

Community Management

Stuttgart Media University, 9th Gamesday

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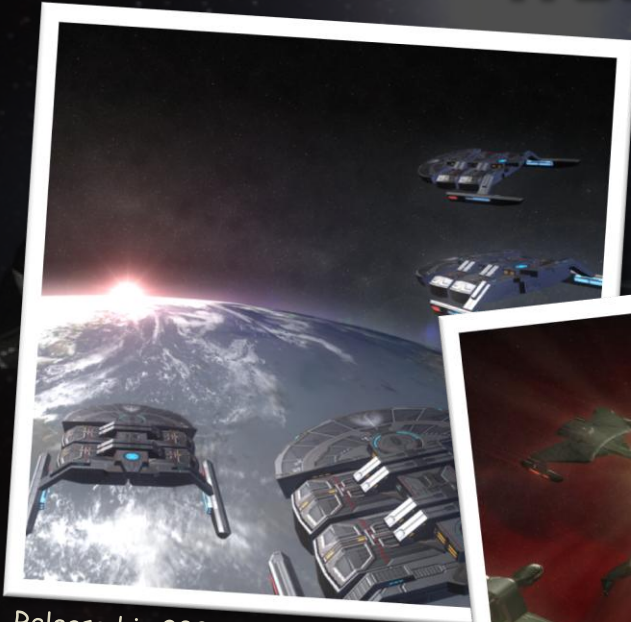
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Case Study: Fleet Operations

World Domination!

Or probably not



Released in 2003



Multiplayer via Tunngle
Growing community



Largest Armada2 Modding site
New release system

Case Study: Fleet Operations

Real-Time-Strategy game

Based on Star Trek Armada 2 (Activision 2001)

Ongoing project for about 10 years now

Current Version: 3.2.2

Focused on multiplayer on eSport level

Balancing, Predictability, Replayability

Rewriting an ancient game engine

Motivation ... ehm ... And Pizza!

Release Plans?

@!\$\$\$%! #&%!! \$\$%#@#%\$\$!!!

Why?

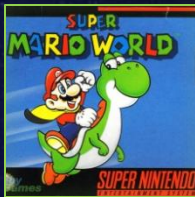
The key to a successful game: A **Community!**



History Lessons



1986



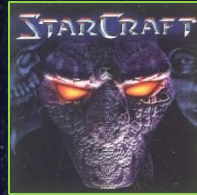
1990



1995



1997



1998



1999



1999



2000



2001



2002



2004



2005



2009

Next Generation
MMOs

Augmented
Reality

Casual
Games

eons ago

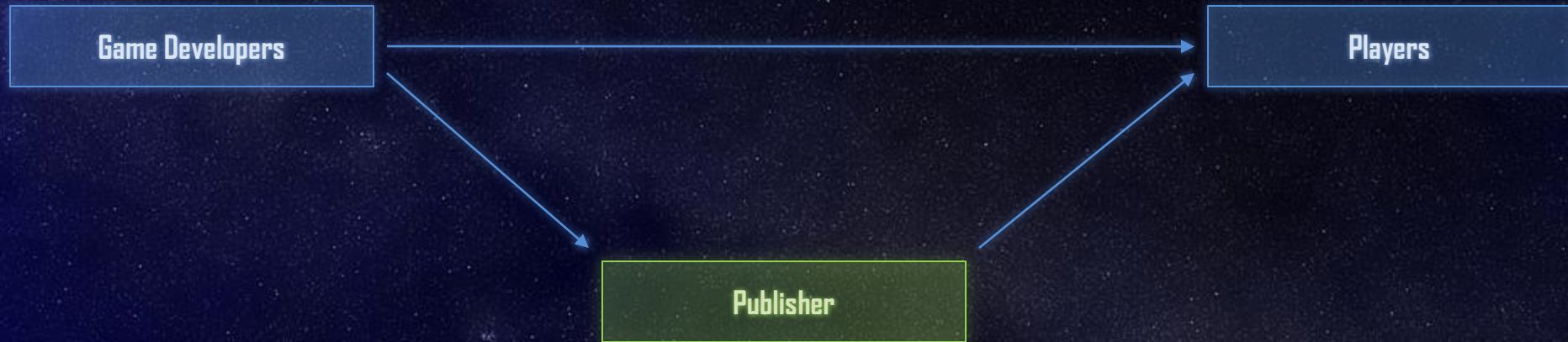
yesterday

today

tomorrow

What to do with a Community?

Producers and Consumers. Still the majority of games.



No management overhead

No community feedback

What to do with a Community?

Community frameworks. Outsourcing!



Predictable Management Overhead. No impact on game development.
No community feedback.

What to do with a Community?

Community Managers and Gamemasters. MMOs.

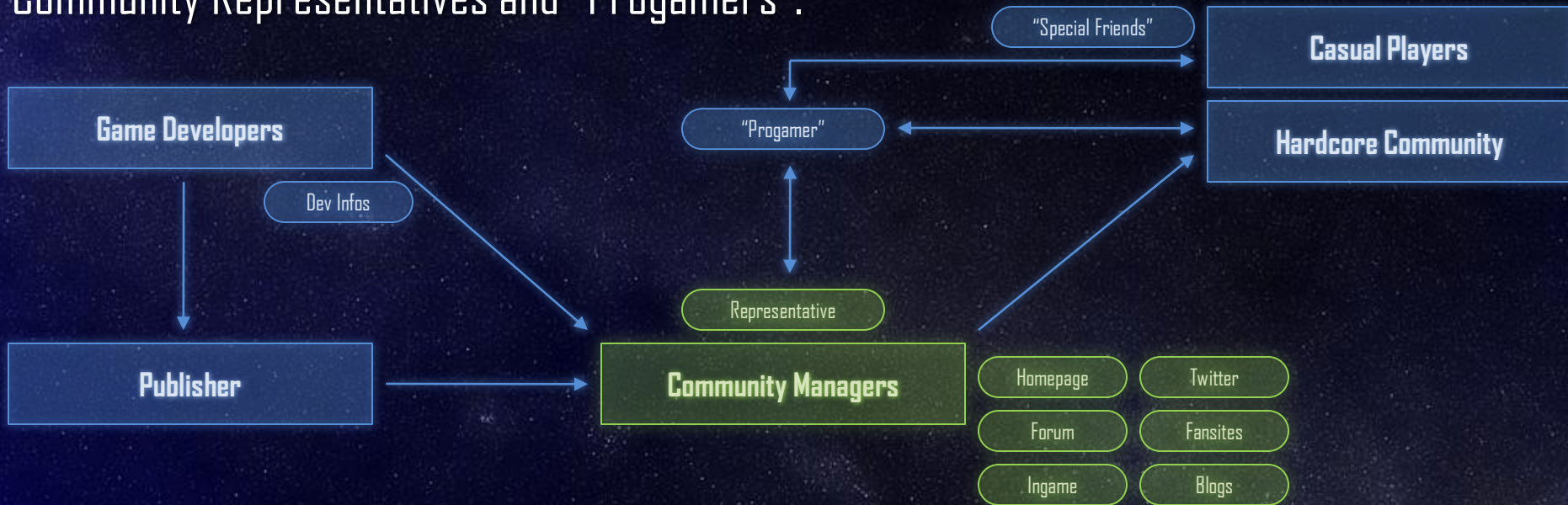


Community Managers have to be kept up to date. Conflicts will arise which will require additional time. More money.

Frequent community feedback. Biased by management.

What to do with a Community?

Community Representatives and "Progamers".

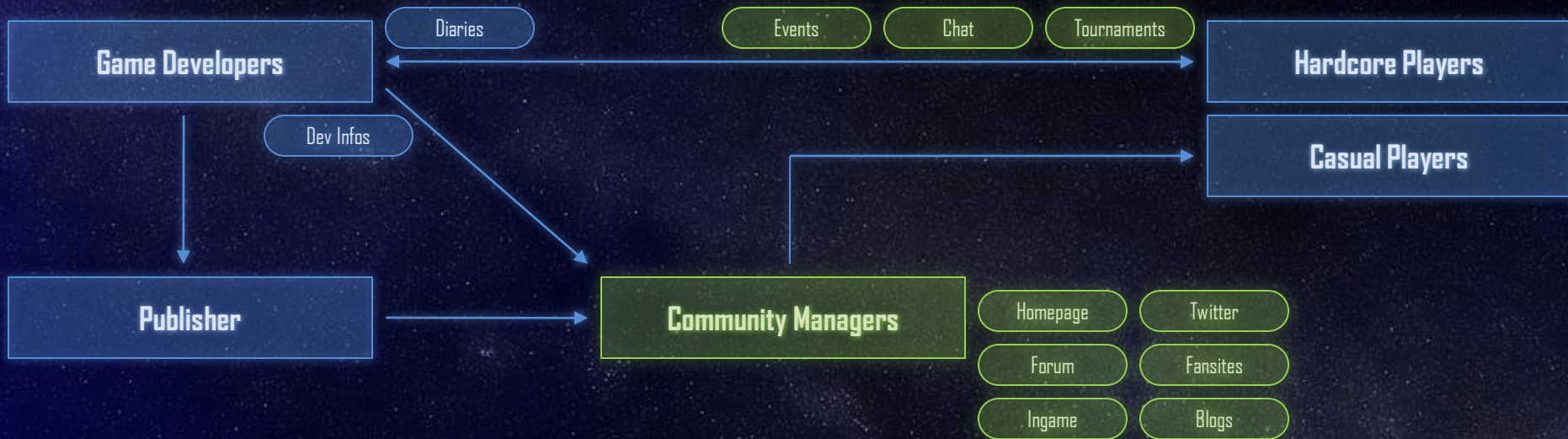


Self-sustaining community management. Managing the social links created by players.
Viral marketing.

Frequent community feedback. Very biased. Risk of community fragmentation, especially if things go wrong.

What to do with a Community?

Direct community interaction.



Players feel much more involved. Incorporating ideas and requests from the player base.
Communication channel untouched by the publisher.

Selected community feedback arrives directly at the developers. Might also produce undesired outcomes for negative feedback.

Enough Theory!



"All science is either physics or stamp collecting."

- Ernest Rutherford

Enough Theory!

How to organize community management?

Start with something to interact with your fanbase.

- Forum (very efficient, bidirectional)
- Twitter (kind of unidirectional)
- Facebook or other social networks (harder to manage, perhaps a bit dangerous)
- Blog
- Newsgroup

Star Trek Armada II: Fleet Operations		
<input type="checkbox"/> General		
 News Announcements and news by us. Post comments about them here.	9371 Posts 196 Topics	Last post by TChapman500 in Re: More about extended ... on Today at 03:23:22 PM
 Star Trek What's your favourite episode? How is romulan ale brewed? - Star Trek in general :-)	12803 Posts 493 Topics	Last post by James Zolar in Re: Future Tense on Today at 04:10:51 PM
 Small Talk Want to say something off topic? Something that has nothing to do with Trek? Post it here.	26841 Posts 1086 Topics	Last post by Myles in Re: Small problem on May 22, 2011, 05:53:23 PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Fleet Operations		
 General Which race do you like most? What do you like - what you don't like? Discuss it here.	21217 Posts 1153 Topics	Last post by Dominus_Noctis in MOVED: Not sure if bug o... on Today at 03:59:03 PM
Child Boards: The Hitchhiker's Guide to Fleet Operations		
 Strategy Share and discuss your gameplay strategies.	3008 Posts 176 Topics	Last post by funnystuffpictures in Re: New Orleans vs Teuto... on May 21, 2011, 08:05:41 PM
 Online Gaming Here you can arrange online encounters and reminisce over past online battles.	7923 Posts 473 Topics	Last post by Myles in Re: Spring 2011 1v1 Tour... on Today at 03:05:02 PM
 Map editing Do you have a question on map editing, how use the map manager or want to make your new map public? Post here.	3790 Posts 400 Topics	Last post by thunderfoot006 in Re: FFA Map In Progress on Today at 10:21:10 AM
Child Boards: Map exchange		
 Modifications I want my 15 rapid-fire quantum torpedo launchers Uber-Defiant now! - Get help from modders. Share your work. Discuss modifications.	9010 Posts 611 Topics	Last post by Terra_Inc in Re: "Hyperspacejump" (JU... on Today at 04:09:31 PM
Child Boards: Completed Mods, Mods in progress		
 Technical Stuff Program aborts? Network configuration? Graphic errors? Bugs? Post your question here.	11735 Posts 1225 Topics	Last post by Dominus_Noctis in Re: Not sure if bug or n... on Today at 03:59:36 PM
 Game Balancing Discussion You feel like a battlecruiser is too weak or a race too strong? Go ahead and discuss it here :)	8190 Posts 290 Topics	Last post by Redshirt in Re: Dominion small yard on May 14, 2011, 03:41:41 AM
 Ideas and Feature Requests Post ideas and suggestions on new features or improvements here.	40078 Posts 2445 Topics	Last post by Tok`ra in Re: Observer status for ... on Today at 03:38:35 PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Star Trek: Armada II		
 General Talk about anything Armada related	1122 Posts 117 Topics	Last post by Myles in Re: Favor request for an... on May 10, 2011, 12:46:11 PM

Forums



Forums

"LOL! That sucks!"

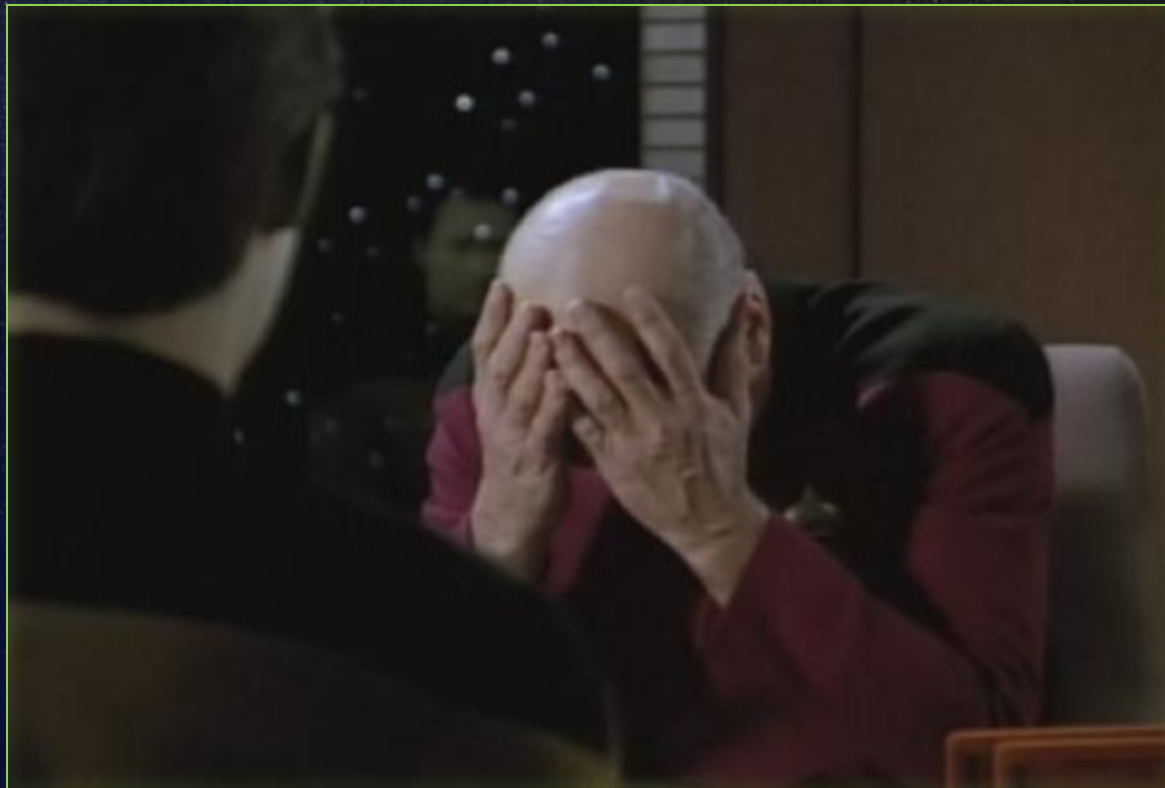
"It is clearly obvious that this unit is overpowered! I lose every time!"

"When will the next version be released?"

"I'm a pro with all the races but the Romulans. They need ..."

"Fleet Operations sucks!"

and many, many more...



Forums

Requests and reports. Stats: Q1 2011

Balancing Requests		108
Bugs	▶	4
Visual Requests		20
New Features		24
Modding	▶▶▶	11
Guides	▶	4
Star Trek		13
Typos		13

Newsposts

The online press.

- Always add some pictures!
- Try to sound a bit professional
- Always keep some candy for the releases
- Never publish release dates if you don't have to

Star Trek Fleet Operations - Behind the scenes

What a busy week! The 3.1.4 patch was released quite unexpected - even for the development team! In the past, we followed a more content-oriented release strategy, which made every update more or less a small expansion pack: a lot of content, but a large time between the patches.

Posted by [DOCaCola](#) on Dec 8th, 2010 [digg this](#) [super bookmark](#)

What a busy week! The 3.1.4 patch was released quite unexpected - even for the development team! In the past, we followed a more content-oriented release strategy, which made every update more or less a small expansion pack: a lot of content, but a large time between the patches. As our multiplayer community continues to grow, we feel the urge to react on smaller bugs and balancing issues faster, which requires more frequent patches with adjustments but less content. So we decided to change our release strategy accordingly, in order to support the community as good as possible.

But that caused a hell of work, as we had to remove the work-in-progress Borg faction redo and restore the 3.1.3 Borg. It also requires to wrap up balancing testing in smaller units and design content updates to make them releasable in smaller packages - which is especially difficult for large-scale changes like the faction redo. Yet, we are confident to master this challenge.

The more frequent patches do also offer new opportunities to us: Delivering small pieces of content, like new Veteran abilities, with every patch. Discovering new stuff is half the fun of a game!

So, what's next on the chopping block? At the moment, we are working on multiple fronts. The most important is probably the Borg faction redo. We are redoing most of the Borg gameplay and implementing their "next generation" features, like expanding Borg space, a more Uni-Matrix feeling, the must-have assimilation and adaption, in order to make them feel as close to the shows (at least the good ones) as possible. The faction redo can't be split into several parts to be released in smaller patches. We can't just change, let's say, the way collective features work, without also adjusting the vessels they apply to. That's why the faction redo will be developed "in the background" throughout the next patches and released once it is done. Other features, like the new veteran abilities or a complete new way of how mixed-tech works (more about that in one of the next blog posts) are easily separated from faction redos or other changes and will tickle in with the next patches. You are not a Borg fan? Do you feel like the next patches won't bring any candy to you? You don't have too! Unlike the Borg faction redo - which is a rather fundamental change - many small changes and features of the redos of other factions were separated into independent content upgrades and will be released as soon as their development is finished in one of the more frequent patches. There are, for example, disturbing reports of new Romulan development to reach the battlefield any moment!

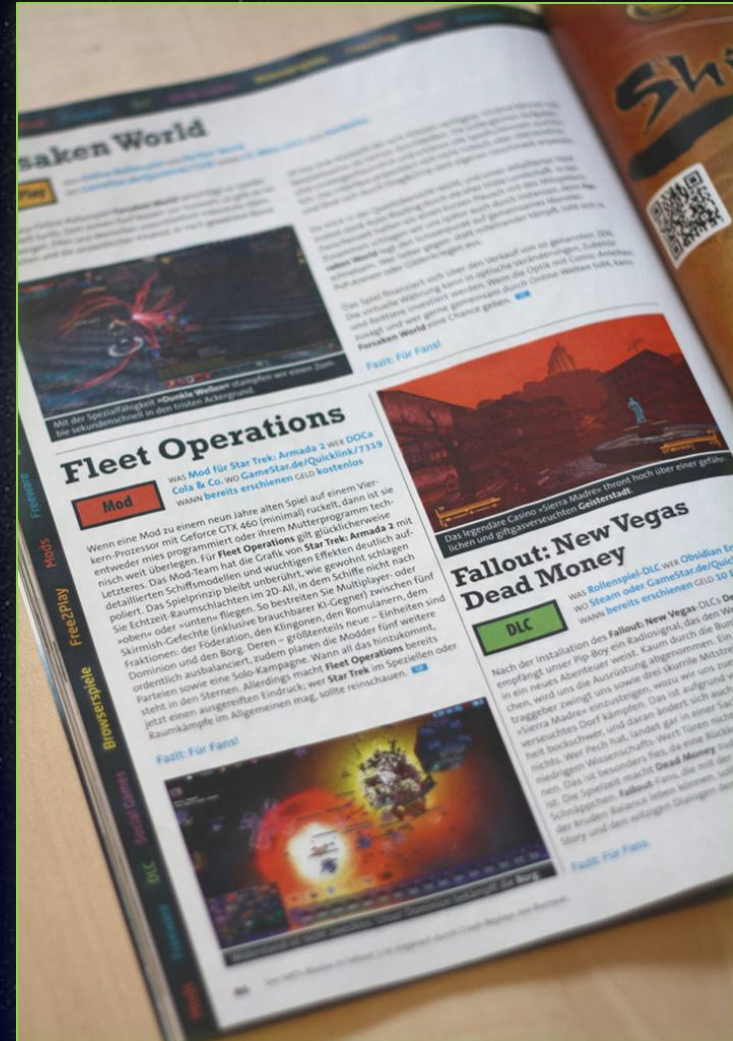


We are looking forward to see where the next patches will lead us. After all, the Fleet Operations "soon" might finally get a little closer to the real-world "soon"!

Magazines

The real press.

- Unless you are hyped, you won't have much control if you are in or not
- Press recognition usually grows with your online presence
- Don't try to force it. Be happy if you are in, but don't expect anything



Community Events

Let your community participate in development

- Design polls, open balancing discussions (perhaps even Teamspeak?)

Give your community the feeling that they participate in development

- "It's on todo"

Entertain your community

- Teamspeak sessions
- Interviews
- Development team games
- Screenshot or art contests

Community

FO Team

7

2






There MUST be a balancing issue somewhere...


Modding

There are many gaming communities out there that evolved around mods

- Counter-Strike
- WoW Addon Community
- Homeworld Complex
- ...

Modifications

 Uber-Defiant mod 15.0 PR	DOCa Cola	Requires: Fleet Operations
 Sigma 2.0 Beta	The Undying Nephalm	Total conversion
 Star Trek Armada II Classic 1.2.6	Mad Doc Software	Total conversion
 Awesome A2 mod 0.1	AirplaneStar16	Requires: Star Trek Armada II Classic
 Best A2 mod 0.1	AirplaneStar16	Requires: Star Trek Armada II Classic



Sigma
Sigma is a total conversion modification for Activision's Star Trek: Armada II. It retains many of the elements of the basic game while expanding into many gameplay concepts that were left untouched. Its main focus is the development of five distinct races for multiplayer, though once the proper tools have been developed a story driven campaign will shed light on a Sigma's plot.

[Launch Mod](#) [Create Shortcut](#) [Visit Website](#)

[Previous Menu](#)

Why not offer Modding to your Community, too?
But be aware: Developers will ask a lot of questions!

Community Building

Where does a community come from?

In the beginning, there was the game.

Why should Tetris have a community?



Community Building

Important factors that push people to start building a community.

Replayability

The secret ingredient of MMOs.

The more time your players spend in the game, the larger gets the chance for them to talk with others about their experience.

Especially powerful if there are choices. "Hey, which class did you chose?"

Probably the strongest factor to build a good community!



Community Building

Important factors that push people to start building a community.

Cooperative Multiplayer

Shared luck gives you double luck.

If players have a good time with their friends in your game, chances are good that they will try to find new friends, using the game as a social channel. To do so, they will require a community.

Very powerful community builder. Uses our very basic social behaviors.



Community Building

Important factors that push people to start building a community.

Competitive Multiplayer

You all must die. I alone am best!

Scoreboards, tournaments, points. If players feel like they are better than others, they will want to express that! Give them a platform to show their size!

Works with our even more basic instincts!



Community Building

Important factors that push people to start building a community.

Socialization

What was this real-life again?

If you online service offers so many social features that players don't want to miss them, they will start building their own community on your platform.

Yep, sometimes you do really feel guilty as a game developer.



Community Building

Important factors that push people to start building a community.

Long Term Goals

What a long strange trip it's been

Offering long-term goals for players to achieve gives them a motive to continue playing. Similar to replayability, this will increase the chance for them to talk with others.

Works excellent as a "hook" or extra candy.

Sometimes, players just want to grind!

Achievement unlocked!



So beautiful!

Use at least five different PowerPoint Fade-In Effects in a single presentation without dying.



The Nasty Slides

Behold the mighty todo!

aye, its on todo

yep, indeed. we will try to improve t
bit out of our scope at the moment.

A redo for Planets is

A fix for that is on t

Project Progress

83 High priority tasks

- New game loading screen
- Changes and additions to Dominion mining (20%)
- Romulan Talon class new model
- Klingon Sang class - new model
- Romulan Leavahl new model
- Breen Battleship new model
- Warbird model update
- New Wormhole model
- new Phalanx model
- Borg Command Cube
- Fix various map placeable vessels
- Klingon Imperial Research model fix
- Update/Replace various Soundsets (20%)
- A new Romulan vessel (50%)
- Fix minor issue with shuttle traffic animation
- Federation Phalanx Class Magnan Fix
- Fix Confront Map
- Enhancements for single player campaign modifications
- Borg Faction Redo (40%)
- New Veteran Abilities (50%)
- Breen T-15 does not gain avatar bonuses
- Enterprise-E Hero (map object)
- Typhon Class from Star Trek Invasion (40%)
- Dominion early game addition (20%)
- Preliminary Supply Fix
- ACS deals friendly damage (50%)

+57 classified tasks

123 Normal priority tasks

- One new planet model
- map object
- Federation Intrepid Texture upgrade
- new borg non-player map object
- Some final Interface Additions
- Federation Custom: New Orleans Class
- update remaining shell elements with new style
- New Klingon Chonaq class model
- put back the borg stuff on models for assimilated vessels
- some starbase upgrades
- Borg station "shuttle"-traffic models
- starfleet command warp-in tweak
- Add Zeich's Cardassian Pack

write is a

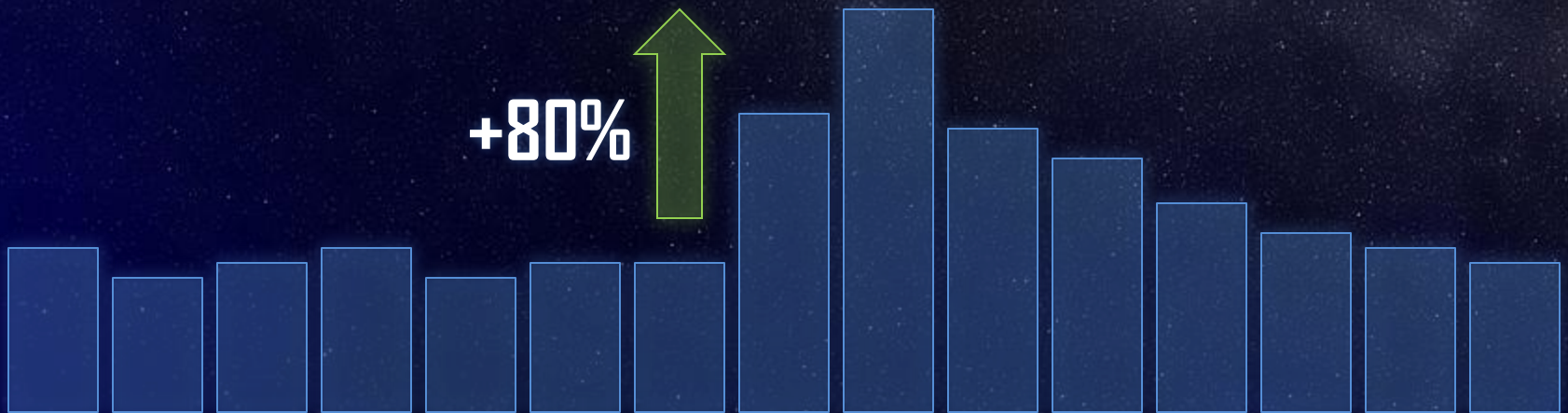
todo 😊

The Nasty Slides

"More frequent releases"

Actually cause a lot more work for us!

But we noticed significant spikes in user counts after patch releases!

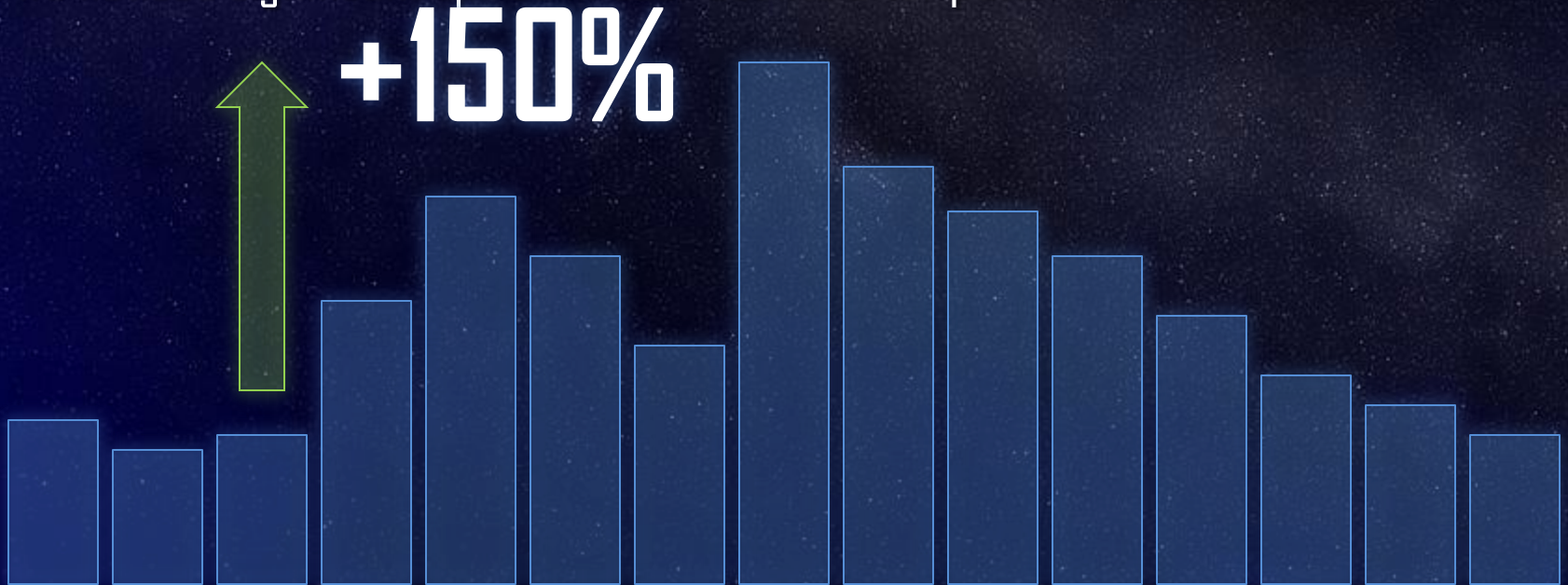


The Nasty Slides

"More frequent releases"

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But we noticed significant spikes in user counts after patch releases!



The Nasty Slides



> Google



The Future

A new community site

A lot of new ingame content (more replayability, customization, achievements, ...)

A new renderer

A new account system

New games



The Future



So what?

- Make something you want to release, be it a game or a tool (although gaming communities are a very unique kind)
- Find out if you actually need an organized community
- Find out if you actually want an organized community
- Decide the amounts of time you want to spend with management
- Build the respective platform
- Don't ask what your community can do for you, but what you can do for your community!
- Enjoy

We made it!

Any questions?

