

December 1, 2010

USF PADD

Gaming

To Explore the
Future...

Has Star Trek Online
Lived up to
Expectations?

Game Appeal

Our Favorite
Star Trek Games

Nostalgia

Star Trek: The
Animated Series



From the Editor

Greetings everyone!

December is already here, and with it come not only frigid temperatures and snow covered landscapes in many parts of the Earth but also a string of holidays. Of course, with holidays comes shopping, be that for food or gifts. And, no one can deny that the newest innovations in high-tech gadgetry are usually in high demand with gift shoppers.

With that in mind, I couldn't help but think of the enormous market that the gaming industry has in connection with electronics and technology. That fact, in turn, led me to the conclusion that "Gaming" would be a logical focus of this month's issue. Since it's a huge field, I decided to keep it strictly aimed at Star Trek games, including video games, simming, and of course Star Trek Online.

All contributors have done an excellent job again! It always amazes me how quickly the pages fill up once I start putting the dozens of items I receive into them. You might note that there are several small contributions. For example, I had asked several people that hadn't even thought of contributing before to write up short parts about their favorite games. And look how wonderful that came together! It just illustrates that contributions don't have to be massive to be in the *PADD*. So, please don't ever think you must be willing to write long articles to be a contributor for the *PADD*.

Unfortunately, we're missing the Photoshop Tutorial and the Cookbook this month due to circumstances beyond my control. No worries, they will be back. But I am looking for more contributors for those sections, if anyone is interested.

You might also noticed that I did some formatting changes in the PDF version. Not only is the cover page image covering the whole first page from edge to edge, but I also decided to make the fonts smaller, as well as there are some other slight adjustments. Overall though, the layout has stayed pretty much the same.

I hope you'll all enjoy reading the fruits of our labor for this month. And please, don't hesitate to give feedback!

Lori

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On the Cover: USF Fleet Logo for STO by Captain Havraha cha'AAnikh

Briefings

USF Fleet

“Ad-Lib”

Animal abuse:

LtCmdrStrent: *stands from the main panel* I'll be down in the engineering alcove if you need me, someone needs to hold the duct tape over the hoses... *grins, and walks off the flight deck, and down to the engineering alcove, bringing all systems online*

AirolDin: ::chuckles at Simon's comment:: How do you make tape out of ducks?

Dr Kaysen Jarv: I don't know actually.

AirolDin: ::shrugs:: I suppose they must have been useful creatures in Earth's past.

- *during a USS Agamemnon sim*

Foreign language courses pay off:

LtJG_Rydekk_Lhidan: ::pushes a button on the wall and a keyboard slides out:: I guess this does it. Anyone read Reman?

USFHavraha: ::shrugs:: Hwaveyiir!

USFHavraha: =/\= ACTION: The TL Starts Up =/\=

USFHavraha: H'Daen > ::slowly stares at Hav::

USFHavraha: ::shrugs:: Lucky ... guess?

- *during a USS Ares sim*

Shameless luxuries:

CaptainCrain: <The new model of Captainschair is mobile. The XO ain't allowed to sit in it. The best feature of the new refit.>

CmdrWatts: ((That's ok, the XO has a holo-hammock.))

- *OOO chatter during a USS Lothlorien sim*

Up close and personal:

AmiraStarr: Food will be the least of our worries if we can't get this wreck back to Alpha. <smiles> She is fine, just a nasty bump and a headache.

AirolDin: ::nods at the Counselor:: I'm glad she's ok. We've lost enough people and I'd hate to lose her especially.

USFBrianaSantori: ((aww Air! I'm touched!))

AirolDin: ((::looks afraid:: It wasn't me! I promise I didn't touch you there, Captain! ...))

- *during a USS Agamemnon sim, referring to Captain Santori's injuries from battle*

Have any interesting lines from one of your sims? Send them our way! We'd love to share the fun and laughs. Use the [feedback](#) link (select "PADD Editor"). For verification purposes, the date of the sim from which the information is taken **must** be included.

Promotions and Appointments

September 2010

- On 201009.03, Commodore **Shane Booker** was reassigned and Captain **Cay'Leb Crain** took command of the *USS Lothlorien*.
- Ensign **Air of Din**, *USS Agamemenon*, was promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade on 201009.07.
- In addition to her responsibilities as Chief Medical Officer on the *Roddenberry*, First Lieutenant **N`alae Leónsbanner** took on the responsibilities of Ship's Counselor.
- First Lieutenant **Rhuann**, *USS Roddenberry*, was appointed to serve as the Acting Chief Engineer on 201009.14.
- Lieutenant **Amira Starr**, *USS Agamemenon*, was promoted to First Lieutenant on 201009.14.
- Lieutenant Commander **Simon Trent**, *SS Nigala*, was appointed to serve as Second Officer on 200909.15.
- Private **Uriel Veltrin** (Marine), *USS Agamemenon*, was promoted to Second Lieutenant on 201009.07.

October 2010

- Commander **Briana Santori** was promoted to Captain and appointed Commanding Officer of the *USS Agamemnon* on 201010.12.
- On 201010.26, Lieutenant Commander **Simon Trent** was appointed as Operations Manager for the *USS Agamemnon*.

November 2010

- Ensign **Jacob Barlow** of the *USS Lothlorien* was promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade on SD 201011.12.
- On SD 201011.14, Ensign **Knomic Broff**, who serves as Engineer on the *USS Ares*, was promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade.
- First Lieutenant **Kai Tama**, *USS Darmok*, was promoted to Lieutenant Commander.
- Twin-Ensigns **Trevor and Travis Cloud**, who serve on the *USS Independence*, were both promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade.
- Ensign **Raeyana Laurie** of the *USS Independence* was promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade.

Congratulations to everyone!!

Been promoted lately? Let us know, so we can announce your milestone here! Please submit your promotional information using the [feedback](#) link (select "Promotions"), or send it to USFBooker@aol.com.

Fleet Field Reports

Snapshots of Sim activities in November

Outpost Phoenix

A mysterious orb? Explosions around the Embassy? The crew of *OPX* is in the midst of a lot of action and chaos on Bersallis III.

Space Station Nigala

Looks like creatures from the Gamma Quadrant that had ravaged a ship gotten loose on the *USS Stargazer* now, which the *Nigala* crew has been taken on a shake down cruise. With a limited crew onboard it won't be easy to hunt the intruders down.

Special Operations Group

Turns out that minefield *SOG* was investigating wasn't a mine field after all, but a debris field of broken up ships. Might some of them be hostile?

SB Everest

The crew of *SB Everest* has a murder case on their hands, after finding a drifting unidentified freighter and running across a gruesome murder scene in one of the quarters. Who's been shedding all this blood?

Starfleet Academy

New cadets and some pranking is keeping everyone at *Starfleet Academy* busy as the new semester heads off.

USS Agamemnon

The crew members of the *Agamemnon* find themselves imprisoned by Federation forces on the charge of possibly being Changlings. What a mess after just having returned to the Alpha Quadrant. Maybe they should have stayed in the Gamma Quadrant?

USS Ares

After disabling two Salt Vampires on a derelict Reman ship, the crew of the *USS Ares* finally found a way to get back to their own universe. Helping the other *Ares* through the wormhole first, they also said their good-byes. The encounter left them with a lot to think about.

USS Columbia

Quite some action going on for the *Columbia*, as the crew had to engage pirates to protect a convoy. Despite some slick maneuvers, the ship didn't get away without damage.

USS Darmok

Attempts to prevent the destruction of the planet Yotaga failed and the *Darmok* was pulled into a rift caused by the planet's annihilation, only to be thrown into another, similar, "universe" -- one where planet killers roam free chomping up entire systems and thereby terrorizing a Federation that has never recovered from the Dominion War.

USS Eclipse

On their way back to Sector 001, the crew of the *Eclipse* enjoyed a Thanksgiving dinner with their Captain.

USS Excelsior

While a wedding is in planning on the *Excelsior*, a trap for the dimension jumping aliens was set. As the

aliens took the bait, a decommissioned shuttle, and began using their hull deteriorating "rust" weapon the *Excelsior* was gathering sensor data. Barely able to beam the Chief Tactical Officer out of the shuttle in the nick of time, they also destroy the alien ship in the end.

USS Federation

After some needed repairs, the *USS Federation* headed out on a route to visit several Starbases, first one being SB 123. Starbase Ops pointed the ship to some unusual readings close to a nebula, and of course, investigating the *Federation* promptly ran into trouble, being swarmed by unmanned fighters.

USS Hermes

In a future time line most of the crew of the *Hermes* were on the shuttlecraft *Lyre*, heading back to the ship in hopes of retaking it from the time-traveling aliens who had captured it. After much carnage they succeed and get the remaining aliens to surrender. Then a man in a "Starfleet" uniform named Duncan contacted them, saying he's from the time ship *Aeon* and that he will take them back to the 24th century and try to repair some of the timeline damage done.

USS Independence

The *USS Independence* has safely returned from the Nexus and was able to get repairs done at a nearby Starbase. Now they have orders to observe a newly formed singularity in the Stardan system. The Stardanians are apparently also interested in a possible future admission to the UFP.

USS Lexington

The *USS Lexington* has taken some shore leave on a M-class planet in the star system L24051. The planet is very similar to Earth, with plants, fish, birds, and other animals, but strangely no intelligent civilization. A survey will be conducted while most of the crew will enjoy leisure time.

USS Lothlorien

Making contact with an unknown species, the *Lothlorien* had to be cautious. Seems these aliens don't know what they want, giving contradictory instructions. This is a delicate situation.

USS Odyssey

Unfortunate circumstances led to a botched final cultural survey of Torvin IV. It has put the *Odyssey's* mission of first contact into jeopardy and left two crew members exposed as aliens and in custody of the natives. The rest of the crew is left to figure out how to get their people back without more cultural damage and assess the possibility of continuing with their first contact mission.

USS Roddenberry

While asking a Dr. Clemens some standard questions the *Roddenberry's* away team was surrounded by armed scientists. Defusing the situation by not resisting, they eventually found themselves "facing" a man they could only make out as a silhouette in the bright light of a doorway. Will they find out who this man is?

Announcements

Starbase Everest and USS Federation

Special Award! Starbase Everest and USS Federation crew members that participated in the Joint Sim operation revolving around the defense of the Federation outpost on Thelian III were awarded with a special ribbon by their Command Staff.

For more information:

- <http://core.sector001.com/cgi-bin/board.cgi?thread=118&post=315>

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Star Trek

Memorable Quotes

Nobody could have imagined the phenomenon that 'Star Trek' became. It's still almost impossible to imagine.

– William Shatner

"If we play our cards right, we may be able to find out when those whales are leaving."

"How will playing cards help?"

– Kirk and Spock, as they encounter Gillian again, "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home"

Intel

Resistance is Futile

It's been 14 years already since "Star Trek: First Contact" has been released in movie theaters, but the main villain of the story still stands out in many fan's memories. In a two-part interview Alice Krige talks about her experience filming *First Contact* and her return in the role of the sexy and sinister Borg Queen for the finale of the *Voyager* series, "Endgame".

Read both parts of the interview:

- Part 1 - <http://startrek.com/article/first-contacts-borg-queen-alice-krige>
- Part 2 - <http://startrek.com/article/first-contacts-borg-queen-part-2>

Physics of Star Trek

A Star Trek based physics course at a college? Really? "How cool!" you say? Well, you'd have to attend classes at Santa Clara University in California, where Dr. Philip Kesten teaches *Physics 5, The Science of Star Trek*. Anyone ready to move?

Take a closer look at this phenomena:

- <http://startrek.com/article/how-star-trek-changed-my-life-dr-philip-kesten>

Event Calendar

Upcoming Star Trek and Star Trek related conventions.

December 3, 2010 – FREE Sci-Fi Market Place, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

December 4, 2010 – Official Star Trek Con, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

February 18-20, 2011 – TrekTrax Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

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Star Trek Online

by Captain Havraha cha'AAinkh

Well boys and girls, there's not as much STO News this month because... well ... most of it was reported on last month! But there's still a couple of things worth mentioning, so let's just dive on in!

Nineteen Wishes Answered

I hear very often "Cryptic doesn't care about its subscribers, they're just all about the bottom line," and I can't wrap my head around this viewpoint because it's simply not what I've seen from Star Trek Online. The following bit of news is exactly one perfect example of why I can't wrap my head around that viewpoint. On the forums, a member named "JT_Marsh" created a thread about 19 wishes he had for the game. In short order, Executive Producer Dan Stahl replied to the post, addressing every wish the subscriber had brought up.

Below is a transcript of this post (in unedited form). The actual post can be found [here](#). For easy identification: parts in bold are the original poster, parts in italics are the replies Dan Stahl made.

1. CLICK TO SIT!!!! 'yea I know its being work on" I also know its not a easy thing or it would of been done."

We are in the process of converting Earth Space Dock chairs, benches, stools - to the new tech right now. I'm hopeful the first of our social areas will be hooked up by Season 3 release day.

2. Assigned officers stations. I want to have a Chief engineer in the engine room. A cook in the gallery. Its Trek! Like Click to sit it should of been in game before the game was out. I bought 2 sets of 2 officers in Cstore and I would so buy more if I could put them some where.

This is part of the First Officer System that is being discussed.

3. Option to put my crew in the same uniforms.

We are awaiting a software update that allows us to share costume data with entities your account doesn't own (i.e. the crew members randomly wandering around your ship)

4. More rooms in ship. "really that can wait until above is done."

We expect the Foundry to have a big part in enhancing ship interiors at some point in the next several releases.

5. Holodeck on your ship so you can have some custom instant action fun.

We expect to hook up a Holodeck door to the Foundry so you can make a mission and then play it by going to your Holodeck.

6. Being on your bridge when your ship is in flight.

We have talked about this, but it requires some software updates that will take some significant time (not to mention it will only be for "solo" missions.

7. I don't mind sector space so much. I like seeing ships flying around in game. Makes the game feel.... Alive. But lets get rid of sector boarders. Just click and fly.

Going to a single persistent zone for sector space is a long term goal of mine. I want to see this happen too.

8. Make you BO more life like. Allow them to get up and walk over to another station lean in and act like they are talking to someone.

This is a great idea but low on the priority list at the moment.

9. View screen chat. Have you enemy pop on the view screen. Or even a private message from a friend. I don't mean real video. I mean simply pic up like it is now. But on view screen.

We've discussed this internally and I could definitely see this happening within the next year.

10. A open pvp star system. "I heard it is being worked on." But lets go one more step. Capture a base or planet and hold it.

We have a test mission in development to work out all the details. Once we work out all the kinks - we'll start getting these areas in game.

11. Animal life on planets. Maybe some that could hurt ya. I know it was talked about.

This was put on hold while we deliberate the good and bad of exploration sectors. Once we determine how we're going to rework exploration, this will get done.

12. Shuttles that can land on planet.

We are working on some cut-scene tech that will allow us to do something like this.

13. Orbit option

This is an interesting idea. I'd be curious if it would work with "any" existing map or if we'd have to hand place orbits to ensure your ship didn't hit anything on the way around.

14. Fleet star bases. " I hear they are coming out but then I hear conflicting reports on what form they will be." Will it be a captains table type thing but with only your fleet can come. Or will it actually be a station in open space? Where people if they knew where to look can visit and ask to come aboard. I hope its the latter. I would like open systems where you stick one in. Maybe varying on size based on players in the fleet and credits. Maybe Dranza size when you have 20 player fleet. Huge space dock size when you have 200 players.

This is all TBD - we want to do Fleet Created and Managed starbases that are a requirement in order to build a shipyard and build your own ships.

15. More servers! I don't like all these instances in space dock. I know it is because of lag, But sometimes it makes STO appear... less players than there is.

We regularly adjust the number of players that can be in each social zone and are always looking to increase this number as computers get more powerful and the transactions that slow down the game become more streamlined.

16. More content for the other side I am federation but I would do the other if it had more content. But really I would rather them finish the one side before adding to the other. Its not being selfish its being practical. There should have been no klingon until they had the federation kinks worked out.

We have always been working on more content for the KDF - it is just a time consuming process. They are getting more patrols in Season 3.

17. EVA or more low gravity planets.

We're waiting for Matt to make us EVA suits - and then we can start having some fun with this.

18. More non canon ships or skins.

This is being discussed. I'd really like to see the ability for players to be able to create their own alien spaceships for use in their Foundry missions.

19. Injury system needs to be redone. I think when your ship is injured. It needs to show it! Not self repair but actually having to go back to space dock and repair. **SHOW THE DAMAGE.** The code it there. But the ship like a borg cube repairs the outside damage! We are not the borg! I would like to see what is done on trek 2, Voyager, and enterprise. I want to look damaged until I get into dock.

We have been discussing ways to do more visual cut-scene like stuff where you have to "dock and repair" etc. I would expect this to happen at some point as a fit and polish task for one of our content designers.

Thanks for all the great suggestions. I liked your list and was compelled to answer

The Future of Space Combat?

Cryptic developer "Snix" recently commented on the forums about his intentions for redesigning space combat in Star Trek Online. In his post, he quickly covers things he considers are problems with the current mechanics and idea they're trying to pursue.

Below is a transcript of his post in unedited form.

Greetings all,

Thanks for all the great feedback in this thread! There have been several examples and possible solutions presented and we'll be making small adjustments soon in 3.1 and 3.2 to help address these concerns.

The one aspect I'll comment on here that I feel contributes negatively to the feel of space combat is the way hull healing can return a ship to 100% in such a short period of time. I believe that a gradual descent to 0%, slowed and held off outright by healing and resistances or accelerated with damage buffs and focus fire, would be preferable to the current extremes of almost dead to full health.

We'll be looking at making some adjustments that assist in avoiding damage while also ensuring that damage dealt is harder to remove. As an engagement progresses, more ships on both sides should be fighting at 75-25% health, rather than one side at 0 and the winning side recovered immediately to 100.

Some possible tweaks that can contribute to this (some of which mentioned in this thread):

Improving the speed defense bonus to avoid damage entirely

Increasing the importance of Shield Power for resistance and shield recovery

A bit more shield bleedthrough by default, which brings hull and shield levels down together gradually and allows more time for regeneration to keep a shield up even if the ship's hull suffers a bit

Reducing the effect of hull healing, especially instant heals, to promote slowed health loss in battle rather than ping-pong between extremes

Lingering minor ship injuries in combat that can be repaired by Crew, but temporarily bestow small debuffs while active

Providing Crew functionality that allows the player to focus their effort on damage control, damage recovery, ship efficiency, or bridge efficiency to allow for a bit of extra defense or offense as the situation warrants

Just some ideas, some of which might be implemented and certainly not all simultaneously. We'll keep working on it to get space combat as close to Trek as possible while keeping game play a priority.

Thanks for all your support,
-snix

The Foundry is Behind Schedule

I think, if I'm not mistaken, I brought up in the last PADD that The Foundry, Star Trek Online's custom mission creation tool, was in closed beta testing but would arrive sometime in November on the Tribble Test Server for open beta testing to get it out in time for the Season 3 Update due out early December. - Turns out I was wrong.

Apparently there are quite a few hiccups with the latest bits of the Season 3 Update in general, not to mention The Foundry. I've seen everything from loading into instances and falling several feet through the floor, through not being able to log in at all, to the most frustrating -- going unresponsive to the server as you load through instances.

Glaring faults like this have made just playing on Tribble a daunting experience despite the various updates Season 3 is offering. To top it all off, Dan Stahl made a forum post essentially saying that The Foundry made some game-breaking bugs when it was originally uploaded to Tribble, so it was removed and they're debugging it at the moment. His official stance on the issue is that they'll get it out for beta testing asap, but ultimately it may not be out in perfect time for the Season 3 release.

Bummer. However, there are several things you can look forward to in Season 3 that they will be releasing early this December:

- **Redesigned Sectorspace** -- The space between spaces, Sectorspace, has been redesigned to reflect the darker, more realistic space atmosphere previously found in the Orellius Sectorblock. You'll also be able to turn on and off astrometrics (the lollipops on the planets and gridlines in space), and have pop-up info boxes about planets you're flying up to. It's a pretty impressive sight and makes the whole game feel far more serious and real.
- **Episode Replay** -- By accessing the computer in your ready room, you'll be able to queue up previously completed missions and replay them for new rewards. The only drawback of this: the enemies will be the same difficulty when the mission was first given to you, so it'll be pretty unbalanced and easy if you play the missions as, say, a Vice Admiral.
- **New Run Duration** -- Now, we'll be able to run halfway around Earth Spacedock in one breath while out of combat! It'll allow for getting around much easier!

So hang in there! The Foundry IS coming!

Pretty Much Everything Possibly Enterprise (ENT) Related is Released to the C-Store!

We knew they were working on a lot of Enterprise related doo-dads. Last STO News, I detailed the T'Pol catsuit coming out sometime soon. I also showed an image of the NX-Class starship refit that was being worked on. Well, this month, in an unprecedented move, Cryptic released ALL ... EVERYTHING ... related to *Star Trek: Enterprise* on one day. And not only that -- you can purchase every bit of downloadable content at one time in a bundle pack and save 20% on the overall cost. Not a bad deal at all!



The Enterprise Bundle Pack includes the T'Pol Uniform, the ENT Era Uniform, The ENT Era Mirror Universe Uniform (yeah, you read that right!), and the NX-Class starship. It's worthy of noting that the Mirror Universe ENT uniforms come with the belt with the knife on it (I mean who doesn't love that?), and the female version has a fantastically awesome midriff. And plunging neckline. If you know what I mean.

Also worth noting is that the NX-Class Starship is another "Lieutenant Level" ship, or in other words "startership" in the same line as the Miranda class you start the game with, and the TOS Era Constitution class you can purchase from the C-Store. So in other words, it's really only useful if you plan to use it with a new character. However, it's still unique because as opposed to being a "light cruiser" like the Miranda and Connie, the NX-Class qualifies as a "light escort". It still

has 2 slots in the front and one in the back like the Miranda and Constitution, but it has a much higher turn rate, like an escort, which means it's a hugely advantageous ship to use. But like most escorts, you get that speed by sacrificing shield strength. It's a weird hybrid in that manner -- agile like an escort, but you still have to fight with it like it's a cruiser.

In any case, let's hope Cryptic does more of these bundles! They're pretty darn nice!

And that's all for this month's STO News! As more is rumored on the forums and Season 3.1 and 3.2 approach, be sure to keep watch for more snippets of news from the game!

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Sciences

Watching the Universe

Peanuts in Space

Well, there were "Muppets in Space", why not "Peanuts"? Though this one has nothing to do with Charlie Brown and his gang. It turns out to be a little peanut-shaped comet (little in comparison to some other comets) named Hartley 2 that has been discovered less than 25 years ago, in 1986 to be exact. According to researchers its 6.3 year orbital period used to actually be longer, and has been reduced due to a few close approaches to Jupiter in the recent past. Seems like our little visitor likes hanging around us more frequently. Who wouldn't!

For more information and some great pictures:

- Image Gallery at NASA - http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/epoxi/gallery-index.html
- Gary W. Kronk's Cometography - <http://cometography.com/pcomets/103p.html>

Old but Fertile

It seems not everything that's old is beyond giving birth. As astronomers come to realize that, once thought of as being past their heydays, many elliptical galaxies have shown some surprising new life. The findings have caused more ground for study.

For more information:

- NASA - http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/science/ancient-galaxy.html

Changing Stripes

Can a tiger change its stripes? Maybe not. But a Jupiter apparently can, and has done so before. Earlier this year, scientists have noted that one of Jupiter's brown stripes had changed to white. It seems this phenomena happens every few decades, and the brown color eventually returns as Jupiter's turbulent atmosphere has some interesting effects on its cloud decks.

For more information:

- NASA - <http://www.nasa.gov/topics/solarsystem/features/jupiter20101124.html>

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USF Features

To Explore the Future...

Interviews with High Command Members on the Future of Simming

all information was obtained

by Commander Loriaarra, First Lieutenant Solik, Cadet Malachi Styles, and First Lieutenant Leyva Torosi

1. How long have you been involved with simming, and USF in particular?

Commodore Robb Clemens: Since 96.

Commodore Shane Booker: Since 1996.

Admiral Caitlin: Since 1995, for both. I didn't start with USF, just joined the same year I started simming.

Rear Admiral John Styre: The only simming I've done has been with the USF, and I've been an active member since August 1997.

Vice Admiral Ahrele Oliver Johannson: I joined the USF on March 6, 1996. I had not simmed with any other group before that time, so my simming experience and my time in the USF go hand in hand.

Commodore Keirana Hunter-Clemens: I have been with the USF since 1998, I believe. I have simmed under multiple characters on several different ships. The USS Odyssey was the first ship I simmed on as Keirana Hunter-Clemens. USS Aldrin was the second ship I served on as Jessica A. Knight.

Commodore Ray Packard: The simming as we know it here in the USF, about as long as I've been with the group itself. I joined AOL back in late 1996 and joined two groups at once. One being the USF, and another group whose name I can't recall. Funny part was, I thought the USF option was the one that wasn't going to work out for me ... but I think my first real introduction to any sort of trek role-playing was through the message boards of Prodigy. When I was around 12.

2. In your opinion, has simming changed since you started? What are the major differences that stand out to you?

Johannson: I do think that simming has changed over the years. In the early years ships had far more active members and people moved up through the ranks a lot faster. There were tons of logs being written by most players with serious log wars between sims.

Clemens: The art of simming hasn't changed. However, the dynamics that we work under today are much different than what they were back in the day. Many of the ships had 15 to 20 members at a sim. We don't have that today... also, life seems to intrude more today than it did before... I know that I used to pump out many logs and lots of Joint Logs, and today, it's just hard to find that quiet time and concentration it seems. I find myself drawn to doing JLs more than anything.

Hunter-Clemens: Simming has changed. The biggest change being that there are so few simmers and writers in simming groups. The dedicated remain in the simming world because they enjoy writing and they enjoy being in the company of online friends, while others... feel that simming is a bit old-

fashioned and find newer entertainment in video and computer games. I've seen this in the regular off line RPG groups you find in comic/gaming stores. There's a market for it... but not a big market.

Caitlin: I consider online simming a natural progression from table RPGs, which I began playing when I was 11. Simming has not changed much from its basic nature, to my perception. The biggest refinements have been developing the sort of shorthand we use to convey certain ideas... conventions like ~ before and after text to indicate thoughts or telepathic remarks and + for comm messages.... "AXN" commands and so forth. I think sim groups and simmers experience changes much more than simming, itself, does.

Packard: I may not be the best person to ask. Most of my experience is within the USF. I do remember through Prodigy, it was more about writing stories (Anyone who has served with me knows how proficient I am with logs! .. insert laugh track here) and playing off each other's stories to move things along. So the biggest change for me was simming live, in the same room with over 10 people. I don't think simming has changed much at all since then. I don't count that as a bad thing. If it ain't broke, right?

Styre: Certainly, there's less interest in simming now than there was in my first few years with USF. That's only natural given the different online entertainment options that didn't exist back then, but we're a far cry from the days when sims would regularly exceed AOL chat room capacities. It's also a different environment without a "modern" Star Trek program around. DS9 provided a strong fictional framework for simming, for example, but there's no consistent "modern history" going on right now. You could set a sim in the universe of the recent Trek film, but we know so little about it.

Booker: I think there have been some minor trends that have come and gone, and some that have been developed that are still around. Simming was quite new when the USF started, so as simming and the USF grew methods were developed that improved the experience as a whole. I think one major change is that Sims don't have to be just one hour anymore, or even less than hour. Back in the early days the USF had 3 sim rooms and back to back sims would share one room, meaning a sim would have to end action at 10 before the hour to recap and end and vacate the room before the next sim. We even shared a public AOL conference chat room with other groups at one point, so Sims were a bit fast paced, even rushed at times, or end incomplete to end at the specific and necessary time. Now a days, we have more rooms and the ability for sims to end when the host teams and crew want them to, making for a better quality experience.

3. Have you ever played any Star Trek related electronic games, such as video games, PC games, or Star Trek Online (STO)? Do you still play any of them now?

Caitlin: Yes, I have, and, no, I don't.

Clemens: I've played Borg and Legacy, and the Klingon flight simulator game, too. Oh, and the Voyager Elite game. But now I only play the STO game. I barely got up to Captain on that last month.

Booker: Only a few of the old ones. I recently re-picked up Star Trek The Next Generation Birth of the Federation. And there are a few Facebook trek games that I have tried. But there is a list of a few games that I have played.

Styre: Ironically enough, I'm not a fan of online gaming. But I have played various platform and PC games, dating back to the old TOS 25th Anniversary/Judgment Rites games in the early '90s. I haven't really kept up with Trek gaming of late, though.

Johannson: I have not ever played Star Trek Online. I own a couple of the Star Trek computer games...Borg and Klingon and enjoyed them, but that is the extent of my computer game experience. Once I won those games, they got put on the shelf.

Packard: A few in my day. Star Trek 25th Anniversary game. The interactive games, Star Trek Klingon and Borg. Think the one I played the most was Birth of the Federation, even played that online on the MSN boards. I was even the proud owner of a 3D chess set first seen on TOS! As for Star Trek Online ... I have been a subscriber for the past 2 months, and have only played once. So far, it hasn't captured my imagination. I'm hoping that changes.

Hunter-Clemens: I've never played any of the electronics games. If I have, it's been in an arcade of a movie theater or the occasional Nickel Mania where the games Star Wars and Star Trek are there to play. Otherwise... I have never owned a gaming station like Xbox, or Nintendo Wii, or Playstation. And I don't have computer games to play. Nor have I participated with STO. I know a shock, huh? Especially since I have very limited to no internet access.

4. Considering how much publicity STO has received, drawing quite a crowd of Star Trek fans in response, have you noticed any impact of that on sim attendance, less log writing, a decline in USF membership, or fewer new applications?

Caitlin: I haven't noticed a trend, either positive or negative, that I can positively associate with STO, no. I was actually hoping it might have a slight positive impact, when it first got started.

Styre: I haven't noticed a significant impact since the game was released, no. We're certainly seeing a decline in all the elements you mention, but I think that decline has been ongoing, and I don't think it intensified this year.

Booker: I have not noticed any changes. I don't oversee new applications so I don't about fleet wide new applicants, but less sim attendance? Less log writing? Less USF membership? No, I don't think that STO has hurt the USF.

Johannson: Unfortunately, there has been a steady decline in simmers for several years now. I don't believe Star Trek Online has had any significant impact on the USF one way or the other. I'm not sure what has caused the decline in log writing over the years. There are many really good writers in the USF, but there are far fewer logs being posted than there used to be. I know that I used to write far more than I do now. I guess I'd blame it on real life getting in the way of my time.

Packard: There were fears the game would hurt attendance, but I don't think that ever really happened. In my opinion any form of entertainment, can affect attendance. I'm thinking Farmville hurts my sim's attendance more than STO ever could. That's not to say attendance hasn't gone down, but we're taking over the span of years. I don't see STO having any negative effect. Simming was never really mainstream to begin with, but now it's more niche than ever. Which is not necessarily a bad thing. Give me a small group of dedicated simmers over casual players any day.

Clemens: No, and we were concerned about that happening. But really they are two different gaming experiences. I think what has hurt us the most is the fact that we don't have a new and exciting series on TV anymore. It's a complete shame... while Enterprise is certainly the most famous of the ships, Voyager proved that an audience can be captured with a different ship and crew... many think Star Trek Titan is in order. We were hoping to have a boost from the Franchise's relaunch of Trek, but that didn't happen either. So really I think we've probably stayed rather consistent through the STO

launch.

Hunter-Clemens: I'm not too familiar with STO. I have heard of it, but never really participated or found out too much about STO to really know its impact on the USF. However, up until a year and some months ago, before I lost my steady internet due to some life changes and challenges, there has been a decrease in sim attendance, log writing, and in membership... Whether it's due to STO, I can't say. But opinion and observation to me, before I had to leave simming in the last year, says that the decrease is due to real life catching up with us and having to retire characters and computers, and for those who feel that simming is just too old-fashioned and perhaps a bit boring.

5. What is your view of the future of simming?

Johannson: I hope that simming continues on for many more years, but I fear that if we continue to lose players, the USF will have to slowly close sims to keep pace with that loss. But, as long as there are people who want to sim, the USF will be here.

Packard: I'm sad to say, I don't think there's any possibility for growth. It'll be up to the old simmers to keep things going. And if we can get enough new blood here and there, I don't see it (or specifically the USF) going away any time soon. The 'glory' days of simming, I think are gone for good. But as I said before, might not be such a bad thing. Dedicated simmers are far more valuable than casual ones. Even if that means smaller numbers of simmers overall.

Caitlin: I think there will always be simmers, in some format or another. If I had to make a prediction, I would say that sometime, in the not-too-distant future, we'll be simming in 3D environments. A sort of 21st century riff on holodeck technology, made possible by advancements and enhancements in existing technology -- conference call meets computer modding meets 3D TV, etc. Too bad we can't have actual holodecks... but virtual holodecks are likely attainable.

Styre: Simming has always been a niche interest, and with the aforementioned variety of online entertainment options, the niche is naturally going to grow smaller. But while the USF might not be as robust as it once was, it's still a healthy, successful organization, and there are several other active sim groups out there as well. What we do is appealing to many people, and until there's a gaming option that allows the total freedom and creativity of text-based sims, simming isn't going anywhere.

Booker: I think simming has a strong future. There are a lot of people out there that Trek Sim in different methods not just in the way we do in the USF or the other groups out there. Trek is strong, as long as that is the case, so is simming. Like with any hobby, technology changes it. Technology has changed and enlarged the grasp of the USF, as technology continues to increase the grasp of the USF can also increase. Personally, I think the USF has the potential to go international. -- To have sim times that cater to those in Europe and in other "far away time zones". That would be an amazing thing to see. My sim has actually had 3 simmers from the United Kingdom in the past month.

Clemens: Like all good things, I think one day the USF will finally have to close shop. However, I don't know that we're going to hit that anytime soon. We have had many folks come and go, but there are those that come back as well. In all honestly, I think that simming is the new way of telling a story around the camp fire that used to be done by folks in the old days. Or the gathering around the radio and listening to the stories. I think that while we have folks around we'll adapt and change as much as we can. The one beautiful thing about the USF is that we're all story tellers. We all have a story to tell of a man or a woman on a starship and the adventures that they run into. Not so unlike the Flash Gordons and Dale Evans of the 20's or 30's whenever the first radio shows came out.

Hunter-Clemens: I would hate to imagine that simming in the future would become completely obsolete and so outdated that there would be no one interested at all in the game so that it would wither and die. Instead, I think that simming will survive in pockets on the internet to those that want to exercise their fingers and type madly onto a key board, and keep creative and imaginative stories posted for those who love to entertain others through the characters we have created. It is one of the very big reasons why I have stayed with the USF. Every time I have had to take a sabbatical to deal with real life, the USF has been around for me to pick up a new journey. Most simming groups that I have been in are not so lucky. They shut down due to lack of attendance whether it be life for the simmer or the simmers' lack of interest.

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Has Star Trek Online Lived up to Expectations?

by Captain Havraha cha'AAnikh

I was asked to write an article about Star Trek Online (STO), because I'm probably the resident crazed-enthusiast of the game here in the USF and the article's subject was going to be whether STO had lived up to expectations. When the idea for the topic was proposed to me, I couldn't help but be perplexed by the question. What expectations? Who's expectations? Star Trek fans' expectations, MMO fans' expectations? It's a loaded question because the answer is irrevocably "no", but that's simply because there is no way for one game to meet every single person's expectations. But I do know my own personal expectations for the title, and whether or not the game has hit them.

But the answer is more multi-layered than a simple yes or no. Star Trek Online's expectations have quite possibly wavered dramatically from one instant in its development period to another, and that's because its development period has wavered dramatically as well. For you to fully appreciate where STO is, how far its come, and what people expected from it, you have to know the history of Star Trek Online.

Where No Game Had Gone Before... Or Ever Would

Originally, Star Trek Online was a title announced by Perpetual Entertainment. Perpetual worked on Star Trek Online from 2004 to 2008. At first, their own expectations for the title were grandiose. They released this in-game screenshot of what they had been working on and planned to make the entire game look like.



On top of that, they revealed screenshots of concept art they had made, indicating that they not only intended to split classes up by department, but also by the species you chose. The original four species announced were Humans, Vulcans, Andorians, and Tellarites.



Obviously at this point, everyone's expectations were fairly high, but they wouldn't stay that way for long. After lots and lots of silent time went on, the attitude of Perpetual apparently changed. They started releasing talk that the game had changed to a more "stylized" art style, and they released the first screenshot of in-game combat --

The picture was undoubtedly small for a reason -- they were concerned about the reaction players would have, and yes, players' reactions were not positive. CBS quickly came out saying they were happy with how the game looked, and that they "would have produced shows that way if they had the budget", but that didn't stop the mumblings that perhaps something wasn't right at Perpetual. It wasn't too long until Perpetual released its first shot of space with their new stylized look --



And honestly, I remember reading about a lot of speculation about Perpetual cutting corners to save money. Around 2008, it was announced that Perpetual Entertainment had gone bankrupt, and subsequently, Star Trek Online had been canceled.

Imagine what your expectations for STO would have been at this time! You'd gone from being on top of the world that Star Trek was going to have an MMO, patiently waiting for it with excitement, only to find after 4 straight years that it would never be. Yeah, your expectations aren't just low. They're basement low, and that's a sad thing.

But maybe it's a good thing! People like me were well aware of what happens when these things go wrong. Sony Online Entertainment, the developers of one of the most popular MMOs out there, EverQuest, had originally got the license to create a little title they called Star Wars Galaxies.



Yeah yeah, it was way older than the mumblings of a Star Trek game, but when it came out, it was the single largest and dare I say bestest MMORPG on the market. It was huge! Everyone played it! I played it! But that wouldn't last. A company called Blizzard Entertainment had been working on a game for 5 years that they had bet the house on, and that game was called World of Warcraft. It came out, went head to head with SWG, and started siphoning away subscribers like a hose down an X-Wing's fuel supply. In a desperate attempt to keep subscribers around, Sony opted to radically and dramatically remake the entire SWG game, much to fans horror, and as the "new" SWG went live, the last of us filed out and left. It remains a grim reminder to the gaming community how an MMORPG can be on top of the world, and

when it loses focus on what it is the fans want, it can die a rapid, rapid death.

So maybe it was a good thing Star Trek Online was canceled then? If the game had been released with increasingly worse quality, wouldn't it be for the better that it never came out at all? Isn't it true that we could imagine Star Trek Online being better than anything that would have ACTUALLY come out at that point? This was the attitude I had taken on the matter -- STO being canceled was a blessing in disguise, because I wouldn't have one more Star Wars Galaxies to mourn over.

Enter Cryptic Studios

Five months after Star Trek Online was canceled with the bankruptcy of Perpetual, Cryptic Studios, the creator of the popular superhero MMO entitled City of Heroes, announced they had taken up the mantle to create and release Star Trek Online. Not only that – they released a trailer to prove it could be done!

Click this URL to See the Original Announcement Trailer! -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loky56-KfdQ>

Now this was truly frightening! I was simultaneously excited and frightened. Cryptic not only had a knack for producing what a lot of people called "generic" MMOs, but they also had a staggeringly short amount of time to make the game. Most MMORPGs take 5 years to build to full level -- 4 years had already been wasted piddling with Perpetual, and Cryptic had been given a whopping 2 ... count em ... TWO years ... to fully produce an MMORPG with only Perpetual's concept art to go by. As exciting as it was, it was also frightening.

On top of this, Cryptic announced several dramatic departures from Perpetual's model. Star Trek Online by Perpetual Entertainment would have continued 30 years after Star Trek Nemesis, with the Klingons in happy standing with the Federation and the Romulan Empire seeking to ally itself or join the Federation after the events of Nemesis. Cryptic went in the other direction with the title. Not only were the Romulans angry, antagonistic, and attempting to build up forces to attack the Federation after the events of the Hobus explosion -- no no, Cryptic wouldn't stop there. Now even the Klingon Empire had turned against their allies of several years, with a war breaking out between them and the Federation. Everything -- all the peace that had been built up by Gene Roddenberry's series over the past few decades -- would be torn down by Cryptic's title. Would it work? How would fans respond? What are the expectations of a game that sought to destroy much of what Star Trek lore had created?

Cryptic's Star Trek Delivers Visually



Apparently, positive! Despite a 2 year development schedule and a sketchy sketchy plot, Star Trek Online debuted to mixed reviews. Most reviewers praised the space combat and gorgeous graphics, but complained that most of the game felt repetitive and incomplete. But that didn't keep players from supporting the title with a massive, massive amount of players purchasing Lifetime Subscriptions -- 1 time fees of 300 dollars, so they would never have to worry about paying 15 dollars later for the rest of the life of the game. This is something Cryptic has done with other titles, but it's a double-edged sword. Gamers were gambling that their title would last for at least 2 years (for them to make up their investment). What would have happened if Star Trek Online had fizzled out abruptly? Only a couple of months after the MMO "All-Points-Bulletin" was released, its servers closed down. I still see copies of the game for sale on the shelves, and I worry about the poor guy that would buy the title and not realize it's an MMO that died. But think of all the people who would have been upset if they purchased 300 dollar lifetime subscriptions and STO died out of the gate!

But that's just the thing -- the massive influx of lifetime subscribers proved one thing -- the undying optimism of Star Trek fans. I too bought a lifetime subscription, with one thought in mind -- Star Trek fans will buy anything Star Trek, and they wouldn't let this game fail. And that's exactly what's happened. A short development schedule (which saved on development costs), a massive influx of cash out of the gate, and a microtransaction store all infused Cryptic Studios with a ton of money ... they're not hurting at all economically, and that means that they can keep Star Trek Online ... well... online, for all of us.

But Is It All Tribbles and No Troubles?

Well not exactly. There were and still are a lot of problems with Star Trek Online. To be honest, the game is still very incomplete. I find something that aggravates me every day. For example, take the option to link Star Trek Online to your Twitter or Facebook account so it will automatically post your achievements. This feature, although there in game, doesn't actually work or do anything.

Another example happens when you beam down to the moon of Andoria. There you will find an entire social area set up for dueling your friends. In fact, the NPCs are standing around encourage you to try it out! The problem? Dueling doesn't exist in Star Trek Online -- it's a feature that was never finished, and isn't on the development schedule anytime soon.

Early on, Cryptic boasted about its "Genesis System" technology, and how it was able to automatically build and create entirely new systems and planets for us to explore. Unfortunately, the Genesis system manifests itself in the final product as a number of low-quality, run-of-the-mill generic exploration missions full of empty starbases and empty planets with no one else to bump into, meet, or save. It's just wholly underwhelming from what was promised.

Klingons themselves appear as an afterthought -- it was announced fairly early on that Klingons would be a "PVP-Only Faction". What that means is that your only method of advancing as a Klingon is to fight people playing as Starfleet officers, but that's not easy to do, considering most people playing as Starfleet officers want nothing to do with player-versus-player combat.

For the first 6 to 8 months of the game's life, most of the advancements under Executive



Oh boy...

Producer Craig Zinkevich lead to more end-game content being added, specifically Special Task Force missions that not everyone liked. About 8 months into the game's life, Zink stepped down from his role as Executive Producer, and that's when things started looking up for Star Trek Online.

Zink was replaced by Executive Producer Dan Stahl, who immediately took the title in another direction. Instead of adding new Special Task Force missions, Stahl's goal was to address complaints players have with the game. The two major complaints were that there wasn't enough content in the game, and that Klingons needed something to do other than PVP. That has been the focus of STO for the past several months, and the difference is overwhelming.

The level-cap has been raised, we've received new ships, and new missions. We've received repeatable missions we can do every day for a special currency, and we've seen the debut of "Featured Episodes", or in other words a new episode being released every Saturday that follows a story arc, with special rewards for completing them! Klingons have received their own special enemy, the Fek'ihri, and several episodes revolving around them. Concerned that there's too much fighting going on, they've introduced a "Diplomatic Corps", with special missions that revolve around diplomacy and puzzle and problem solving as opposed to combat. And ultimately, coming out in December, Cryptic is releasing The Foundry -- a new tool for players themselves to make their own missions and share them, so the content amount of the title will explode.



If we could go back in time and change Star Trek Online, would we?

So, what was your question? Oh, that's right. Has Star Trek Online met expectations? Well, that depends on what your expectations are. As for my own opinion? That's hard to nail down as well. Personally, STO doesn't achieve everything I hoped it would because ultimately it lacks an element that I find very powerful in MMOs, and that's the exploration factor. I've played several of these games before, and the ones that stick with me are the titles that I can get actually lost in -- that I can stumble upon something that no one else has ever seen before in the game, and relish in that fact that I could stay there and probably never be found. That just doesn't happen in Star Trek Online, and it's because

the game is very instanced and controlled -- you enter into star systems that are typically your own private versions of the space -- others can enter that system as well, but only under certain very specific conditions or missions, and they're automatically teamed with you and expected to help. In a way, I wish you were able to choose whether to ignore someone in need or help them, but the game simply doesn't work that way. When you beam down to a planet, it looks huge, but is actually an empty, lifeless walled in area... not exactly any place you can be proud to make a discovery in.

Another area I expected to be stellar, but wasn't, is the powers. I based a lot of this expectation off Cryptic's other title, Champions Online, that allowed you really fully customize your character in a way that is very satisfying. As you progressed through the title, you were given superpowers that really made you feel like you were pretty awesome. Star Trek Online, for the most part, lacks this. You click a power that buffs your abilities, and they do statistically, but they're graphically not that impressive. Its only upon playing as a Science officer that I'm remotely starting to have "fun" with some of the abilities I'm capable of, and it's disappointing that there isn't more of that or that it doesn't apply for tactical officers.

But it's the places I didn't have expectations in that I'm most impressed with Star Trek Online! Cryptic has really pushed the envelop in MMO design in some cases with the game. For one example, most of these MMORPGs involve people stumbling around screaming "LFG! LFG!" (Looking For Group) or otherwise desperately trying to find someone to play with. The creation of guilds were the first attempt to counter this lack of an ability to find people to play with, but all that did was make very exclusive clubs that segmented the players. Star Trek Online introduces auto-teaming. If you and someone else are entering the same system, it automatically teams you together, so the game will help you find other people to play with and make new friends. On one hand this is apart of the problem that keeps us from being able to choose to help other players or not, but on the other hand its really an ingenious way to make LFG a thing of the past. In a way, one could complain that STO doesn't utilize auto-teaming enough!

Another area that I'm impressed with in STO is this concept of attaching powers to items, which the game refers to as kits. In other MMORPGs, you trained yourself to have certain powers, and then you had them -- you were stuck with them. If you wanted different abilities you had to retrain your character. In Star Trek Online, training your character only changes the EFFECTIVENESS of these abilities -- the actual abilities you can do, however, are determined by which "kit" you have equipped. As a science officer, you can switch from being a medic, to a full-fledged physician in powers, all the way to a geophysicist in your skillset ON THE FLY by changing out different items you're wearing. Its a novel idea that's all around over-looked, even by the so-called MMO-experts that play and review these games, and I'd like to see it expanded upon further.

So if you were to ask simply me if "my" expectations of STO have been met, then the answer is "no". But as I've explained above, just because something doesn't meet what you expect, doesn't mean what you don't expect can't positively influence your opinion of Star Trek Online. Star Trek fans may expect lots of talking and little shooting. If that's what you expect, then no, it hasn't met those expectations. MMORPG fans might expect something that shall dethrone World of Warcraft as the King of the Hill, and if that's what you're expecting then no, it hasn't reached those expectations either. But if you're expecting a game you can play with your friends that lets you design your own Starfleet or Klingon officer, customize a starship, and fly around in space as you fight Klingons, Romulans, Cardassians, Borg, Species 8472, and aliens we've never even seen before -- while being treated to a take of the future universe of Star Trek Online then yes, Star Trek Online has met expectations. And if your expectations are a little higher than that, they I can tell you that no ... it hasn't reached those expectations. But its boldly going in that direction, whether you like it or not!

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Game Appeal

a discussion on Star Trek gaming

by Lieutenant Falco Fogarty and Commander Lorianra

"Simming is a hobby. MMORPG's are an addiction. One that you pay for."

-- First Lieutenant Fred Fogarty

Lori: Ok, so Falco, I have to admit I'm not very familiar with gaming. I sim and love it very much for various reasons. Though, I have never truly played a Star Trek video game but only watched others play. And I have very little experience with Star Trek Online (STO), meaning I have a demo account and played through the tutorial but not much more.

In all honesty I'm pretty horrible at it. Of course, I know you have done all three forms of gaming, right?

Falco: Correct, I've played several PC games, and a few on other consoles.

Lori: And you simmed on different USF sims before, and played STO?

Falco: That is correct. I've been on four different ships, and have guest simmed for a few more. And I had an STO account for a short time before I couldn't pay for it any more.

Lori: Yes, one of the downsides of MMORPGs and video games in general, I guess, no free play. At least not for STO. I suppose that's why I like simming for one thing, it's free!

Falco: Well yes, MOST online MMORPG's are monthly pays. I've played a few that are not, but they restricted your access. And that does lend an advantage to simming, but if you don't have the ability to picture in your head what's happening, then things can become a bit confusing.

Lori: Very true. Many people are very visually oriented. I have to say, I never had a problem picturing things in my head. I have quite an active imagination to be honest, and being able to make up my own character exactly the way I want, and then writing stories about that character, taking her down whatever path I decide, has great appeal to me. I don't see that possible in STO and/or Star Trek video games. You're always stuck to a certain story line.

Falco: That depends on how you play it. I, myself, would role play my character like I would when simming, staying completely in character. You still have the limited stories, but if the game is popular enough the game creators will add more story as the game goes on.

Lori: Yeah. As I've noticed STO has been doing, according to the news Captain Havraha has reported. I suppose I just don't see the appeal of it because I do have to stick to some story line that is not completely my own. Plus, like I mentioned before, I stink at playing any sort of video games short of puzzle games.

I especially despise the "shoot them up" games. I know you don't necessarily and you also like strategy, correct?

Falco: I believe you mean FPS, first player shooter games, which a few Star Trek games have been, and I've played them. But it all depends on my mood. If I'm angry, I wouldn't mind a phaser. If I'm happy and calm, strategy. Mix them together however and take the "First Player" out of it, well, then

you got Star Trek Armada, a great mix between the two. All great, but like most entertainment, it has its time.

Lori: Agreed.

I suppose, the more I think about it the more I have to say that perhaps the different genres cannot truly be compared. They have appeal to different people in various degrees. I personally am very specifically drawn by writing and the creation of original material. Though, I've noticed many USFers play STO and other video games on a regular basis, yet they still enjoy simming as well. Hmm.

What exactly is the appeal of video games to you?

Falco: Well, if it's a strategy, I want something challenging but new. I don't want a repeating puzzle or problem. As for FPS, interaction. I love an FPS, or any game really, that can make you feel like you're part of the game. Where if an ally falls, you feel even more motivated to stop the enemy. So I guess interaction is my real appeal, now that I think back over my many played games.

Lori: So, you prefer games with interaction? Does that mean multi-player games are more interesting to you than single player ones?

Falco: To give a example, if I was playing a game where you have 4 main characters, and you could either play with 3 NPCs, or hop online to play with 3 of your friends, I'd say I rather play with my friends. Not only to hang out with them, but because I feel more motivated to protect them, which adds A LOT to the interaction.

Lori: Ah, I see. So then, STO has more appeal to you than a PC/Console Star Trek video game?

Falco: Well, MMORPGs have another factor you have to consider. And that's other people. Not everybody is polite, to say the least. And it really ruins the experience. I'd rather play a game with just my friends in a closed server than be in a public server with a lot of... impolite gamers. Cause unfortunately, not all gamers are the respectable kind.

Lori: Hmm. That is very true.

I have to say that is one thing I have not really experienced simming with USF, impolite simmers. Of course, I know there have been cases of individuals or groups coming into a chatroom and trying to interrupt a sim. I only know that because there are measures hosts are suggested to take when that happens. But I can't say I ever experienced it for myself.

I suppose that is why one person told me before they prefer single player games, since they can do their thing without worrying about a team. Not sure if he had in mind the issue of dealing with rudeness or not. Maybe it was simply because of him liking to be the lone hero.

Falco: Being the lone hero is fine when you just want to be the "Ultimate Weapon" of whatever world you're in. Everybody needs their alone time.

A good mix of the two keeps a gamer happy.

Lori: Wise words.

Though, to come back to your point of interaction, that is really one of the big appeals to me in simming, you get to interact with people, real people. It's like impromptu acting in a way, you never know what any one crew member might say or do in a given situation. It's also part of the fun for me... the unexpected.

Falco: Yes, but sometimes the unexpected can turn out to be your worst enemy. I'm not naming names, but not everybody is cut out to be a simmer. Like you said, you just can't get the hang of video games other than puzzle games. Same thing for some simmers. But they could be great at writing stories, just not writing an active story meant to be interacted with by 4-5 other people, who all

have their own idea of what's going to happen next. "Active story" being my definition of a sim plot.

Lori: True, but people can learn. Even me. I might be able to learn how to play a video game other than puzzles! I just don't really feel the draw to want to learn.

Anyways... your words once again reflect the fact that there apparently can't be a true comparison. I think each form of role-playing has its appeal to different groups of people in general, but there are many that do all forms and enjoy each for precisely the reason that it IS different than the others.

Falco: Well, that's the charm of games, it's just like food. You have many different options, and some may enjoy a Spanish dish over an Italian dish. Applies the same way towards games.

Lori: Ok... So, in closing, if you had to rank the appeal those three forms of gaming have to you - simming vs. PC/Console games vs. STO - how would you rank them?

Falco: 1) PC/Console games due to the amount of choices, 2) Simming because of my imagination, then STO. Mainly due to the limited possibilities. But if someone were to buy me a month of STO, I wouldn't turn them down.

Lori: Ha! You are shameless.

I have to say for me it would be: 1) Simming, then STO and PC/Console games in distant 2nd and 3rd.

Anyways, thanks for the lively discussion, Falco. I hope our readers will enjoy it as much as I did.

Falco: No problem, it was interesting.

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Our Favorite Star Trek Games

It comes as no surprise that a celebrated franchise such as Star Trek has generated a wide variety of games. Many story lines and formats have been covered throughout the years, though not all have achieved great popularity.

Which are some of the most favorite Star Trek games among USF members?

Pinball Games

Star Trek

Released: 1978

Manufacturer: Bally

Players: 4

by Lieutenant Katherine Swan

"Star Trek Pinball? Who would have thought!"

In 1978 a Star Trek Pinball game out. I played that pinball machine in a Pizza pub that my family worked at (Ya, I'm old). It had Star Trek symbolized targets that you had to hit to gain rank, and there was a multi-ball feature.

When you first started the game and launched the ball, you would have a target shot. If you hit the ship flying across the screen, you'd get points. Every time you launched the ball the ship would change. It started out being large ships and then they progressively got smaller. If you managed to hit the ramp you would gain 10% for every run. Once you made it to 100%, Scotty told you to get the primary crystal. You then had to hit the swinging target, and that would activate the transporter and the multi-ball feature. If you were able to shoot the ball up the ramp, the team would transport and the extra several balls were released.

I had more fun playing that pinball machine than I did going to the Pizza place to eat. (It was a treat to get to go out to eat dinner in those days in my family.) The sounds effects were great, and I loved how Scotty would get more excited every time he would call out the higher power levels. Unfortunately, with strategy and shoot-em-up games out there now like WOW and StarCraft, and now STO, and the multi-action games like Wii, I'm not sure if pinball will ever make a comeback or not. One can only hope.

As I was doing some research on the pinball game, I found a YouTube link to a video of the 25th Anniversary version being played. Did this ever bring back memories!

- [YouTube - Data East Star Trek pinball game#at=181](#)

There was also a game that came out for the Next Generation series. It had animation and used the crews' voices, too. I only remember playing it once, but there is a YouTube video for it as well. Check it out at the link below.

- [YouTube - Star Trek the Next Generation Pinball](#)

When I went on eBay and typed in "Star Trek Pin Ball Machine", to my surprise there were several still out there and for sale. I just might have to start saving to get one for my house. Talk about a collectors item?? Ohh, wow!!

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Original Backglass

Video Games

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

Released: 1992

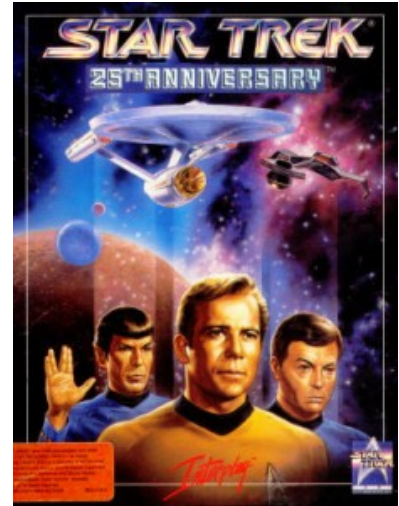
Platform: MS-DOS, Macintosh, Amiga

Manufacturer: Interplay

Players: Single-Player mode

by First Lieutenant Fred Fogarty

When I was younger I would go to my grandma's house and play on her computer that ran Windows 95. This was the most amazing thing to me since I didn't have a computer of my own, and they were not yet commonplace at my school. My grandma's computer had Mario Party Games, Monopoly, etc. But the greatest game on there, at least for me, was *Star Trek :25th Anniversary*.



Star Trek: 25th Anniversary was what is called a "Point-and-Click" (PaC) game. These used to be really popular a decade back, and there are still some out there today (may I suggest Sam & Max?). They pretty much consist of pointing to a spot on the screen for your character to move to, interact with, etc. *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary* was no different.

In fact, it was pretty much industry standard. The only thing that separated it from other "PaC" games was its ship-battling parts between some of the missions. I've heard some say the ship controls were terrible and ruined the game. Let me take this moment to point out that I was winning ship-battles on this game when I was 10 and could barely work a computer. If you got used to the ship moving like a grocery cart (and who's to say ships wouldn't control like this in space) you could easily win most battles the game put you through.

The away missions themselves were the real meat of the game. The stories had multiple "paths" you could take. Would the red-shirt (always handy) die? Would you save the ship but lose the crew due to a rigged control panel that you should've had Spock look at first? Would you beam yourself onto the captured bridge or would you rig a phaser-welder-thingy to go through the shields set up around the bridge? Would you be so bad at negotiating/distracting the pirates that your Fleet Commander would sent you away so that the pirates would stop killing the crew off one member at a time? How many green girls would Kirk shack up with?

Except for that last one, those were all actual things that could happen on one mission. In fact, it was only part of what could happen. When you were done with the mission a Fleet Commander would give you a percentage of how well you did.

Some of you might go out now and get the game on a ROM. (Don't worry, I won't tell.) But there was another thing that was real popular in video games a decade ago: Required Manuals.

And without it... well... tough. See, the starmap was written on the manual for the game. If the Fleet Commander told you to go to "Green Chicks IV" you would have to look it up on the manual or else you were just guessing which one of dozens of stars would have to head to. If you went to the wrong planet you might be attacked by Pirates/Romulans/Klingons. Sometimes you might get lucky and it would be 1-on-1, and you could win. Sometimes you would not be so lucky and would have to face down 5 or 6 ships. You know what? You wouldn't survive.

The game is great for those who like "PaC" games and for Star Trek fans who want a game that

takes the pace down a notch and really makes you think sometimes (you might want the internet and a binary code sheet nearby, just helping). If you're the type who skips by cutscenes in your favorite shooter because you just want everything in front of you to die in a bloody mist, this game might not be for you. Otherwise, I highly recommend it if you can get your hands on it (and get it to work on your computer, seeing how old it is).

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Star Trek: Armada

Released: 2000

Platform: Windows

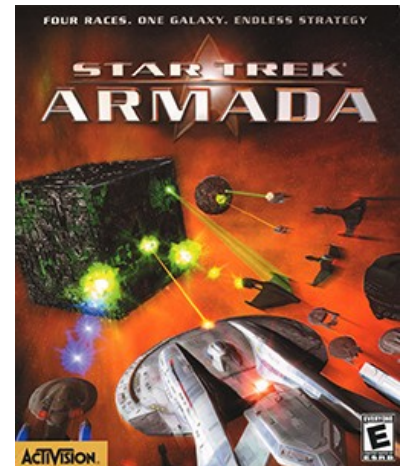
Manufacturer: Activision

Players: Single and Multi-Player modes

by Lieutenant Falco Fogarty

Hmm, where to start... *Star Trek: Armada*, the original Fleet Command Game.

Nothing makes a man happier than controlling a fleet of Sovereign Classes into battle against a fleet of Negh'Vars. *Armada* had two gameplay choices, Single and Multiplayer. I'll start with Single player mode.



You start off playing as the Federation, where the game introduces the gameplay controls to you with the "Control" Race. The Federation is the all around even species, not boasting overwhelming power, defense, or scientific advantage over the other three species. After passing through the Federation Campaign, you then go through Klingon, Romulan, then Borg.

Klingons have a more attack based strategy to them, Romulans a defensive, and Borg a scientific advantage. Now many people will say that they DON'T have any advantage over each other, that they all have six attack class vessels and two extractor/Construction class ships, and their stats don't have any major differences. Well, those folks aren't looking deep enough into it. When I say they have a power, defense, and science advantage, I mean with the way they are best used and controlled. Klingon ships are better for charge and die tactics, Romulans for defensive tactics. It all matters on how you use each species' ships. I personally, loved the Borg, sue me. It's one of the ways I became an expert on the species.

Overall, the Single player gameplay is nice and fun, good story, good challenges, good time. BUT, that's only 1/3 the fun. Next is Online Multiplayer mode.

You haven't had a crazy experience like playing against seven other humans of near equal skills on a small map. Seeing other folks' tactics is a good way to decide on your own. You can start off building ships for an immediate assault, or go straight to defense, setting up turrets and such. Or you can push your luck and materials and try for a split of the two. Personally, that's dumb if you ask me. And the mountain of shipwrecks I left behind proved it.

Games like this are my favorite to play only because you really can't cheat on it. It doesn't matter if you have an auto-aim, or a speed hack, or even wall hacks. Old school, honest to god fun. What gaming should be like, and gamers.

In my recent discussion with Cmdr. Loriarra, I talked about bad gamers. Folks who seem to find a huge jolly in making other folks miserable. Pathetic, and sad, and never seen in *Armada*. Most folks

that played were good ol' Star Trek fans that loved the ships, the species, the very essence of the game. Which is why after all these years, and all these so... SO many other games, *Armada* is still one of my top favorites, and loved. Heck, I still have the original CD in its original case, along with *Armada II*.

To sum it up, if I had to rate the game in whole and in separate parts between Single and Multiplayer modes, I'd give Single a 4/5, Multi a 5/5, and the game overall 5/5. Not many games come out right, but with this one, I feel Activision hit it spot on. If you ever get the chance to buy this game, do it, do it now, do it fast, don't let go!

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Star Trek: Armada II

Released: 2001

Platform: Windows

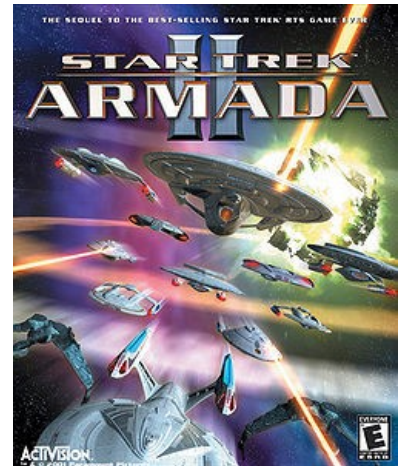
Manufacturer: Activision

Players: Single and Multi-Player modes

by Commodore Shane Booker

\$200?\$200?! I bought that game for \$60 ten years ago. I thought things were supposed to get cheaper as they aged and now *Star Trek: Armada II* is on EBAY for \$200.00. OK.... There is one for under \$50, but there are five that are closer to \$200.00 than \$100.00.

I bought *Star Trek: Armada II* when it first came out, but then ended up getting rid of it, along with the first *Armada* game and *Star Trek: The Next Generation Birth of the Federation*. And to think I could have sold it for \$200.00!



It is really no surprise though. The game was... IS, a good game. The replay value is not strong however. The game plays out in story form instead of free range and lets you build a few specific types of ships first, but as you continue the story you free up more ships to build. There are some other good diversity points in the game however. You start out by playing as Captain Picard with the *Enterprise-E*. After a few missions, you complete your Federation campaign and continue on to other races. You can also play as the Klingons and Romulans as the game's story advances. Each class of ship has their own special advantages or weapons that aid you in the game. After you play as the Romulans, you get your chance at playing as the Borg and can assimilate planets.

At the final mission/chapter of the game, you play as the Borg against the Federation. When you are done kicking the Federation's butt, the game turns a twist on you and resets the same story, only this time you play the Federation defending against the Borg. This was my favorite part of the game because it throws an original twist into gaming. It is not very often in a game that you get to play both sides. I only wished that when I played the Federation, the Borg did what I did when I played as them, so that way I would have to counter my own tactics. Tactics that enabled me to beat the Federation forces the first time. Could I outwit myself or would I succumb to my own strategies? But since that was not how the game worked, I guess I will never know if I can beat myself.

Another neat feature of *Armada II* was that it had another game mode in which you can play the game in an open forum. You picked which empire you wanted to be and the game put you in a random or selected playing field, growing your fleet and taking out the others. The complexity of the game was also impressive. It balanced an economic and resource system that you had to achieve

through mining asteroids and trade routes in order to build your infrastructure and ships.

Overall, the game was great and worth playing. But is it worth \$200.00?Perhaps.

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Star Trek: Encounters

Released: 2006

Platform: PS 2

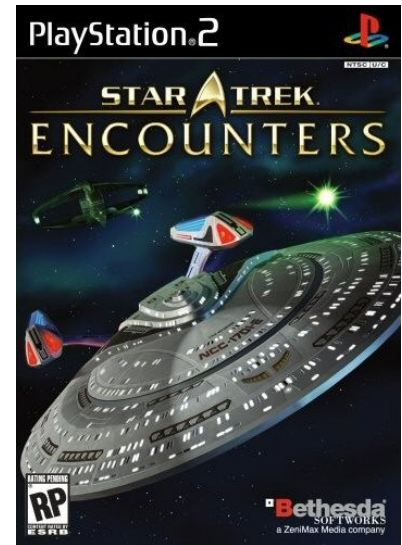
Manufacturer: Bethesda Softworks

Players: Single and Multi-Player modes

by First Lieutenant Solik

"Encounter a Whole New Dimension of Star Trek"

As the first *Star Trek* game designed solely for the Sony PlayStation 2 console, "Star Trek: Encounters" brings the player into a new style of gaming. Spanning the three main eras across the five series, plus an extra series named "Star Trek: Sovereign", the player takes control of four different incarnations of the *Enterprise*, the *Defiant*, *Voyager*, *Deep Space Nine*, and even a Klingon D7-class battle cruiser. The game itself is quite inexpensive, but well worth it if you enjoy the classic "Asteroids" style of gameplay combined with *Trek* lore.



Unlike Bethesda Softworks' later *Trek* products ("Star Trek: Legacy" and "Star Trek: Conquest"), "Encounters" doesn't follow a single storyline throughout the game. Beginning in the "Enterprise" era, the player begins with the tutorial, controlling the NX-01, learning to target with weapons and secondary systems, such as the transporter. After saving Earth from the Xindi superweapon, the "Original Series" episodes are unlocked, and despite being in the "Original Series", the player uses the *Enterprise-A*, first seen in "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier". Succeeding the battle at the Genesis planet, "The Next Generation" episodes become available, followed by "Deep Space Nine", "Voyager", and ultimately the non-canon "Star Trek: Sovereign", taking control of the *Enterprise-E*, presumably after the events of "Star Trek: Nemesis".

Each series has a "primary villain", where that is the adversary the player faces the most often. In the "Enterprise" episodes, the Xindi are the primary adversary. In the "Original Series", the player is constantly fighting the Klingons. (Would you have thought anyone else?) The Cardassians and Jem'Hadar team up against the *Defiant* and *Deep Space Nine*, and the Kazon, Borg, and briefly Species 8472 are the targets in the "Voyager" episodes. However, in "Star Trek: Sovereign", there's not one specific adversary, but in the final level, you switch control between all of the vessels, except the *Enterprise-D*, and battle the villains from every era near Earth, due to a temporal anomaly near the moon.

The music score of "Encounters" certainly gives the bold, adventurous feel of *Star Trek*, whilst being original and unheard in the on-screen franchise. Despite the music being agreeable, several sound effects fail in that regard. One in particular is the phaser sound from the *USS Enterprise-A*. The game uses a single sound for all phaser beams, similar to the phasers of the *Enterprise-D* and *Voyager* in the television series.

Not to mention, William Shatner narrates the introductions to each episode, so that's epic on its own. I've read elsewhere that, "he certainly sounds like he wishes he were somewhere else besides a recording studio doing another Star Trek video game", but in my opinion, that would hold true to the nonchalant style of Majel Barrett's recount before an episode with a back-story.

One word on graphics: STUNNING! It's incredible that when you look at the ship in "Story Mode", you don't get much of a view, as you're seeing it from overhead, but the game has a tool called "Ship Viewer". In there, you can get some statistics and a model of each ship, with an adjustable view. From there, you can zoom in and see just how much work was put into the ship. Not only that, but the backgrounds in the levels are quite simply *stellar*.

It takes some getting used to, but the controls are easily manageable after a while. There are *primary weapons*, phasers and torpedoes, alternating by using the X button, and *secondary weapons/utilities*, such as mines, tractor beams, transporters, used by alternating the O button. Once the desired weapon is selected, the R1 button is used to fire. Using the right analog stick, the player can aim the *targeting slice*, with can lock onto enemies and allied ships by pressing R2. Without target lock, firing weapons is called "snapshot", as it is a quick blast of firepower, similar to using a camera without aiming.

In addition to weapons, mobility is quite necessary. The player moves the ship by using the left analog stick, and can also raise or lower their elevation by using L1 or L2, respectively. By using the directional buttons, the player can allocate power to weapons or shields, and to sensors or engines. The drawback is that by increasing power to weapons, you lose shield regeneration ability, and vice versa, and the same with engines and sensors.

All of these controls are essential in playing the game, so you really must hone the ability to multitask and know what you're pressing, because you might just end up using a tractor beam when you wanted to fire torpedoes!

The game itself is quite enjoyable to play through Story Mode, and some of the known scenarios seen in the series. In each of the levels, you are assessed based on different criteria, such as "enemies destroyed", and "times died", so when you don't get Admiral rank, there's some reason to go back and play.

Once Story Mode is complete, there are Skirmish and Battlefest modes. In Skirmish, you can play against the computer, or against a friend, in a one-on-one fight to destroy the opponent's ship, and you are given three ships based on your choice of faction. In Battlefest mode, you choose a Starfleet ship and must hold your own against wave after wave of enemy ships, but don't worry! There are pick-ups for hull regeneration and ammo replenishing, as well as power-ups, such as "Rapid Fire Torpedoes", allowing you to fire without stopping or cool-down, for a short time.

Once you finish Story Mode, there's plenty of fighting to be had and high scores to make in Battlefest mode, so do not fret. Even for \$10-20, this is a game worth getting if you truly enjoy *Star Trek*.

In summation, I thoroughly enjoyed playing "Encounters", and to be honest, it inspired me to watch "Deep Space 9" and "Enterprise", as I had not seen any episode from either series before playing this game. There are a few things that are off, like the *Defiant* being able to fire its phaser cannons in any direction around the ship, as well as the lack of quantum torpedoes. I think those can be overlooked for the sake of the game as a whole. I recommend this game for anyone that enjoys *Star Trek*.

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Star Trek: Legacy

Released: 2006

Platform: Windows, Xbox 360

Manufacturer: Bethesda Softworks

Players: Single and Multi-Player modes

by Lieutenant J.G. Jacob Barlow

The story starts with Captain Archer's attempts to help a female Vulcan scientist named T'Pol. In trying to help her, he uncovers an elusive mystery that flows through to the eras of Kirk and Picard. Each captain only gets a handful of missions but they are held together by the mystery of this Vulcan scientist. Along the way, you will find yourself battling against Klingons, Romulans, and eventually Borg ships.

While the endless space battles are kind of the point of the game, they do tend to get a bit repetitive early on. It seems like each new mission involves going to a new sector and blowing the hell out of everything you find. You will have the occasional desire to use your scanners or maybe transport an away team onto an enemy installation, but these are rare exceptions to the fighting that you will usually be doing.

Once you move to The Next Generation era, things get a bit better. The missions step away from the aggressive combat missions of the first two chapters to get at the heart of what Star Trek ought to be about. Though many Star Trek episodes involved some kind of ship battle, more often the main focus was on exploration, diplomatic negotiation, scientific research or supply runs. As Captain Picard, you will have to protect a system from dangerous asteroids, seek out a Federation ship hidden in Romulan territory, and oversee planetary evacuations.

After the constant shoot-em-ups of the *Enterprise* and Original Series missions, it is a nice change of pace. You will get the chance to captain each of the three *Enterprises* from the series as well as a variety of other Federation ships. Successful completion of mission objectives and lots of extra killing on the side will earn you command points that can be spent to add up to three other ships to your fleet. (Unfortunately, the upgrade system that would allow these points to be spent to tweak each your ships' performance was scrapped, although you can download a mod that has it online.)

The main reason I bought the game in the first place was because of the graphics and for the simple fact it was set in space. As I played the Windows version on my computer, I also found that the story line was extremely accurate, especially around Captain Picard's command, where it shows you all the ships that he served on. I very much enjoyed that it also had the original voices of the captains.

Once I finished the game the first time around, I just had to play it again and again. It is just one of those games!

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Star Trek: The Next Generation – A Final Unity

Released: 1995

Platform: MS-DOS, Macintosh

Manufacturer: MicroProse

Players: Single-Player mode

by Ensign Naryan Bailey



"A Final Unity" was released on May 31, 1995. It's considered a classical modern era game. It incidentally is an all time favorite of mine, and I enjoyed this game compared to all of the other Star Trek games because it features the entire original cast of the TNG series with their voices in an interactive point and click sequence. It also has one of the most fascinating and intricate plots that I have ever seen within a Star Trek game, which remarkably takes you on a series of small quests to different worlds that gradually reveal the main plot of the Unity Device. The game often made me wonder how *Star Trek: TNG* would have evolved if it included certain races from the game had the series continued.

The game offered many interesting choices and decisions as you took control of Captain Jean-Luc Picard. You were able to ask the crew for advice as well as converse with foreign species on the viewer screen, and on away missions in real character voice. The dynamics of the game within the *Enterprise* are located at helm, tactical and engineering and offered a wide variety of interplay by allowing you to manually control these stations or delegate them to one of the main characters. I enjoyed sidetracking from the game's main plot to travel space at my own will, engaging in random battles with Romulans, and fiddling around with the engineering controls. The game even allows you to manually operate the transporter depending on the difficulty setting of the game. Away missions were particularly fun as you had to investigate and figure out solutions using things you discover from individual planets.

To sum up the story, the crew of the *Enterprise* encounters a fleeing scout ship hijacked by fugitives known as the Garidians who are in search of a historical document known as the "Fifth Scroll". Later in the game, dealings with the Garidians lead them to discover an ancient and very powerful species known as the Chodak, who are attempting to reclaim a profound technology known as the Unity Device to restore their vast lost empire. During the progression of the story, the *Enterprise* is forced to undergo away missions that gradually reveal isolated fragments of crucial evidence that will lead them to the discovery of the Unity Device, its purpose, and origin for creation.

Once I had finally finished the game, which took several months, being that certain missions were very complicated to solve, it led me to think about the Chodak and Garidians. I thought about the Garidians mainly because of the political dilemma they had undergone and the history of their race surrounding the Lawgiver and his structuring of their society. The Chodak's use of technology and superiority was astonishing because they were so advanced that they were almost impervious to any other race and the power of the Unity Device gave them the ability to destroy the Borg inevitably. I think it is quite saddening that Roddenberry never introduced them or even mentioned them in the series, they would have made good sub plots. But then we would probably have never seen the Borg. Lastly, "A Final Unity" was an outstanding game and truly puts the class in classical.

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Star Trek Nostalgia

Star Trek: The Animated Series

by Lieutenant Yahleksi Ra-Tehguay

"NBC's new animated Star Trek is as out of place in the Saturday morning kiddie ghetto as a Mercedes in a soapbox derby. Don't be put off by the fact it's now a cartoon ... it is fascinating fare, written, produced, and executed with all the imaginative skill, the intellectual flare, and the literary level that made Gene Roddenberry's famous old science fiction epic the most avidly followed program in TV history, particularly in high IQ circles." – A quote from the **Los Angeles Times**, September 10, 1973 edition, review by Cecil Smith.



After the cancellation of the original *Star Trek* (live-action) television show, Paramount Television, in association with Filmation studios, produced an animated version which aired for two seasons from 1973 to 1974 for a total of twenty-two half-hour episodes.

While originally titled simply "Star Trek", it has since been referred to as "Star Trek: The Animated Series" to distinguish it from the original live-action television show.

The Animated Series was the only Star Trek series to have won the Daytime Emmy award. It received this award in 1975 for Outstanding Entertainment – Children's Series, beating out such staples as *Captain Kangaroo* and *The Pink Panther*.

Characters

The Animated Series featured the return of most of the characters from *The Original Series*, including the same actors voicing their characters' parts. Only Pavel Chekov (played by Walter Koenig) was not included in *The Animated Series*. The reason given for this was that the studio could not afford to pay for the entire cast. Koenig did however write an episode of *The Animated Series*, "The Infinite Vulcan", becoming the first Star Trek actor to write an episode of Star Trek.

New characters were also introduced. There was Lt. Arex, an Edosian with three arms and three legs; and Lt. M'Ress, a female Caitian (a feline humanoid).



Voice Talent

James Doohan, who had played Lt. Cmdr. Montgomery "Scotty" Scott, reprised Scotty and also voiced Arex and some 50 other characters. On two separate occasions, Doohan did the voices of seven distinct characters within a single episode ("Yesteryear" and "The Ambergris Element").

Majel Barrett, wife of Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry, played Nurse Chapel throughout *The Original Series*. Incidentally, she was the un-named female executive officer of Capt. Christopher Pike's *Enterprise* crew from the original Star Trek pilot movie which later became the two-part "Menagerie". Barrett has also always been the voice of the *Enterprise*'s main computer. Later, she was Lwaxana Troi (Deanna Troi's mother). Barrett reprised her role of Nurse Chapel for *The Animated Series*, as well as voiced M'Ress and a dozen other characters.

Nichelle Nichols reprised Lt. Uhura and also voiced a dozen other characters.

George Takei reprised Lt. Hikaru Sulu and voiced a half-dozen other characters.

A few guest stars from *The Original Series* reprised their roles for *The Animated Series* also. Mark Lenard returned to play Sarek, Spock's father; Roger C. Carmel reprised the role of Harcourt Vincent Mudd; and Stanley Adams reprised the role of Cyrano Jones.

Writing

Many of the original writers from *The Original Series* penned episodes of *The Animated Series*, and a lot of famous science fiction authors contributed episodes. Among them was Larry Niven.

Several episodes were written by D.C. Fontana, a key player in *The Original Series*. Many feel her episode "Yesteryear" for *The Animated Series* was one of the best Star Trek episodes ever written.

Some of the episodes were sequels to *The Original Series* episodes such as "More Trouble, More Tribbles", a sequel to "The Trouble With Tribbles", written by David Gerrold.

Another sequel was the episode "Once Upon a Planet", a sequel to "Shore Leave", both penned by Theodore Sturgeon.

The infamous Harcourt Vincent Mudd featured in two episodes of *The Original Series* returned in *The Animated Series* in "Mudd's Passion". All of the Mudd episodes were written by Stephan Kandel.

The Animation

While the freedom of illustrated scenery allowed for large alien landscapes and believable non-humanoid aliens, the budget constraints were a concern for *The Animated Series* just as it was for *The Original Series*. This resulted in animation of poor quality and a liberal usage of what was termed "stock shots" - scenes where the same illustrations were re-used and superimposed over different background images.

Most of the show's perceived faults stemmed from the limited range of action the greatly restricted animation process could show. But in spite of this, it was able to portray alien cities and life-forms and spatial phenomena that could not have been done in a live-action show in the '60's and '70's.

The production schedule for the original season was incredibly short. The studio did not give the go-ahead for the series until April or May of 1973, with the first episode scheduled to air in September. A team of some seventy-five artists had only five months to prepare eight hours worth of animation at the rate of ten thousand to fourteen thousand separate drawings per hour. For comparison, at that time Walt Disney studios took almost two years to generate two hours worth of animation.

The costs of the actors and the team of animators made *Star Trek: The Animated Series* the most expensive animated show on the air at the time.

However, in spite of the short production schedule and limited budgets, *The Animated Series*'

22 half-hour episodes, covering only about eleven hours worth of programming, brought a staggering thirty spaceships and vehicles. *The Original Series'* three seasons were about eighty hours worth of programming and showed only a dozen spaceships.

Star Trek concepts introduced by the Animated Series

Several ideas were introduced in *The Animated Series* that influenced later Star Trek developments:

- Capt. Kirk's middle name, Tiberius, was introduced in the episode "Bem".
- Spock's mother, Amanda, was given her maiden name, Grayson.
- A second exit for the Bridge appeared.
- The Vulcan *kahs-wan* ritual (the Vulcan maturity test, where the child is expected to survive ten days without food, water, or weapons in an inhospitable zone called Vulcan's Forge) was introduced in the episode "Yesteryear".
- The Klingon, Commander Kor, reminisced in the DS9 episode "Once More Unto the Breach" as having commanded the battlecruiser *Klothos*. That fact was introduced in *The Animated Series* episode "The Time Trap".
- The Vulcan capital city, ShiKahr, was introduced.
- Spock's history of having been bullied when growing up as a half-Vulcan child is introduced.
- The *Enterprise* of *The Animated Series* was also the first ship to have a "holodeck" (though they called it simply the "RecRoom"). This was some eighty years before Picard's *Enterprise*.

References:

- Wikipedia Articles - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Trek:_The_Animated_Series
- Memory Alpha - http://memory-alpha.org/wiki/Star_Trek:_The_Animated_Series
- Fan Site - <http://www.danhausertrek.com/AnimatedSeries/Bgd.html>

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Fan Fiction

Last time on **MC-A-Prise...**

...we met an imaginative young man named Skown McCallister. After his imagined graduation ceremony he was called into the communications room by Admiral McMillian. What will the fate of this young man be? Will he have his real graduation or something else? Read on to find out.

MC-A-Prise

by Lieutenant J.G. Peter McMillian

Admiral McMillian replied, "At ease. Listen Cadet, I know you were supposed to graduate tomorrow, but something has come up. Now your instructors tell me not only are you an excellent Tactical Officer but you're outstanding with communications as well."

Skown relaxed, saying, "Yes, sir, that is correct."

The Admiral looked him in the eyes, and said, "We received, a message an hour ago. It is unlike anything we have heard before. Can you take a look and tell me what you think?"

"I'll do my best, sir." After spending a few minutes listening to the message, he looked at the Admiral. "Sir, it's old Morris code, its a distress signal, only.....only."

Growing impatient, the Admiral eyed the young cadet. "Only what, Cadet?"

"Sorry sir, it looks like a hidden message inside the code. Give me a few minutes."

A few minutes later, Skown finished decoding. "Got it, sir. Here we go."

Then a very distorted visual log appeared on the screen, "This is Captain Paxton of the Inferno. We.....caughttime hole.... no idea where we are. Left Starfleet on 53193.35 reappeared here. That's not all... (explosions could be heard on the bridge and small fires could be seen ever where) unknown.....senors.... couldn't detect..... weapons useless. Please send help." Then the Message cut out.

"Sorry sir, that is all I could get. The rest of the message was too badly degraded."

Extremely worried the Admiral walked towards Mrs. Melano. "Mrs. Melano, Do we have any vessels in the vicinity of the Inferno."

"Give me a moment, sir." She then pressed a few buttons on her terminal. "No, sir, but the Enterprise M is scheduled to launch 1100 tomorrow."

After thinking for a few moments, McMillian said, "Ok Mrs. Melano, can you have Captain Bradley call me asap?"

"Yes, sir, I'm attempting to hail him now."

"Excellent, excellent. Cadet, you come with me." Skown and Admiral McMillian both proceed to head to the Admirals office.

When they arrived the Admiral heard his terminal beep. Answering the beep he saw Mrs. Melano. "Excuse me, sir, I was able to find Captain Bradley for you. I have him on stand by, would you like me to put him through?"

"Excellent, Mrs. Melano. Route it here please. Thank you." Moments later Mrs. Melano's face was replaced by an African American bald man. "Ah, Captain Bradley. How do you do? Listen I know you're set to depart tomorrow, however, I'm sending you a Cadet in the morning. He will have your orders and will work as both a Communications Officer or a Tactical Officer. I will leave that decision up to you. Anyway, the orders are for a rescue mission. And Captain, good luck, you're gonna need it."

Admiral McMillian the turned off his screen and return his attention to Skown. "Ok, Cadet, as

you heard, I'm gonna give you orders in the morning, but first you should go to your quarters and sleep for a few hours." The Admiral grabbed a small box. "One more thing, Cadet."

Now standing at attention Skown waited as the Admiral approached him.

"I, Admiral Jonathan McMillian, hereby duly appoint you, Skown McCallister, the field commission of Ensign, with the rights and privileges of a person with that rank." The Admiral then put a new Ensign pip on the Cadet's uniform. "Now go rest for a few hours. I'll bring your orders by at 0900 hours. DISMISSED."

"Yes, sir," and Skown returned to his quarters for a few hours of rest.

A few hours later, Skown heard the bell chime on his door. He was all packed and ready to go. Admiral McMillian had arrived and was waiting to escort him to the shuttle pad. After receiving the orders, Skown boarded the shuttle that was heading to the *Enterprise*. It was cramped with the last of the officers heading to the ship.

When they got closer everyone was awe struck by its beauty. A couple of people were talking about the Federation's newest ship.

"Wow! Look at that thing."

"I hear that not only does she have 3 separation stages but she also has bio neural circuitry, 10 quantum torpedo launchers and 10 quantum phaser banks, forward and aft."

"She also has that new wormhole warp drive and wormhole transporter, along with the conventional warp system."

It all stopped when they hear the clicking sound of the shuttle docking with the ship.

As they unloaded Skown found the Captain waiting for him. Bradley smiled. "The Admiral must really like you, sending you with classified info to me."

"Yes, the Admiral is a family friend. He supported my entrance into the Academy. Here you go, sir." Skown handed the Captain the padd.

After looking at it, Bradley said, "Sorry to put you right to work, Ensign, but as you know we've got a rescue mission to attempt."

Skown followed the Captain to the bridge and took up the tactical spot, relieving the officer already there. The bridge was incredibly sophisticated and had more room than any other *Enterprise* bridge had ever had. Stations were bigger; everything was just incredible.

"OK, guys, here we go," Captain Bradley said to his bridge crew. "Alberian, clear us with Ops."

"Ops has cleared us, sir," the Bolian at the comm console reported.

"OK. Let's get this show on the road."

Bradley waited until the ship had completely separated from the dock before informing the crew further. "OK, we are on a rescue mission, people. We are going to the Gamma quadrant and have orders to find the USS Inferno. It is suspected they were attacked, but the message they sent didn't give too many details. Know this, this is the *Enterprise M*, the newest, biggest, and baddest Starfleet ship ever made. We will succeed."

A few minutes later, as they had gotten far enough away from any colonized systems, the Captain ordered, "OK, let's punch it. Activate wormhole warp drive."

A seriously cool looking bubble appeared around the *Enterprise*, making it suddenly disappear.

When it reappeared it was in some unknown part of the Gamma quadrant.

No sooner had they arrived, Ensign McCallister reported, "Sir, I'm detecting a ship."

Bradley looking right at him asked, "Can you be a little more specific, Ensign?"

"Sorry, sir, I can't. I can detect this ship, but sensors can't tell me what's inside it."

All of a sudden, it seemed out of nowhere, came massive weapons fire.

"Red Alert! Battle Stations. Skown try to disable it," Captain Bradley called out.

"Aye, sir, firing phasers. The phasers had no effect, sir, switching to torpedoes." A minimal

explosion could be seen as the torpedo hit the enemy's shield. "Sir, nothing we hit it with has any effect."

"Helm, get us out of here now!"

The Gorn at the Helm replied, "I can't, sir, they are using some kind of warp field jammers."

Then out of no where came another shot. A second ship had joined the fight.

"Sir, another ship has entered the fight, and our shields are down to 50 percent."

"Thank you, Ensign. Continue firing. Comm officer try to hail them."

"Aye, sir, attempting to hail them. No response, sir."

"Sir, we can't take many more hits like this. Shields are down to 30 percent." No sooner had Skown said that, his console blew out knocking him unconscious.

The Captain looked around the room. "Hail the vessel. Tell them... we surrender."

The Comm officer nodded. "Aye, sir." Then he sent the message.

Moments later black, oily, warlike creatures appeared all over the ship. They began capturing the crew and beaming them to their ship as prisoners. Ensign McCallister was left lying on the floor of the bridge bleeding, while the computer sounded alerts.

"RED ALERT. OFFICERS DOWN ON BRIDGE. RED ALERT. OFFICERS DOWN IN ENGINEERING. RED ALERT. OFFICERS DOWN IN SICKBAY. RED ALERT. RED ALERT. SELF DESTRUCT SEQUENCE ACTIVATING. RED ALERT. RED ALERT. SELF DESTRUCT SEQUENCE ACTIVATION IN 10 MINUS 5 MINUTES. RED ALERT....."

.... *to be continued*

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Simming

Log Writing: Titles

by Commander Loriaarra

Desserts. Rows of colorful candy. Scrumptious bites of chocolate. Flaky pastry dishes. Succulent fresh fruits. We all have our triggers inviting us to reach out and try the heavenly deliciousness.

But why am I talking about dessert when this article is supposed to be about log writing? Dessert is simply a metaphor I'm exploiting to make a couple of points. 1) Dessert is a small but much anticipated part of the meal, and while I consider books to be a main course, I see the logs we write for our characters on the USF as dessert: small but enjoyable pieces for mental digestion and gratification. 2) Logs need to be appealing to invite the reader to reach out and try them, just like those desserts.

The very first invitation we make in that regard is titling our logs. The title is what the reader initially sees, especially when looking at logs on a message board.

But why worry about appealing to the reader if our crew members are supposed to read them anyway? Yes, fellow crew members are encouraged to read all logs that are sent out through the sim's mailstring to keep up with character developments. However, setting the tone of a log with an appealing title increases anticipation and, most often, enjoyment of the log, just as a visually appealing look to a dessert increases the enjoyment of eating it.

Plus, keep in mind that your fellow crew members are not the only ones that might read your logs. Message board posts are public and can be read by anyone, USF members or otherwise. Wouldn't it be great to think that someone read your log because it had an appealing and interesting invitation -- a great title?

In today's lesson we will consider the following:

- Common title formats for the three types of logs (DL, PL, and JL)
- How to come up with interesting titles (particularly focusing on narrative logs)

Common Title Formats

Duty Logs

It is appropriate, and often desired by the hosts, that a duty log should be described as such in its title either by spelling it out ("Duty Log") or via abbreviation ("DL"). Most writers will also add the Stardate to the title to help readers distinguish between last week's DL or this week's. So, a DL title might look something like this: *Duty Log, SD 201011.09*. Such a title is especially appropriate for a recorded type DL (first person perspective) that simply recounts the events of a sim from your character's point of view. (Some add their character's name to the title, but that isn't always necessary since the message boards show who posted the log.)

At times you might want to write a DL that reveals information not covered in the sim. You could use wording that you might be familiar with from Star Trek series, reflecting your position on the ship, like *Executive Officer's Duty Log - Supplemental, SD 201011.09*.

Remember also that you may post 'on duty' events in narrative form as DLs, if your CO agrees to that. In that case you could add a more personalized title part that will indicate this is a narrative. For example: *DL: "Not all Black and White"*.

Personal Logs/Joint Logs

While there are the occasional recorded-type PLs titled similarly to common DLs, as discussed above (i.e. *Personal Log, SD 201011.09*), most PLs are narrative story logs. It is appropriate to give them personalized titles, much like the author of a book. For example: "*Crew of a Former Vessel*."

The same usually pertains to JLs, since they are most commonly narratives, though it is appropriate to show a log is a joint effort by indicating such in the title, either like "*That Little Game We Play*" (JL), "*Intimacy Comes in Many Forms*" JL (Aquas/Maha), or JL - "*Swordplay*".

So, here is where the fun starts! The search for an interesting title that whets a readers appetite for reading the log itself. "But what if I'm not good at picking titles, and they all sorta sound 'meh'", you ask? Fear not! There is a formula you can apply that might work some magic for you.

Interest Arousing Titles

I find that most titles fall under one of seven basic categories. Consider what each category entails, how it represents the story in the log, and how it invites and affects the reader.

1.) Short Titles

Examples: "*Purge*", "*Progeny*", "*Devil's Bridge*", "*I, Eximus*", "*Succubus*", "*Invalid Move*"

Most of the very short titles (one or two words) are used for fairly serious stories, sometimes using an esoteric word that the reader might only be marginally familiar with but that arouses interest and delivers a punch. Usually, however, they are simply made up of words that very strongly represent what the log is about, possibly including a goofy word that shows the lightheartedness of the log. At times, metaphor might also be employed, like in the log "*Devil's Bridge*." Here, the title reflects a challenging situation reflected in a deal that basically sold the Captain's soul to the "devil," using legends commonly called 'devil's bridges' as a figure of speech for the title.

2.) Humorous Titles

Examples: "*More than a Man... A Captain Man*", "*Non Parish-able Items*", "*Where, Oh Where Have My Raptors Gone?*" or "*Fruit of the Gloom*", "*Men are Pigs... but not Engineers*"

Funny titles are a great way to draw attention to your log; puns or word plays work very well to solicit audience responses. When you get someone laughing they usually wonder what the log is about -- and if the laughs will continue in the story. Don't try too hard to make the title funny, though; it can backfire.

3.) Shock Titles

Examples: "*The BS about Wild Animals*", "*Playing Bridge Naked*", "*The Thing with the Tree and the Apple*", "*Politeness is the Art of Choosing Among One's Real Thoughts*", "*Oh No Ono*"

Shock titles are those that make you think, "what the heck?". They deliver a hook in the form of a shock effect to draw the attention of and intrigue the reader, whether by using unusual or blunt wording, conflicting words, or absurd word plays. In other words, titles that cause readers to scratch their heads in confusion.

3.1.) Off The Wall Titles

Off the wall titles are a form of shock titles, but unlike the titles listed above, they have nothing to do with the story itself. Rather, they are there to catch the reader's attention without relating to anything in the log. While they can be fun -- and serve a very specific purpose -- be cautious! If you continuously use clever titles that have nothing to do with the story - especially if

the story doesn't deliver and leaves the reader without a sense of satisfaction - then the reader will eventually figure out your titles are just puffs of smoke with no fire behind them and might end up not reading your logs at all. Off the wall titles should be used very sparingly, since they can get old quickly.

4.) Alliteration Titles

Examples: "Frigid Fever", "Creature Comforts", "Meditation Migraine"

Alliterations are word plays that repeat the first sound in a word. Sometimes you can make titles like that by just using common phrases that are already alliterative, but other times you might look very deliberately for words with the same beginning letters or sounds. These titles can also deliver a bit of a shock effect: by using contradictory words together, like in the title "Frigid Fever," a conundrum is evident, arousing interest in a log that eventually explains why those two unrelated words were put together.

5.) Common Phrase Titles

Examples: "The Stone that rolls down the Mountain", "How to Save a Life", "To Dare or Not To Dare", "Breaker, breaker...", "Double the Dan; Double the Fun", "When on Nom Do as the Lagiers Do", "The Dummies Guide to Good Plans Gone Wrong", "If Life Gives You Lemons...", "Why Do I Get The Feeling We're Taking on Another Pathetic Lifeform?"

Common phrases include anything catchy that we are familiar with, like quotations from various sources or songs. Sometimes they can be used as they are, but most of the time adapting them to the story or for humorous effect works best. The title "How to Save a Life", for example, is a song known to many and used in its original form, but it also depicts the story in the log perfectly, as a life is being saved. Or the title "Why Do I Get The Feeling We're Taking on Another Pathetic Lifeform?", which was used in its original form, a direct quotation of a line in a Star Wars movie. Those who know the line get an instant picture of the situation, those who don't will probably at least chuckle at it.

5.1.) Star Trek Reference Titles

Examples: "Nailin' the Kobayashi Maru", "I'm a Doctor, Not a Counselor", "To Seek Out New Life and New Annihilations"

Using a Star Trek phrase or term and then giving it a twist to fit your story is always an attention getter, as those things are easily recognizable to fans and usually evoke a smile. However, as with all good things, don't overdo!

6.) Foreign Language Titles

Examples: "Daire'n Heis'he" (Romulan - Forbidden Love), "Kahs'khior" (Vulcan - Shooting Star), "Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes?" (Latin - Who Watches the Watchmen), "Carpe Diyem" ("carpe diem" - Latin - Seize the Day)

Foreign language titles bring a mystery to the story. They can reveal the species of the simmer's character or those of the characters in the log, showing a cultural significance. They require careful choosing and perhaps some research. Sometimes they can receive an interesting twist, like the log "Carpe Diyem", where the author purposely changed the spelling (though not pronunciation) of the word 'diem' to draw a close tie to the character featured in the log. It required forethought.

7.) Series Titles

Examples: "Tides", "Making History", "Project Mole", "Winds of Change", "'Porkchop' and 'Femme Fatal'"

Series titles have to encompass several logs, and therefore need to be considered thoroughly. They often tend to have an epic sound or feel to them, but they can also be funny or shocking at the same time. What they absolutely must do is capture the overall idea of the story series, a goal that requires thinking to accomplish.

As you look through the USF's message boards, you'll notice that shorter log titles are most common. Now and then a longer title might fit better, but long titles are not a rule of thumb. There are also plenty of logs that employ characteristics of more than one category: for example, a play on words can be used with many titles to make them unexpected or funny. Evoking a strong emotional response is key to rousing readers to action and drawing them in. When you think about what title to pick, consider the overall emotion you want to evoke in your reader when seeing the title.

So, when do *I* think of a title? - Everyone does things differently, but most of the time I think of a title *after* I write the log. I usually read through the log again and perhaps look for an interesting phrase in the log to make it a title, or I determine what the overall theme of the log is and then try to put an interesting twist to a title that reflects this theme. In my mind, I go through those seven categories and see if anything can be used.

I seldom know the title before I write. I often know the title when it comes to log series, however, because I contemplate the overall theme of the series before I start writing. I want to make sure my title reflects that theme, even if it's not completely obvious to the reader from the beginning.

Personal examples of how and when I came up with a title

"Invalid Move" - I decided on this one during the writing. It's actually a joint log, and I led my writing partner to a very specific ending, and then used the very last sentence as the title because it reflected what had happened in the log so well, but it was still somewhat ambiguous and abstract. I like making readers guess.

"More than a Man... A Captain Man" - This is a joint log with quite a history, as my co-writer is only too well aware of. It actually came about incidentally through a misunderstanding of mine. He had jokingly suggested this title, and I had taken it serious and applied it. The title ended up eliciting many chuckles and visions of a Captain with a cape and a big C on the chest, though the log itself was touching on the much more serious matter of the Captain being not only slave to his male desires, but at the same time having a responsibility to this crew and his Starfleet duties.

"Oh No Ono" - For this log I knew what I wanted to write, a backstory to my character's youth. But I didn't want to call it flashback in any sense; that just seemed too overused and stale. So I deliberately looked for a quirky title because I knew the log was going to be funny. I ended up naming the crazy inventor uncle in the story Ono, a play on the words 'Oh no' that illustrate his wife's sentiments on his inventions.

"When on Nom Do as the Lagiers Do" - This joint log is leading the readers into the world of the Lagiers, which is mostly unknown to them since they are an original species. After re-reading the log, the phrase 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do' came to my mind. I felt it was a good choice to use that phrase and simply adapted it to the Lagiers.

"Kahs'khiori" - As an introduction to one of my characters, I had the title picked before I started the log. The word reflected who she was, or better what name her Vulcan friends had given her according to who she was, a shooting star. The word combined a bit of her background, knowing Vulcans apparently well, and her personality, always being on the move, burning bright and shining her light on any given place for only a short while, then being gone. It has held true for this particular character.

"'Porkchop' and 'Femme Fatale'" - And last, but not least, one of my favorite series titles. Of course, I thought this one up ahead of time. It was in connection with a log writing contest on the *Lothlorien*. I wanted a title that was different, funny, and quirky to show the overall theme of my

character's pranking personality in the series. 'Porkchop' and 'Femme Fatal' were actually nicknames the Cadets had given two of their teachers in the story. And no, 'fatal' is not misspelled. I used a twist on 'Femme fatale', but the woman it talks about is definitely fatal. Despite seeking a funny title, the log series actually had a serious undertone to it about betrayal, but my focus was to bring out the humorous side.

To sum it up, I do hope the examples of my personal choices and knowing the seven categories will help you in picking a variety of interest arousing titles for your future logs that will keep surprising your readers and make them come back time and again.

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Starfleet Academy Abridged Correspondence Courses:

Field Study Case 995-0671 – The Firegon

Lecturer: First Lieutenant N`alae Leónsbanner*

Hello, I am Doctor Leónsbanner, and I am here today to walk you through the steps of my field study on a species known as the Firegon. The reason I was asked to do this lecture today is because of my expertise in genetics, as well as having some contact with Cadet Malachi Styles during a recent trip to Earth and the Academy. Cadet Styles' family was on Starbase Two-Nine-Two during an attack that involved the Firegon. For Cadet Styles' privacy that is all that I will be acknowledging for the event aboard Starbase Two-Nine-Two.

To give you a bit of background information: The Firegon are a hostile species that inhabits an old space station within Sector Five-Seven-Three-Three, although their planet of origin is unknown. From our resources we do know that they are a race created within a laboratory. As far as we can determine the Firegon are created with Ferengi and Klingon genes. As can be seen here.

Obviously, the Firegon are a mixed breed, but the question that has arisen throughout Starfleet Medical: Are the Firegon a hybrid race or a chimera? This is the question I will answer in today's lesson.



To start, what exactly are hybrids and chimeras? A hybrid by definition is any offspring of two animals or plants of different breeds, varieties, species or genera as produced through human manipulation for specific genetic characteristics. You might say, "Well of course the Firegon are not hybrids; they were created within a laboratory." Incorrect, hybridism can also be created within a

laboratory, or through other circumstances that do not involve breeding.

An example of such a hybrid would be Tuvix; the result of a transporter accident involving Lieutenant Commander Tuvok (a Vulcan), Neelix (a Talaxian), and the orchidaceae specimen that they had with them.



As you can see, Tuvix has spots on the side of his face, as well as the similar semi skull deformation and receded hair line of the Talaxian species. However, these features are not as prominent as they would be with a full Talaxian. Tuvix also has the pointed ears and dark hair color that is common among Vulcans, but those features are not dominant either.

A chimera, on the other hand, is defined as an organism composed of two or more genetically distant tissues, as an organism that is partly male and partly female, or an artificially produced individual having tissues of several species. An example of a chimera can be found in Earth's Greek mythology; the chimera or chimaera is shown to have the body of a lioness, with a tail that ended in a snake's head, and the head of a goat that arises from her back at the center of her spine.



We now need to apply the criteria to the Firegon. Their prominent physical appearance can be an initial way of determining if this species is a hybrid or a chimera. Looking at the Firegon's face you can see the Ferengi and Klingon features that dominate it.

First let's look at their Ferengi features. The fully developed lobes, which are prominent within the Ferengi species, are one of the Firegon's major features. A few minor physical appearances that can be seen from a closer examination are the ridges upon their nose, as well as the jagged teeth that are accustomed to the Ferengi.

On the other side of the scale are their Klingon features. The major one being the fully developed cranial ridges, along with the Firegon's overall size being roughly one point seven-five meters, or six feet tall, about the same size as the common Klingon, which are two meters, or six point five-six feet tall.



Going farther into the Firegon's body, scans have shown that their brain is four-lobed just as the Ferengi's brain, allowing the Firegon to not be read by psionic species, such as Betazoids. The multiple organ layout is of Klingon origin, as well as the ribcage structure that is found within the Klingon skeletal structure.

In conclusion, during the recent months of examining genetic material specimens from the Firegon, I have concluded, that the Firegon are indeed a chimera because of the absence of the blending of genetic material as would be seen in a hybrid, but their more distinctly, fully developed Ferengi or Klingon parts. Such being the fully developed cranial ridges and lobes, as well as the jagged teeth, and nose ridges of the Ferengi, along with the Klingon height, the internal layout of their multiple organs and ribcage structure, and also the four-lobed brain.

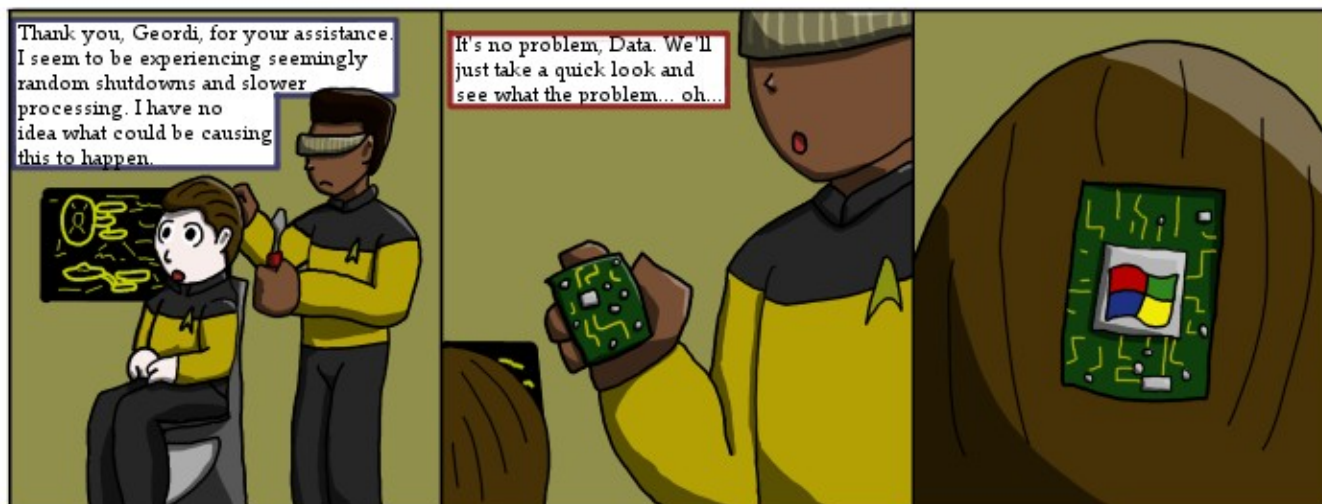
** First Lieutenant N`alae Leónsbanner is currently assigned to the USS Roddenberry as Chief Medical Officer and Counselor*

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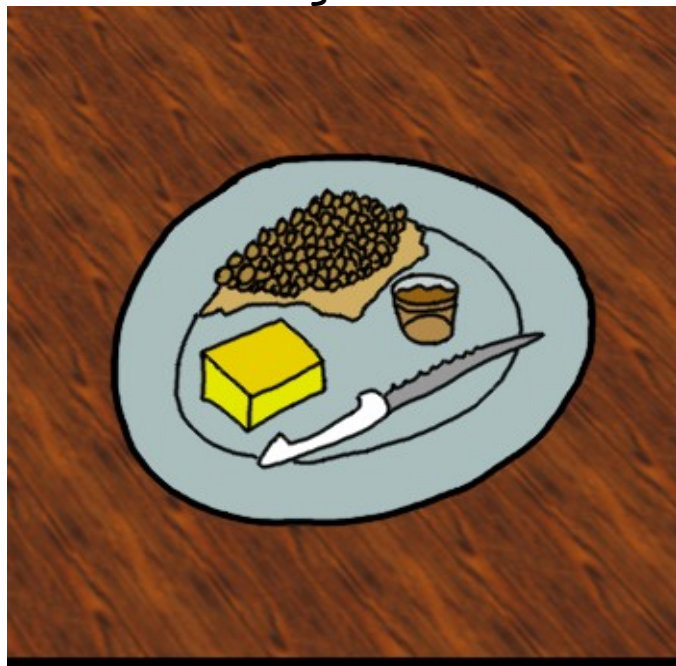
Comics & Humor

Data Issues

both comics by Falco and Fred Forgarty



Redneck Engineers...



... will, if left unsupervised, reprogram the replicator to serve nothing but cornbread, whiskey shots, and beans.

They will then proceed to talk about how it's "Still not how mamma made it."

Fred Forgarty

F.F.

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Data Network

Trivia

by Ensign Naryan Bailey

1. What medical device is used to revive neural activity in the nervous system of critical patients by delivering an electrical shock to induce brain activity?
2. These were artificial lifeforms designed by Dr. Farallon.
3. In episode 42 (Q-Who) of the TNG series, Q sends the *Enterprise* 7,000 light years across the galaxy, this is incidentally their first encounter with the Borg. What system is the *Enterprise* located near when they first arrive?
4. What craft were used by the Bajoran Militia that were lightly armed with two phaser emitters?
5. What is the name of the communications array that was designed between Starfleet and the Vulcans?

(Answers can be found at the bottom of this issue.)

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"The Forum"

Welcome back to The Forum!

After receiving some feedback on my style of execution, we're going to try something a little different this time around. Before we get to that, let's read what some of our readers had to say about last month's topic!

Best Science-Fiction Series Besides "Star Trek"

"Star Wars! - I like the romanticized and swash-buckling features about it. Like the way many people in that galaxy dress is reminiscent of Earth's past. Or the skilled swordsmen (Jedi) that can take on an opponent with a gun, which just portrays more sophistication in battle than the crude pulling of a trigger. And yet, it's all set in a background of very futuristic technology. I also like it that some places look more cruddier, and not everything is sparkling clean and shiny. It lends the story a down-to-earth feeling and believability. So, for me, Star Wars is ranked almost the same as Star Trek, just very different settings. But I love both of them!"

-- Lori

"Well to tell you the truth there are two other good ones besides Star Trek, which are Stargate SG1 and Stargate Atlantis."

-- Lieutenant Junior Grade Jacob Dylan John Barlow, USS Lothlorien

As for myself, "I personally enjoy the Farscape series. In a way, it's similar to *Star Trek: Voyager*, in the sense that the main character is flung across the galaxy against his will, and ventures to find any means of transportation to return home, while constantly eluding the reigning military. The character development is another thing that compelled me to continue watching the show, as the alien crew of the ship begins as a group of escaped convicts, a member of the enemy military, and the Human main character, each with their own backgrounds and dispositions. They learn to overcome their differences and work as one. Also, along the way of their journey, they make quite a few enemies; each knowing just how to get inside the crew's heads and often lead them down the wrong path. Luckily, the crew watches out for each other in those situations."

I was very excited to see a couple of responses, but after some feedback, this is going to go in a slightly different direction, so without without further ado, the topic of discussion for December is:

Best Alien Foe

Allow me to clarify: this could be one person, such as Gul Dukat, or perhaps you might like the Cardassians as a whole. (This is merely an example, as everyone knows the Cardassians are a joke, compared to the Dominion.)

Personally, I like the Borg, not that I'd want to be assimilated, mind you. It's been said that our individuality is what makes us Human, but I believe a single hive-like mind *could* also be advantageous in some ways. Not to mention, they are pretty frightening, as they're the worst enemy the Federation ever faced. As far as we've seen in the series, there's no way to absolutely obliterate them, meaning they will always exist in one form or another, be it physically, or psychologically. The actual Borg may be destroyed eventually, but the idea of uniformity will always exist.

Take some time to think, but have your submission sent in before **December 15th**, so that everyone has an equal opportunity to be heard. I can't wait to see what you all have to say!

Until next month,

Solik

Please submit your opinions on The Forum Topic of the Month using the feedback link (select "The Forum"), or send them to Solik@sector001.com .

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Photoshop Tutorial

GOT SOME PHOTO-MANIPULATION SKILLS YOU WANT TO PASS ON TO OTHERS?

THE USF PADD IS LOOKING FOR CONTRIBUTORS FOR GRAPHICS TUTORIALS.

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USF Cookbook

*Contributors for the USF Cookbook wanted !
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Gossip & Advice

"The Tattler"

by Captain Alejandra Montoya-Mancuso and Captain Rosanna Severine

This issue features rumored facts and/or fiction from the Outpost Phoenix, USS Ares, USS Federation, USS Lothlorien, USS Independence, USS Agamemnon, and Starfleet Academy! Don't see your sim's goodies listed below? We'd be happy for you to contact us. Captain Montoya gathered all of the gossip this month (except the Academy) either through submissions or personal knowledge. Way to go!

Captain Rosanna Severine picked up a PADD that contained all of her incoming transmissions for the day. She smiled at the notes from her good friend Captain Alejandra Montoya-Mancuso on the Outpost Phoenix. She really wished that they were able to meet more often, but their Starfleet postings were pretty far apart. She poured herself another mug of steaming tea and snuggled down to read the latest gossip from around the quadrants.

"Things have really been exploding around **OPX**, literally. There was a bit of a buzz going around that the new CSO was spending a lot of time with that cute little number who just came in a few months back and opened a plant shop. Now I am sure she and Miguel will get along just fine, but the new CSO, Kevarn Behl, seemed to have been spending a lot of time there. Then, she suddenly just disappeared.

"Perhaps, it wasn't a complete mystery though. She showed back up later with her new specialty being Botany. The buzz I'm hearing now is that he sees her as a problem in Science because he has the hots for her. He is falling back on the 'fraternizing with fellow officers rule' to the letter. Men really do take things so literally sometimes."

"The **USS Ares** is currently lost in some other universe that they arrived in via a wormhole. Though the wormhole has allowed for a distress signal to come through every now and then, everything that is received from 'anonymous' on our side is broken up."

Montoya turned on the new communication on their private "gossip" channel. Alejandra then turned up the volume so they both could hear it over subspace.

"Crazy thi ... happening ... We ... countered ourselves ... older selves ... decrepit Ares ... many ... ship had kids ... Brott had five chil ... with ... little girl ... Danni ... tenant Ra-Teahguay ... eight ... ith random women ... ship ... lking ab ... sowing your oat ... bomb ... apparently ... two leaders of ... ship ... twins and ... spring of Com ... Diell ... Captain Hav..."

Montoya turned off the private channel replay and faced the communication screen again. "That is one heck of a message. I don't even know where to begin deciphering it."

Rosanna nodded on her end, even though she knew it was a pre-recorded message left by her friend. "Wow."

"One of our informants might have gotten themselves in quite a pickle on the **USS Federation**. Here's what she had to say."

"I think there's trouble in paradise on the *USS Federation*. I haven't seen the Commander around sickbay much lately. I'm not sure exactly what happened since my last communication, but Dr. Voss is

tight lipped about it and seems a little grumpy. When I tried to probe and question him, I think he thought I was trying to hit on him. No way! That's not saying he isn't a good looking man, but you have to realize the Commander is a woman to be reckoned with. She might not be all that big, but she packs a punch. I've seen her workout in the gym. I'm not gonna mess with that if there's still something going on between them.

"Then something happened to the Away Team on a planet we visited at the edge of Klingon space. I dunno exactly what, but something doesn't smell right. I believe the whole matter has been sealed as confidential, but I've heard that the Captain had to take a strike team down because they had lost contact with the AT. As if that isn't weird enough, in the end a bunch of Engineers were sent to the surface to repair something. So, I really don't know what to think. Was it a friend or a foe that they ran into?"

"Rumor has it Commander David Watts, USF's most charming XO who graces the **Lothlorien**, along with Captain Crain saved the day again. They met up in space with a probe called 'ASRES' or something along those lines. It is a type of artificial intelligence that was sent out to explore the Galaxy much like we do in our Starships. Well, the onboard computer got some type of virus and started emitting holographic images which were trying to kill the away team! Watts thought up the idea to fight the virus with another virus, and thus he saved his fellow shipmates.

"The crew of the Loth are definitely charting the great unknown and having a lot of fun while doing so. Best of all, the new Advanced Intrepid Class Starship they have has held together rather nicely. It's even attracted a few interesting and "strange" personalities who want to be a part of the crew. The only problem? They don't realize that you start off as Ensign and work your way up. Where do they find some of these crazy people nowadays?"

"Now I hate spreading rumors, but it is true that the **Agamemnon** has always had lots of controversy. I've heard through the grapevine that Lieutenant Commander Simon Trent is being blackmailed by his own Captain!"

There was a pause in the transmission, almost as if their informant had been looking around to make sure no one had heard them.

"You see, Trent is from the future. So, I hear the Captain has threatened to bust him down to Ensign unless he gives her future winning lottery numbers for the biggest wins in the universe. I never trusted her anyway. She used to hang with Ferengi, and you know how that is."

"Onboard the **USS Independence**, Acting Chief Engineer Bryan Roberts continues to have difficulty with his voice enhancement device. The latest one that he built started putting out some rather hot and steamy words when he attempted to speak to Doctor Addy Darz in Sickbay the other day. An Engineer who has worked with Roberts on the device was reported to say that the only problem with this latest enhancement device is that it was literally pulling the thoughts from his mind and turning them into words. So, while Bryan did not mean to say what he said, he really meant it in his mind!"

Rosanna laid the PADD down on the table in front of her. She had to smile at the look she imagined was on the face of Dr. Addy Darz. Ailana Darz, Addy's sister, was currently a cadet at the Academy. Aside from that, several cadets and staff at the Academy had met the sisters in a future/alternate universe in the last year. She knew the Adrenna Darz of this universe wasn't the same as the one they met, but she still got a chuckle out of thinking about it.

"Well we don't have anything quite so juicy going on at the **Academy** now that we solved the murder of one of the cadets. I can't believe that another race would go through so much trouble just

to instigate a war with the Lagiers. Then, they kidnapped Hlaoda Zaiba'ny as she was en route to Nom. I worry that we'll never see her again. I can't say that it would break my heart not to have to deal with Mazzir Edzett Zaiba'ny, Hlaoda's father, ever again though.

"One good thing came of the whole mess. We have a new pair of Lagiers that joined us, named Rahyu and Zivy Ezllen. They are a brother and sister pair, and I've already heard about their antics around campus. They seem to be some type of Engineering protégés on their planet, but they still have a lot to learn about Starfleet's way of life and equipment. Perhaps the Academy won't survive their learning process though. I already have one holo classroom that was destroyed by Rahyu, Zivy and another new cadet named Tiger Sheme. Reports are still coming in, but maybe it wasn't directly their fault. We'll see. I'd hate to have to start off someone's Starfleet career with disciplinary action."

(Note: We want to thank all the hosts and officers that sent us gossip for their sims, and also thank you for letting us sit in on your sims to observe. Not all sims have gossip, or we weren't able to look at all sims. Each issue will depend on just what news is out there wagging tongues.)

Have any gossip to pass along? Please use the [feedback](#) link (select "The Tattler") or email rosanna.padd@gmail.com.

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"Ask Y"

by Lieutenant Commander James Yosay

Question Number 1:

Why do Starfleet ships blow up so much? The ships of Earth in the 21st Century don't seem to have that problem.

Yosay's Answer:

Because I am not the Engineer of those ships that are blowing up! I can only be at so many places at once.

Practical Answer:

With the exploration of space come many risks. One of those risks includes meeting species who do not have the same peaceful intentions that we in the Federation have, to search, explore, and learn. As a result, we are constantly losing ships in battles. While we, as the Federation, tend to generally have the edge when it comes to weapons systems, there are always cases where the other side is stronger and we have to adapt. I cite the Borg as a prime example of this. While at times it may seem we are taking heavy losses, it needs to be pointed out that we have more ships than ever in the

fleet.

Now it's time for a little history lesson. For much of Earth's 21st century, the only "ships" present were those on the water. We saw only a handful of ship losses during the 21st century on the great oceans of the earth. There were indeed a considerable number of aviation aircraft lost, especially during the years of 2001-2050.

Question Number 2:

Ok, so there is this guy I like -- a lot. And he likes me too, just not -- a lot. Am I wasting my time?

Yosay's Answer:

Yes. Relationships are a complete waste of time, and you only end up heartbroken in the end. There is a saying: "Better to have loved and lost, then never to have loved at all." That is all a bunch of HOGWASH and full of phaser holes. Now with that being my own opinion on the matter, let me add some perspective as we all know that Engineers do not have time to get involved in a relationship. We're too busy keeping things together so that all you other yahoos on the ship can participate in courtship, make-out sessions, and then repairing the damage you crewmen do to the walls, mirrors, and other items on the ship when venting your frustration over someone breaking your heart.

If you really like a guy and want to test the waters and see if he is willing to take things to the next step, come up from behind, clobber him over the head when he's not looking, and knock him out. When he comes to in sickbay, make sure that you are the first person he sees and watch his reaction. If he smiles warmly at you, then you know you got yourself a keeper. If he looks you over and asks what the heck is going on, you best hit him over the head again, and then make a quick departure and try the next guy.

Question Number 3:

Why do cats always land on their feet?

Yosay's Answer:

I have had PERSONAL experience with this one. Felines land on their feet because they know the second they land they had better be making a mad dash to get out of the room, or else they'll be in DEEP trouble and likely have someone or something pouncing on top of them. ::growls::

Need some advice? Use the [feedback](#) link (select "Ask Y") or e-mail your questions and/or comments to USFJamesYosay@gmail.com.

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Staff & Contributors

Editor-in-Chief: Commander Lorianra

Staff

Creative Advisors: Vice Admiral Jonathan Anders, Captain Havraha cha'AAnikh, Captain William Styles

Graphics Artists: Commander Lorianra, First Lieutenant Solik

Proofreaders: Fleet Captain Crelak, Lieutenant Air of Din, Kayshl, First Lieutenant Solik, Captain William Styles, Rear Admiral John Styre, First Lieutenant Leyva Torosi

Contributors for this Issue

Ensign Naryan Bailey, Lieutenant J.G. Jacob Barlow, Commodore Shane Booker, Captain Havraha cha'AAnikh, Lieutenant Falco Fogarty, First Lieutenant Fred Fogarty, Commander Lorianra, Captain Alejandra Montoya-Mancuso, Lieutenant Yahleksi Ra-Teahguay, Captain Rosanna Severine, First Lieutenant Solik, Cadet Malachi Styles, Lieutenant Katherine Swan, First Lieutenant Leyva Torosi, Lieutenant Commander James Yosay

(All names are listed in alphabetical order for their respective sections.)

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Trivia Answers:

1. Cortical Stimulator, 2. Exocomps, 3. J-25, 4. Bajoran Interceptor, 5. Mutara Interdimensional Deep-Space-Transporter Array System or MIDAS

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