Dual Universe will be influenced by spies in a major way, he is sure, although much of it might happen behind closed doors. "Only those on the inside may know of their involvement", Shockeray speculates. Glory of **GLSU** does not expect the "spy-game" to reach the level of games like Eve Online. "I think most of the time it will be used for trolling and not for actual war", he says. Certain game mechanics, that are in development, restrict actual "surprise attacks" on constructs and would probably make it hard for spies to do massive damage, he imagines. "However, I'm sure this will come back to haunt me eventually, knowing my luck."

The scope of things to come might possibly be massive, as Meroran of **Stargate Command** states. "Like in Eve Online I believe that we will see less short time operations, but a large numbers of perfectly planned and performed operations over months or even years", he says. "I can totally see players making their way into important positions to leak sensible information to their handler - and I see organisations breaking apart as a result of such operations." In the long run this might include the manipulation of groups or factions within organizations or the bad-mouthing of certain players. "If you are good enough, you can

even bring two parties into a large conflict", Meroran says. To him it is a proper game of "out-playing" the enemy on the battlefield of information warfare.

"Oh, it's going to rip organizations apart", MasteredRed of **Diverse Unified Accord** evaluates the role of espionage in Dual Universe. "Also: With the way movement is described, it is entirely possible that organizations will simply have spies to detect invading fleets ahead of the chaos." The strategic in-game value of spies is apparent to other organizations as well. Depending on the tools, that the game will provide, **Hyperion Corporation's** Underhand Aerial sees a lot of "match-winning" possibilities. "Short-term there is the massive importance of revealing the position of enemy fleets, ship types and ship numbers prior to offensive or defensive battles", he says. "Long-term you might get huge advantages through your spies stealing LUA codes or blueprints for constructs."



After the collapse of the Cinderfall Syndicate, which was one of the most prominent victims of the "spy-game" in early Dual Universe history, the parties involved have understandable gloomy expectations for the future. "I have no doubt that Dual Universe's political activities will incorporate a prominent deal of espionage", Lord Kittishima of Cinderfall's successor **Aeonian Federation** says. "In fact I'd go as far as to say that Dual Universe will be polluted with it, judging by its rough past." To him the "successes"

of espionage in the past "scream an alarm about what may come in the future, when organizations will possess countless valuable assets." The events surrounding the Cinderfall Syndicate did indeed leave a lasting impression on several leaders of the Dual Universe community.

On Her Majesty's Secret Service
How to survive in the spy-game

One thing seems sure: The spies will come and organizations will have to defend themselves against those incursions. But no one says, that you can't have fun with it. "Sometimes, if we determine, that someone is a spy during the recruitment process, we let them in anyway, mark them and feed them false information", Cybrex of **Band of Outlaws** explains. With the crime syndicate being the second biggest organization, there is certainly much opportunity for that. "We treat them nice, 'promote' them and tell them all our 'secrets'. They feel so special that they never notice when they stop being a tool for their handlers and start being a tool for us." It would also mean: the attacking organization doesn't see the necessity to send another spy. "It's like natural selection for our enemies: survival of the dumbest."

In general most of the big organizations have some kind of intelligence department with varying degrees of importance. FleetAdmiralCoke of **Terran Union**, again, focuses more on stability and less on confrontation. "The real difference, in my opinion, is what you choose to use your intelligence to accomplish", he says. "The organizations that use it for security

and prosperity, while not trying to interfere with other organizations, will see the more favourable results - where the ones that only serve to undermine each other are going to meet their own fate." A sentiment that Terran Union's associate **Hyperion Corporation** shares as well. Underhand Aerial sees the importance of counter-intelligence as well. "We will focus more on defence and prevention and not on attack", he says.

Other organizations are more keen on doing the actual spying. "I think such departments will have great use throughout the lifetime of Dual Universe", Zamaro of **The Eldritch Nation** says. His organization doesn't beat around the bush when it comes to espionage. The task of the Eldritch Military Intelligence, according to its own description, is "long term infiltration of other militaries, gathering Intel about these and finding important military targets". Kytuum of **Empire** is a bit more reserved on the topic, but the direction of his organization seems clear. They will have an "intelligence department on launch to assist with the evaluation of threats and the collection of miscellaneous data", he

says. To him it's a requirement of every organization wishing to "compete" in the game.



Some leaders intend to use the experience gathered in other games to their advantage in Dual Universe. For years **FrogSwarm** has been right in

the centre of the defining "spy-game" as an ally and later member of GoonSwarm in Eve Online. "Our special department, called Frog Intelligence Agency, has always been an important gear of our organization since 2006", Silmerias explains. He's looking

forward to the information warfare. **Dark Star Imperium**, having already survived an attempted coup, doesn't see any other way either. "From our extensive experience, being made up of PVP clans in Space Engineers playing on infinite worlds, espionage is almost needed." He's quite sure that every organization will have to deal with the topic, "at least the ones that will last".

For Your Eyes Only
Espionage in Alpha and beyond

Nothing currently existing in the Pre-Alpha of the game will last. It's not a secret that the development of the game will see several server wipes until the game world will reach its final stage. But the meta-game doesn't have resets. The relationships emerging between players and between groups will persist. And that probably includes secret treaties and spy networks as well. There is still much camaraderie in the community, because the enthusiasm for the game is high and the stakes are low. This will change - or it already has. "The community has been founded by intelligent individuals devoted to the game, to roles and to organizations", Raptor Master of **SilverLight Industries** says. "There's a good chance that a few people are inclined to get involved in espionage from the very start."

"To be completely honest, I feel like it's already too late to set up the massive spy rings some people envision", Glory of **GLSU** judges. "We aren't even into Alpha, yet almost every important position in the Top 10 is already taken." For dedicated people it would probably still be smarter to start from the bottom and work

their way up, he reckons. "However, having spies in the top positions when the community site first became a thing, would've been the real advantage." Shockeray of **Soul Nebula** sees the forces hard at work as well: "Spy networks and sabotage have already been a part of Dual Universe for two years", he says. "Although they range from role-playing groups to unnamed dark groups, who have actually made large changes in the power structure of Dual Universe."

Underhand Aerial of **Hyperion Corporation** doesn't think much of these early stages of the "spy-game", to him it's still too early to have any meaningful impact. "The recruiting of agents and the setting up of spy networks shouldn't really be feasible yet, as you can't pay them anything", he says. It's obvious to him that there are spies anyway, but so far he sees it as "spy role-play" and not much else. "We had to deal with a wannabe spy already", he recounts. "Of course he couldn't do anything, it's just too early for that." At the very least Meroran of **Stargate Command** doesn't expect any major spy networks to exist yet. "Most organizations do not share much information", he says, "and if they do, they only share it among their key people." Networking is a different beast of course.

As Kytheum of **Empire** explains it: "Currently and until launch, I consider reputation to be the biggest influencer in Dual Universe. Once the game wipes, all that is left is the reputation of what came before and what the community expects or assumes of you." Getting involved in nefarious



activities he sees as detrimental to that. "Spy networks might interfere with the objective of building a strong, honourable reputation", he reckons. Cybrex of **Band of Outlaws** has a similar view: "The smart people are taking advantage of the time to get to know people, learn who to trust and who they enjoy playing with, and to determine who their rivals are." This might involve spy networks, but also trade, social, political and military networks. All of them will determine the game's landscape, he's sure.

Another thing to consider is the NDA, which is still in place in the Alpha phase. That's why Zamaro of **The Eldritch Nation** sees the period since Dual Universe's Kickstarter as a preparation phase, that will be followed by a flood of content. "This will open up for a whole lot more propaganda and flashy videos", he says. "Organizations will rival each other for fame, new recruits and whatever else they seek. Naturally intelligence operations will matter more at that stage." Zamaro expects the "spy-game" to increase over the course of the Alpha and evolve in the Beta. "At launch there will already be tons of networks for this and people will have prepared ways to further their own agenda and cripple their enemies", he reckons. "Everyone and their mother will want a head-start."



"Right now I think organizations are struggling with the common things", MasteredRed of **Diverse Unified Accord** states. "Recruitment is hard, space is limited, and activity isn't at an all time high. People can get desperate and start accepting everyone who joins them." Speaking from personal experience the organization leader sees the dangers: "There are currently seven applications we could accept into the Diverse Unified Accord, but

none of them are people who we would consider trustworthy." Some of them may be spies, but the organization can't know for sure. Under the surface a lot is happening, MasteredRed says. He does indeed know details he can't reveal, but even he is unsure about the extent: "It's impossible to detect each and every person working in these fields."

The World Is Not Enough

The dangers of things getting personal

The Dual Universe of the Pre-Alpha is still a big testing ground. Nothing has any consequences (outside of making the game better). Organizations and players have nothing to lose, because they will lose everything during the next server wipe anyway. But the meta-game is different: It involves real people communicating on various channels. It can be entertaining or it can be arduous - and sometimes the players can get carried away. Espionage in general involves the manipulation of people and in a gaming community like Dual Universe the line between attacking a "character" and attacking the "person behind the character" can get blurry. Things unrelated to the game shouldn't matter, but sometimes they do. Is there a real danger of player espionage devolving into personal attacks?

"You can never underestimate the lengths that people will go to in order to satisfy their own needs", FleetAdmiralCoke of **Terran Union** says. "And where most gamers in a given community are generally okay with keeping things on an in-game level, there will always be that small subset, that will try to cross that boundary."

As the leader of the biggest organization in the game there's a certain spotlight on him, he recognizes. There's also still a layer of "being represented by an avatar on the internet", but it's thin at best. "I have to implicitly trust the people I deal with in Dual Universe, because they know who I am, but I cannot say who they are with certainty", FleetAdmiralCoke says. "Thankfully, I've met many good people in Dual Universe and it's such a strong community."

Terran Union's leader trusts in the idea, that the community will see personal attacks negatively and morally oppose them. Cybrex of **Band of Outlaws** shares that view: "There is always a danger that, when you have a lot of people coming together in a high stakes environment, shrouded by the pseudo-anonymity of the internet, some people will take things too far", he judges. But: "We trust in the common decency of our fellow players to keep the game in the game. I'll kill you in the game, but I'll buy you a beer in real life." Raptor Master of **SilverLight Industries** is hopeful too. "Players dedication to the game and to their organizations could get out of hand, but I'm very confident that Novaquark would handle it swiftly and accordingly", he reckons.

But the nature of the meta-game certainly has inherent dangers. "Espionage will probably be run through forums, Discords, TeamSpeak servers, and so on", Zamaro of **The Eldritch Nation** says. "People who think that you can conduct proper espionage in-



game will only face a bitter reality. As for whether it will involve personal attacks, who knows. I think we will see such cases, but I do not consider infiltrating the communication assets of an organization a personal attack." It would be next to impossible to stay rational in certain situations, Meroran of **Stargate Command** judges. "There will be cases where intelligence operations are only performed based on personal feelings", he says. "To be honest, we will always pick our enemies based on personal feelings like fear."

Silmerias of **FrogSwarm**, even after experiencing the sometimes harsh world of Eve Online, draws a clear line: "Meta-gaming is a game and shouldn't be anything else", he says. "Out of game espionage and diplomacy is an extension of the game and should always be fun. Real attacks on people make no sense. This should never happen and be severely punished." For Glory of **GLSU**, who does a regular YouTube show, it's a matter of exposure. "Content creators put themselves out there, and if for example GLSU were to attack a large organization the retaliation could become personal", he worries. "I think there is a definite risk, which is why people have to protect themselves and be smart." There is certainly hope that Dual Universe's community is mature enough to keep the game a game.



The Spy Who Loved Me Bringing espionage to the actual game

Espionage by players on players is the meta-game and the meta-game happens outside of the actual game, that's the understanding. Infiltration and information gathering relies on communication channels like Discord. Even things like fleet movements will be conveyed by means separate of the game. But could there be actual features to make espionage a meaningful profession for players? Will the developers provide dedicated technologies like spy satellites and character skills like hacking for players to have a tangible impact on the game world? "I think it might be a good idea, it would make espionage a lot more fun", MrStarWars of **The Solar Empire** says. And Raptor Master of **SilverLight Industries** states: "Novaquark could possibly do that. It may be in the works." But in general the opinions are split.

"No, Dual Universe should be left as much of a sandbox as possible", Kytheum of **Empire** says, "By adding specialised features you have limited the creative ways, that players could use to perform the task. I feel the game should be left, not to a minimum, but as unbiased towards as many areas of gameplay as possible." Primarch of **Dark Star Imperium** has a similar view: "I'm very against that. It needs to be done through true grit and player interactions. They shouldn't add systems for it or against it in the game." Cybrex of **Band of Outlaws** sees espionage as an activity conducted in back channels outside of the game. "It would make little sense to try and bring that to the game itself outside of being a saboteur", he says.

To FleetAdmiralCoke of **Terran Union** espionage features are an interesting idea, but one with a lot of question marks. "I'm not sure how that could be fully implemented without the game suddenly having to focus around those mechanics", he wonders. "I



think it's already theoretically possible to have hacking if you have someone who knows LUA scripting and can reverse engineer someone else's work." Likewise he imagines, that spy satellites could already be experimented with, just by

building normal satellites in-game. To him it seems plausible that the game mechanics, that are planned, "will be able to do a lot of fun stuff". Ginger of **The Federation Alpha** states: "It would be a cool idea, but I think people should also come up with their own creative ways."

Others are open to suggestions at least. "I would enjoy some simple tools for in-game espionage", Zamaro of **The Eldritch Nation** says. "They already have ideas for hacking and with how RDMS and extra characters may work, I don't think it's a necessity." He sees a lot of functionalities already existing or being worked on, but he "wouldn't say no to more possibilities". As for what shape those could take, Zamaro has no specific ideas. Underhand Aerial of **Hyperion Corporation** openly encourages espionage features to be implemented. "It would be interesting to use hacking to get on board of space ships and hijack them", he speculates. On the other hand he's sceptical of getting access to cargo containers without being the owner. To him there still need to be clear limitations.

But for MasteredRed of **Diverse Unified Accord** it's generally not the right way to go for the developers: "They can spend days and weeks and months implementing spy mechanics but when it comes down to time and effort spent, I don't think it'd be worth it", he argues. "Players already have demonstrated they have the means to explore their fantasy in this regards. Would Novaquark really need to step in and say that the players shouldn't live the fantasy to the full regards?" He doesn't see the need for having espionage features, because gathering and sharing information "is as simple as pressing Print Screen". And MasteredRed quotes Dual Universe's founder J.C. Baillie as well, who said on the topic of game features: "We can't have it all."

Dr. No

Exposing the Illuminati of Dual Universe

All said and done, we know of course, that there are sinister forces at work, who rule the universe as they see fit. They have many names or no names at all. They instigate wars and profit from them. They play the leaders of all organizations like pawns in a game of four-dimensional chess. They are the secret cabal. Or they are just some bored kids. Who really controls Dual Universe?

FleetAdmiralCoke, **Terran Union**:

"I wouldn't know anything about that."

Cybrex, **Band of Outlaws**:

"If there were a cabal, they would be a powerful group with relatively little drama. Their members would be well known but

secretive, being influential in a large amount of organizations. They would have good media distribution, spying capabilities, and diplomatic influence. Most importantly, they would try to convince you, that they are not in fact a cabal. Obviously, such a group doesn't exist."

Kytheum, Empire:

"I haven't heard of any, perhaps one of the many private organizations in Dual Universe is planning to do so."



Raptor Master, SilverLight Industries:

"I can imagine, as the game progresses and grows, some sort of group could form. Power and influence has a way of drawing people together to conspire."

Shockeray, Soul Nebula:

"The cabal is a loved trope and especially a favourite of teenagers who haven't quite understood all of the boring work it takes to maintain one. That being said, I have already seen the signs of leaders and officials from separate organizations, who aren't publicly interacting, working towards a single goal. So I would say yes, there are going to be and may already be cabals in Dual Universe."

Underhand Aerial, Hyperion Corporation:

"I think they call themselves Kyrium-Founders. In all seriousness, we are the 6th biggest organization in Dual Universe and have close relations with the biggest organization Terran Union - and we still haven't heard anything of such a secret cabal. I guess we can assume for now that none exists."

MrStarWars, **The Solar Empire:**

"Yes, one such is known as The Order. A mysterious group that has dedicated itself to protecting Dual Universe by any means necessary. Or so we think..."

Primarch, **Dark Star Imperium:**

"If a cabal did exist, and someone knew and talked about it, they would have no proof. So it wouldn't be good evidence, since everyone would think their group is that specific group, when in reality it would be a collective of allied groups perpetuating false flags, fake wars and more."

Zamaro, **The Eldritch Nation:**

"I've seen and heard of plenty. Most, if not all, have been either of two types: Posers and people talking and acting like they matter, when they don't. Or ironic takes on cabals, such ones that aren't actually aiming to be real cabals. There may already have been a few of the real kind in the making, but i don't think we will see any proper ones until much later. After all, if they gain exposure too early, they wouldn't be proper secret cabals now, would they?"



Silmerias, **FrogSwarm:**

"I can't confirm or deny the existence of such a group."

Meroran, **Stargate Command:**

"There is certainly one, but I won't share my suggestion due to diplomatic reasons - also I can't give proof so it doesn't matter anyway."

Glory, **GLSU**:

"I know there are a few floating around, and I think you will see more pop up later on. I think right now they would want to remain off the community page to lay low. When the time is right, organizations like that will emerge."

Ginger, **The Federation Alpha**:

"I have heard of some spies getting caught, but not of any spy organization."

MasteredRed, **Diverse Unified Accord**:

"What's to say that I'm not one? I'd like to leave it at that."

Lord Kittishima, **Aeonian Federation**:

"I'm not aware of any groups specifically dedicated to taking advantage of conflicts in such a manner. However, many organizations in my opinion will sport 'immoral' tactics to take advantage of conflicts and may even do so in a 'peaceful' way - such as insurance, loans and other financial services. They will be extremely lucrative during times of conflict and one could argue that they're taking advantage of conflicts. In all seriousness though, anything can happen, anything will happen and there are no limits on who can do what. It would not surprise me in the slightest if there was to be something comparable to the Illuminati in Dual Universe."

Interviewed Organizations



Terran Union



Band of Outlaws



Empire



SilverLight Industries



Soul Nebula



Hyperion Corporation



The Solar Empire



Dark Star Imperium



The Eldritch Nation



FrogSwarm



Stargate Command



GLSU



The Federation Alpha



Diverse Unified Accord



Aeonian Federation



Image courtesy of Novaquark

In the three months since the last issue of the Almanac, the Dual Universe community produced a bunch of new content. **Ark Central** kept up its monthly schedule and released their May, June and July Updates. They can all be found on the news broadcaster's YouTube channel. **The Lost Prodigy** as well released several new videos about Dual Universe, mostly advertising the game and making comparisons to Star Citizen. While The Lost Prodigy's Dual Universe podcast seems to be on hiatus, others stayed active.

Glory of GLSU did another six episodes of his round-table discussion **Q-Cast**, but has taken a break since due to lack of topics that aren't prohibited by the NDA. The recordings of the live broadcasts can be found on YouTube. Meanwhile MasterChiefMKI has done four new **SpartanCasts** about various topics and with changing guests. They can be found on YouTube.

Outpost Zebra released four articles: A two-part discussion about the possibility to loot DACs and two Organization Close-Ups with Objective Driveyards and The Eldritch Nation. Novaquark provided a compilation of the **NovaWrimo** fan-fiction contest entries and announced the winner of the 2017 contest. The Almanac wrongly reported last time, that Kurock won, but that was the community vote. The overall winner is Dwarf3d.



In the dangerous environment of the uncharted frontier there is strength in numbers. Dual Universe is no exception to that rule. Many players are lured by the perceived safety and support of the big states, empires and corporations, that have already sprung up. As a player you might not make much of a mark on history by being one of 800, but the group will secure your survival. On the other hand there are players, who don't want to lose any of their freedom. Their strategy depends on even the big organizations of Dual Universe needing outside specialists. They provide services others might struggle with. And they look for the thrill of "self-made success" - sometimes against all odds.

All images courtesy of Novaquark

"I know from past experiences: the larger the group, the smaller the chance of you progressing through the ranks", **MasterChiefMKI** explains. "I come from a background of 'Rust', so I'm well acquainted with the 'drone' aspect of organizations, and I was not too keen on becoming a mindless being that has no hope of progressing past 'asteroid miner'." He has chosen a different path, one that led to a diversified portfolio of services, that he and his associates now provide. MasterChiefMKI runs a security firm called Sentinel Consulting, gives conspicuous assistance to clients as part of the MultiMedia Freelancers and has founded the Dual Universe Yellow Pages on Discord.

"Being someone in a lesser-populated field means, that you have a larger pool of clients than for example mercenary organizations, of which there are too many to count" he says. His

services are supposed to provide a testing ground as well as a place of communication. "For me, it will never be about the money", MasterChiefMKI states. "I always approach it with the thought of helping as many people as possible." His method of "making a name" also includes a podcast with varying guests from big and small organization, discussing equally diverse topics of the game and how they will shape up in the future. And his future plans include setting up even more "platforms" like that.



"The reason for me to make a company is freedom", **Tybirius Balin** of Meridian Jumpworks affirms. "A government's job is to restrict disorderly behaviour and provide stability. This is done through laws, which inherently, by their very nature, restrict freedom." He sees governments using their power mainly to keep people in line. "We at Meridian are more like a foundry of creativity, we help to build dreams not tear them down", Tybirius Balin says. His organization doesn't need to hide in any case: by their own account they are Dual Universe's 10th largest company.

Meridian Jumpworks has a visible array of services, because the organization split them into 9 branded sub-organizations on the community page - the move bewildered some, but had undeniable advertising effects. "While I specialize in administration, ship design, diplomacy and strategy on a personal level, Meridian as a whole is designed to accommodate whatever desire a customer should wish", Tybirius Balin explains. According to him this will include "advertising, transportation, security services, custom constructs, consultation, representation" and much more.

Captain Hilts has his fingers in many pies as well. Besides working on the Dual Universe Yellow Pages with MasterChiefMKI and Tybirius Balin and being one of the administrators of the Tortuga project, his big passion is the designing of space ships.



"Creating things is what I really like to do", he emphasizes. His organization Hilts Independent Contracting allows him to do it without "overbearing rules and drama". As he says it: "I could

make another one man organization and call it a vast empire - but that's just silly. This is something I can accomplish without delusions of grandeur." And he did have some impressive success already: His designs have been featured several times in publicity screenshots released by Novaquark.

Logistics & Transport

Consulting and designing are one side of the industry, but there is a service that strikes most people as the most obvious activity in a game with vast distances like Dual Universe: getting from point A to point B and spending hours doing it. But what appeal does "space trucking" even have? "Logistics being something fun - that is kind of a stretch", **Daralax** judges. "If you are travelling with friends or having to smuggle things into dangerous space, maybe." He plans more for the "stationary" part of the industry by providing a series of space elevators called the Tree of Life Network, that brings goods from the ground to space. The actual flying part he expect to be a more "tranquil" experience.

But it's an activity that has surprisingly many fans. As **Cringey Buttclench** of Buttclenchean Logistics and Spaceline states: "My hope for the organization is to attract people who play and enjoy games like Elite Dangerous, Euro Truck Simulator and Flight Simulator - and for them to have the same sort of experience in Dual Universe." **Captain Hilts** shares the sentiment: "I find just flying around to be quite fun, the views are amazing." For him it's a great way to test new ship designs and explore new places at the same time. It's fitting that he is also a member of the shuttle

service Wayward Express. "I think its just an added bonus that you can get paid", he says.

"If we didn't think it would be fun, we wouldn't be doing it", **Dhara** of The Outfit states. "I imagine it will be just like any other job. Some days will be easy and some days will be hard." She expects her organization to earn the bulk of its money and reputation by doing transport missions in dangerous areas of the game world. "And of course making a living is the reason we're in business. I know I don't want to spend all my game time working in the mines and neither does the majority of our members." The Outfit has already fully embraced the "space trucker" image in videos and comics. Apparently with success: "We have several contracts already in the works", Dhara reveals.



But logistics is still an "iffy topic" as **MasterChiefMKI** expresses it: "There are some people who find repetitive and grindy things fun, and those are the people that I try to attract to cargo pilot positions." He actually planned on running his own transport service called Spartan Logistics, but the project is currently on hold. "With the logistical side, staying efficient and organized requires a lot of planning, scheduling and tracking", MasterChiefMKI explains. It's not for everyone, but he expects a dedicated group of people to crop up, "who take space trucking

extremely seriously, having 'code names' for themselves and other freighters on their routes", he says. "And to me that's awesome."

MasterChiefMKI recently did a podcast on the topic "Logistics and Transportation". You can listen to it [here](#).

Independence

The term "independent contractor" sounds simple, but in a universe of massive empires and mega-corporations it might be a struggle to stay truly independent. For **TheBlender** of Fringe Exoplanet Cartel that's the goal. "Part of why we call ourselves a 'cartel' is, that we are indeed looking to provide an outlet for people regardless of affiliations or how deep they plan to get involved", he explains. "Many people want an independent organization, that will help them survive and make money - without the feeling, that they have to dive head first into political alignments and obligations." And "working for everyone who pays" is always the most feasible thing to do, TheBlender judges.

"Our main service is simply providing a place for construction focused players to meet and make deals with each other", **dude1144** of DU Constructors Guild explains. His organization tries to bring together large numbers of people interested in construction, who want to tackle big projects together. Their service is the provision of know-how - politics is just an unwanted obstacle there. "It wouldn't make sense to ally with another organization. That might cause some people to feel they can't enter, because they may be part of a different, antagonistic

organization." The DU Constructors Guild sees itself as a "guild in the traditional sense": a meeting place for professionals from all political sides, united by the drive to build things.

Consulting is a profession that simply requires independence, **MasterChiefMKI** says. "Choosing favourites" would just hurt your work, he judges. "I think 'working for everyone who pays' works efficiently with certain organization types, specifically: consultancies, banks and insurance providers. With Sentinel Consulting we want to make sure, that as many people as possible have the best security as possible." For **Dhara** of The Outfit it's a matter of circumstance. "We won't work for just everyone", she states. "We do have some scruples. But yes: overall I think our reputation for getting the job done and keeping our mouths shut will enable us to work for just about anyone."



Staying independent doesn't necessarily mean "staying solitary", **Captain Hilts** expects. "I can see myself working with subcontractors or being a subcontractor on a project myself", he says. "And I see manufacturing licenses and royalties as a good way to give myself access to the advantages of mass-production, that a larger organization can provide for my more popular designs." He definitely expects challenges from people who want to control everything. "I hope to provide a superior product and service in a way that avoids favouritism." Captain Hilts wants his products to be compelling enough in themselves, that this fact alone will keep people off his back.

Growth

Providing services forces you to actually have the manpower to fulfil certain contracts. There might be the need to staff a fleet of transport ships or provide experts in several fields simultaneously. "Company growth is always an interesting topic for me", **MasterChiefMKI** says. "On one hand, having large amounts of staff means you can do more, do it quicker and do it more efficiently. On the other, it also means there are extremely high levels of management and planning." For Sentinel Consulting **MasterChiefMKI** plans a maximum of 10 employees. In the consulting business, communication is key. Helping a client with his security does require experts - but not a whole group of them.

Dhara of The Outfit on the other hand heads an organization focused on logistics and transportation. But even she says: "We will stay as small as we possibly can". It seems plausible to her, that the group will get a little larger over time, but they aren't aiming for it. "Our goal is to be tight, nimble and effective. We will only grow as large as needed", **Dhara** explains. To her the importance lies in having a strong team: people, who actually work together and spend time with each other. For **Cringey Buttclench** of Buttclenchean Logistics the lack of members is a unpleasant reality. "Most likely we will be forced to stay a small company", he states. He still hopes for growth in members though.

"I see growth as being slow but strong", **Captain Hilts** says. "Word of mouth and a good reputation come slowly but are more enduring." To him it's, again, a matter of letting his work speak for

him and with his "design team of one" he was already able to achieve impressive feats. "I have 18 different ships on order from people via the forum and community page", he recounts. Being an independent contractor, Captain Hilts sees certain limits to growth. "If I become wildly successful and there is more demand for my products than I can provide, then I will look into outsourcing the manufacturing", he says. For the moment he enjoys his freedom and being able to do design work without any restrictions.

Tybirius Balin, already heading a sizeable company, sees still more growth for Meridian Jumpworks in the future. "With any corporation like ours the more we grow the more everyone benefits", he says. "Be it from increased manpower to large supply stockpiles, with our systems in place now we can handle large amounts of members and coordinate them efficiently." He also sees "quality control" and "customer satisfaction" benefiting. **TheBlender** of Fringe Exoplanet Cartel plans ahead as well. While sticking with the credo of "quality over quantity" he's still looking to build a team of 100 experts of various fields - while keeping coordination and efficiency intact.

Obstacles

Working in the service industry of Dual Universe might be the dream job for some players, but that doesn't mean there aren't obstacles to overcome. A lot of them have to do with actually "getting yourself out there", attracting clients and building reputation. Which might be easier said than done, as **Cringey Buttclench** of Buttclenchean Logistics and Spacelines divulges:

"From my experience, advertising has done nothing for the company. I don't personally know the reason why, which is why I plan to gather up a marketing team first, before even looking for 'space truckers'." Having a high position in the GLSU alliance, he at least has a strong base to start from.

"I find word of mouth the most effective form of advertising", **TheBlender** of Fringe Exoplanet Cartel states. "At some point, pictures and words on a screen are just noise. But when you have a real conversation with a friend who recommends a service, now that's different." For **Captain Hilts** the challenges in his many ventures are diverse. "Right now I'd say the hurdles are security of my intellectual property, getting the word out, that I have good products for sale, and figuring out what prices to set for things", he explains. But with Dual Universe still in its early stages of development, some of those issues won't be resolved for a while.



For others, the obstacles are very specific to their craft. "I think our biggest hurdle will be the actual delivery of the goods we carry", **Dhara** of logistics heavy The Outfit says: "There will be people in-game who's only goal will be to steal from our customers." According to her there have already been threats on the Dual Universe forum in that vain. "However we are already working on plans to help mitigate the damage caused from those sorts of encounters when they do happen", she explains. As for

advertising, the organization hasn't done much recently, Dhara states. "Our hope is that our reputation will grow and most of our contracts will be word-of-mouth."

"Time. Time is the biggest hurdle", **Tybirius Balin** of Meridian Jumpworks says. The old saying about the "customer being king" rings true in Dual Universe as well, Tybirius Balin is sure. "Even though we have a hefty head start on most, we will never be satisfied with 'good enough'", he emphasizes. "We will always be adjusting and fine tuning our methods and means to fit the needs of our customers." Advertising and personal interaction with big name clients are equally important to the company president. "We must appeal to the customer like salesmen", he says, "prompting them to let us handle the slack of their busy lives, so that they can focus on their goals."

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|  <u>Sentinel Consulting</u> |  <u>MultiMedia Freelancers</u> |
|  <u>Dual Universe Yellow Pages</u> |  <u>Meridian Jumpworks</u> |
|  <u>Hilts Independent Contracting</u> |  <u>Tree of Life Network</u> |
|  <u>Buttclenchean Logistics</u> |  <u>The Outfit</u> |
|  <u>Fringe Exoplanet Cartel</u> |  <u>DU Constructors Guild</u> |

Organizations Snapshot

[August 9th 2018]

| Organization | Tag | Members | Affiliated with |
|------------------------------|--------|-----------|---------------------------|
| ● Terran Union | TU | 831 (+58) | SEN TU |
| ● Band of Outlaws | BOO | 341 (+6) | Tortuga |
| ● Empire | EMPIRE | 316 (+25) | SEN |
| ● SilverLight Industries | SLI | 304 (+18) | SEN AFED |
| ● Soul Nebula | SN | 217 (+30) | |
| ▲ Hyperion Corporation | HYP | 190 (+49) | SEN TU |
| ▼ The Solar Empire | TSE | 187 (+13) | SEN |
| ▼ New Genesis | NG | 156 | AFED |
| ● <i>Tortuga City</i> | - | 141 (+11) | Tortuga |
| ■ Dark Star Imperium | DSI | 140 | DSI, TOF & TFA [name tba] |
| ▼ The Eldritch Nation | TEN | 134 (+8) | SEN |
| ▼ <i>DU Explorers</i> | - | 117 (+4) | |
| ▲ Objective Driveyards | ODY | 107 (+13) | |
| ▼ MassCorp "Ethereal Sirius" | MC | 103 | |
| ▼ <i>Alpha Academy</i> | - | 97 (-1) | |
| ▼ FrogSwarm | FROG | 95 | |
| ▲ The Opean Federation | TOF | 87 (+10) | DSI, TOF & TFA [name tba] |
| ▼ Stargate Command | SGC | 84 (+5) | TU |
| ▼ <i>Haven</i> | - | 82 (-1) | Tortuga |
| ▼ GLSU | GLSU | 79 (+2) | GLSU |

SEN SEN council

TU Terran Union & associates

AFED Aeonian Federation

Tortuga Tortuga City

GLSU GLSU & associates

DSI, TOF & TFA [name tba]

