



PAPER PLAY

ROXOR FRONTMAN, TRAINED OPERA SINGER AND NOW ONE OF CCP'S LEADING (OFFLINE) GAME DESIGNERS, PETUR THORARINSSON IS FATHER AND CO-DESIGNER OF *THE SECOND GENESIS*, EVE'S COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME

How did the idea for an EVE CCG come about?

The first time I logged into EVE Online during beta was one of the most impressive moments in my gaming memory. It didn't take more than a couple of eye blinks to realize that the depth of this universe is completely incomprehensible. I couldn't help wondering what a perfect setting EVE would make for a CCG, or any game for that matter. The idea was brewing in the back of my head for ages. Then, just before Christmas 2004, I suddenly got a chance to meet EVE's dad, Reynir Hardarsson, and I was surprised to discover that he was also an old time CCGer and had attended the first *Magic: The Gathering* Icelandic National Championship in 1996, which I organised with my brothers. Even though neither of us had any specific ideas beforehand of how the game should flesh out, I felt that I shared his philosophy on game design and we decided that I would bring him a playable prototype a week later.

...and now you work for CCP

Yes, I started in January 2005. Reynir and I had so much fun playing the early prototype that we then spent months trying to capture, as much as possible, the game we love so much. After I started working at CCP, I gradually discovered that not only was I, my brother and Reynir veteran CCGers, but every other person there had played CCGs before. This leads to the long-awaited answer to your previous question: I believe that the creation of *EVE: The Second Genesis* CCG was inevitable. While outsiders might think the project was suggested from the top, as an easy way of strengthening the EVE brand (which it surely does) and perhaps make some money out of it, the truth is that the game was made because of the common love the Devs shared for CCGs. I was just fortunate enough to be brought onboard to make it happen.

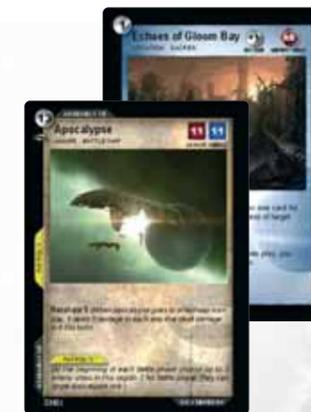
What is your experience of CCGs?

I have been a part of the collectible card game experience since autumn 1994, a few months after the release of the revised edition of *Magic: The Gathering*. I was hooked instantly. Since then, I've conducted countless *M:TG* tournaments and tried out many other CCGs. Growing up in the country, my siblings and I chose to create our own entertainment, hence the fact that today, all four of us are professional musicians or game designers (hmm, I'd never thought of

it this way before). When I started working on *The Second Genesis*, I knew that, in comparison to the home-grown board games and RPGs I had worked on before, this was going to be a monumental task. Every experienced collectible card gamer knows what I am talking about. A game such as this needs extensive play-testing, and then some more. CCP has been more than generous in granting me the time needed.



The EVE CCG is nearly half-way through the beta testing stage, with cards changing almost daily



The resources to play the cards are cumulative from turn to turn. This is probably the single most defining aspect of the game. This lowers the game's random factor substantially, makes it more important for players to think ahead and gives them room to better themselves.

How does the game differ between 2, 3 or 4 people?

I realized almost from the very start that this game would and should be no less fun in a multi-player game. In fact, we played a three-player game during the second play-testing session and we had a blast. This arrives mainly from the function of the multiple regions in play and the strategic resources players gain from controlling them. There are no additional rules going from a two-player game to a three-plus player game. I've been fortunate enough to have a group of exceptionally talented beta testers. Depending on which games they've grown most accustomed to before, they have different expectations to a good CCG. While some of them will only play the two-player game, others fancy the multiplayer version.

What is it that will make EVE distinct from other CCGs?

The game is far less abstract than most other CCGs I've played. This realistic feel makes the game flavourful, yet even the more complicated rules are easier to learn.

Unlike most other games, the play area is split up into multiple zones, each with its own locations and ships situated in them. The play area starts out as multiple home regions, one for each player. Players can gradually add outer regions into play when they've played enough ships to claim them, or use their ships to attack other player's regions.

convention centre were occupied 24/7. We had a lot of game designers, editors and fellow attendees demoing our game and we got really good feedback.

What was the reaction from the Fanfest?

I had no idea what to expect from the people at the Fanfest. Not only was this my first Fanfest, but I didn't know if the game would appeal to the die-hard EVE gamers who made the journey to Reykjavik. I accepted that they may be too busy with everything else going on that was more straightly related to their online lives, so I was pleasantly surprised, ecstatic actually, that players showed up at my table all day long. For most of the time, all the decks I had prepared were being demoed. Naturally, I recruited a few beta testers who perfectly represented the typical, avid EVE player, since most of my other play-testers are veteran CCGers.

During this current beta testing phase, has there been any feedback that has surprised you?

If anything, it would be the beta testers' competence in finding and utilizing the number of intricate interactions between the cards. They've developed many more winning strategies than I imagined while I was creating the game. I could never stress the importance of their roles enough; every hour spent on play-testing is worth a whole week of my work.

If it is released commercially, how do you plan to develop the game after it is released?

The list of possible themes and game mechanics is almost endless. We are half way into the beta, so the game is still evolving. I just added a new rule yesterday that solved a couple of problems, but 25 per cent of the card base has had to be modified as a result. Creating a new expansion to an already published game will be wildly different from what I have been doing until now.

CCP took the game to GenCon in August 2005. How was it received?

We went there to meet potential publishers and the media that covers hobby gaming. Also, only being accustomed to large computer game expos such as E3 and ChinaJoy, we wanted to find out what to expect from GenCon in the future. Along with the 'EVE Fanfesters', the GenConers were the most passionate group of gamers I have ever met. I felt as if everyone was there to have fun and it was hard to spot the staff from the attendees. Every single table (and even patches of the floor) in the



IF THIS HAS GIVEN YOU A TASTER FOR THE NEW EVE CCG, YOU CAN READ MORE ABOUT IT IN E-ON ISSUE #002, AVAILABLE FOR ORDER NOW ON THE EVE WEBSITE

Below: our esteemed E-ON editor (left) gets all the gen from *Second Genesis* lead designer Peter Thorarinsson and EVE illustrator and conceptual artist Börkur Eiriksson

