Democracy and the Internet

The theoretical foundations and practical applications

Ritgerð til M.A.-prófs
Thesis for the degree of M.A.

Pétur Jóhannes Óskarsson
Maí / May 2010
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Abstract

In this essay I will investigate democracy in relation to the Internet. I will approach this goal from two different directions, by discussing and analyzing theoretical issues concerning democracy and the Internet on one hand and then by describing in detail an experiment I participated in relating to an introduction of a democratic structure to an online society on the other hand. My guiding light throughout this discussion will be the concept of ‘deliberative democracy’ as that was the blueprint used for the experiment in implementing the players’ democracy in the online community.

First, I will approach democracy from a theoretical standpoint. Modern states that are called ‘democratic’ are so diverse that one could be tempted to believe they are not operating within the same political framework. I will shed a light on this ambiguity of the concept by looking at three main ‘camps’ of thought in relation to cyber-democracy and also by discussing how it is possible to compare systems of governance and then specifically how we can compare democratic systems. The Internet has held, and still does, great promises when it comes to augmenting democracy that have yet to be realized. This public space is very useful as a viewpoint on the democratic tradition in terms of how the schools of thought are using it and how they could be using it.

The second part will be dedicated to the democratic institution that was introduced into EVE Online, a popular online computer game that is frequented by more than 300,000 participants. Having taken the leading role in this project within the company, CCP, that produces and maintains the game, I have a firm grasp of all things relating to the game and the introduction and evolution of the democracy therein. I will argue that the users of the game form a society within it and as such the democratic system can be used to draw conclusions about societies that are not online.

My main conclusions are that on one hand the Internet is a very powerful tool that can be used to strengthen democratic systems in terms of deliberations, data gathering and analysis of the matters being discussed. On the other hand it is apparent from my research that in-person meetings cannot be replaced by the Internet and are, as such, necessary to conclude the democratic ‘leg–work’ that has been performed online.
Acknowledgments

This essay would not exist if I had not been approached by Hilmar V. Pétursson, the CEO of CCP Games, who asked (maybe CEOs ‘tell’ you to do things?) me to put ‘democracy in to EVE Online’. At first I only had him to bounce ideas off and formalize a direction for this project. As it took shape I was put under Eyjólfur Guðmundsson’s guidance, a Ph.D. in environmental and resource economics, who had recently been recruited by the company to conduct social economic studies within EVE. Gradually the audience of CCP employees I communicated with about the matter grew until I had spoken to most of them about how we could best achieve the goal of players’ democracy. I owe them all quite a lot for the assistance.

Since early 2007 I have met people from all over the world and discussed the players’ democracy in details. Tens of minor lectures about it are under my belt since then, for numerous university representatives, committees, student groups, etc. and several large lectures. Most notable are: November 2007, EVE Fanfest Reykjavík where I introduced the design to the players of EVE Online, the people who were going to use it. During that event Dr. Richard Bartle and Jessica Mulligan, veterans of the MMO gaming industry, truly told me what I needed to hear to move towards what was practically possible to achieve with the players’ democracy; February 2009, Game Developers Conference San Francisco, California; September 2009, Game Developers Conference Austin, Texas; May 2010, NoNick Conference Bilbao, Spain. Also, Ren Reynolds needs to be mentioned specifically as well for his comments made during the process of creating the players’ democracy.

I would also like to acknowledge a research grant from RANNÍS (the Icelandic Centre for Research) which enabled me to concentrate on this project.

My wife, daughter, family and friends have had to listen to me speak about this for many years now and their observations and support are duly noted. You own more in this than you realize.
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Introduction

The concept of democracy has been a part of human societies for a long time. As such we have started to take it for granted when we think about ourselves. In fact we have almost declared it to be the form governance should take and we measure other cultures by whether they have democracy or not. However, when we start to think about what democracy is and what is essential to it we encounter some problems. What conditions are needed so a governance framework can be called ‘democratic’? Intuitively we believe that elections are one of those things, a necessary condition that has to be present but it is not a sufficient condition. Something more is needed. Another condition is equality, but again we run into troubles when we ask whether it is enough for all to be equal in terms of voting rights or if equality in terms of wealth (for example) is needed as well. Following this line of thought we start to build a foundation for democracy, a foundation that becomes increasingly difficult to make coherent and consistent as we proceed.

I will attempt to answer what democracy is in general, focusing in particular on deliberative democracy, by approaching the matter from two different routes. First I will examine the literature regarding democracy to try and locate the ‘core’ of democracy. The examination will be done in regard to the Internet and the ways in which it can enhance modern democratic thought and to some extent how it is being used presently. I will also try and clarify how different governance systems can be compared and more narrowly how different democratic systems can be compared.

The second route will be taken by examining a democratic structure\(^1\) that was introduced into a popular online computer game called EVE Online\(^2\). As the leader of that project on behalf of CCP Games, the maker of EVE Online, I have detailed information about why it was done, how it was done and how it is progressing. Finally, I will address the question of whether anything can be learned from an online computer game in terms of democracy and how that is applicable to the ‘real world’.

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\(^1\) See Appendix B.
\(^2\) See Appendix A.
Democracy and the Internet

Few things have been as revolutionary as the Internet when it comes to communications and the availability of information. The possibilities of near instant and uncensored exchange of information along with the flexibility of the Internet can be utilized to strengthen direct democracy. In principle at least, every voice has a place at this gigantic agora and every opinion an advocate. Consequently great expectations have been and are attached to the Internet when it comes to the practice of democracy. But the Internet does not only open up new possibilities for a more direct and efficient democracy, it can also be used to improve the quality of the democratic process, to enhance, for example, the discursive or deliberative nature of the process. To understand how the Internet might further the democratic process it is helpful to look at the recent theoretical discussion of democracy.

At the most general level it can be stated that founding ideas of democracy are that all citizens are granted equal rights, equal duties, an equal access to their political communities and their interests are treated equally. Politics practiced under the banner of democracy then aim at enhancing and protecting those same rights and duties. Additionally, contemporary democracies have a certain requirement of inclusion, i.e. that all inhabitants of a state or a municipality should have the right to run for a public seat and vote in elections pertaining to public seats. This has not been the case throughout the development of democratic practices, “since their origins in classical Greece, democratic ideas have been plagued by the problem of inclusion: what persons have a rightful claim to be included as citizens with full and equal rights to participate in governing the association?” Julie King has described modern democracy in the following way: “Today’s democracy is… the result of constant revisions of the classical ideal, limited by safety nets intended to assure economic security, social stability and constancy and reflecting market concepts of citizens as consumers. Gradually, it seems, the active role of individuals has been ‘de-emphasized’ and citizens have retreated from their civic involvement apparently accepting what Henry Kariel has referred to as ‘survival through apathy’.”

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3 (Goodin and Pettit 2006), (Harrison 1993), (King 2006), (Held 2006) and (Kymlicka 2002)
4 (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 107)
5 (King 2006, 17)
This understanding merits extensive discussion outside the scope of this paper. However, with these observations in mind it is easy to understand the hopes attached to the Internet as a platform for discussions and information sharing available to all citizens, which in turn reactivates them as citizens. But has the Internet been utilized constructively to fulfill the expectations experts and novices have towards it? To answer this question I am going elaborate on how different theorists have attached different expectations to the Internet when it comes to democracy.

There have been observed three main directions the democracy on the Internet is taking in terms of ideologies and methods. Each direction can be traced back to one of the three different approaches to democracy, liberal individualist, communitarian and deliberative democracy. A brief account of these approaches helps us to get an overview of the contemporary debate about democracy and of the different, and sometimes conflicting ideas about how the Internet might further the democratic process.

Liberal individualist democracy

Liberal individualism, as it appears in modern times, is closely related to the classical economic definition of the individual, according to which “individuals choose (or act) rationally if their actions are determined by their preferences, and their preferences are themselves rational... One’s preferences can be as rational in the pursuit of evil as in the pursuit of good. If one fails to choose what one prefers, then one is foolish, not necessarily morally culpable.” In this model, a rational individual will always pursue his or her best personal interests that are known to him and as a rational agent he or she will know how to acquire those interests. The liberal conception is an aggregative conception of democracy which takes the preferences of the individuals as given. It requires no justification of the preferences themselves but seeks only to combine them in various ways that are efficient and fair. As such the democratic system is only to serve the needs of the individual where they bring their preferences to the table, much like a physical product, and then try and maximize their worth. These preferences are all equally valid, not because they have been accepted as such by a higher authority such as the state or the society, but because the state or the society

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6 (Dahlberg, 2001b) and (Dahlberg, 2001a)
7 (Hausman 2008, 235 - 236)
does not, and should not, evaluate the preferences in any form or fashion.⁸ According to this view, “[d]emocracy is … seen as complementary (and often conflated) with consumer capitalism. Cyber-democracy means that consumers are at liberty to freely move around cyberspace and make the choices they desire without the restrictions found in ‘real’ space, whether bodily, geographical, or cultural or political.”⁹ This definition can be associated with how King conceives of modern democracy as an evolution from classical ideas about democracy and, as McKinnon puts it, tied “to those who are allowed to be individuals – mostly white men…”¹⁰ Although this apparent historical limitation will not be investigated further at this time, it is worth noticing the concept of ‘the digital divide’ which refers to unequal access to computers and the Internet across income and educational divides.¹¹ I will get back to this topic a little later in this essay.

Regardless of the access and actual usage, the Internet is a tool where information can be obtained regarding personal preferences along with the most efficient methods of realization of those preferences; – a place where individuals, as voters, can rally together to try and create a stronger movement behind those preferences. If a situation arises where one person’s interests collide with the interests of another person (or persons) negotiations are started where everyone will try and get their interests through. Each person values his or her interests differently and is ready to put a price tag (so to speak) on them with the aim of getting the most valuable result. Along those lines, liberal individualists have envisioned the function of the Internet, where “politicians… can go directly to the people without the ‘distortion’ of the media.”¹² The ability to speak directly to voters gives the representatives the ability to ‘sell’ their ideology and agenda without the usage of a ‘middle man’. Additionally, the direct line back to the elected representative gives the voter a better chance to further advance his or her preferences. The subsequent discourse assists with acquiring the necessary information for both voters and representatives to pursue the “best possible strategic choices between competing positions.”¹³ It has been noted¹⁴ that despite the possibilities offered by the Internet it has only been used to further strengthen the existing

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⁸ (Kymlicka 2002, 220)
⁹ (Dahlberg, 2001a, 163)
¹⁰ (MacKinnon 1993, 81)
¹¹ (Demunter 2005) and (Horrigan 2008) give valuable insights. The main conclusion is that medium to high education and medium to high income individuals are significantly more likely to have the skills and the equipment to access the Internet.
¹² (Dahlberg, 2001a, 161)
¹³ (Dahlberg, 2001a, 160)
¹⁴ (Dahlberg, 2001a, 161 - 162)
liberal individualist system instead of developing it by taking full advantage of the options available. What is currently being offered is only a digital version of the services already provided offline.

When it comes to elections the liberal individualist selects a representative who best serves their interests in relation to other items that representative might have on his agenda. In many cases the proponents of liberal individualism “defend market freedoms, and oppose the use of redistributive taxation schemes to implement a liberal theory of equality.”15 In a nutshell the liberal individualists will rather vote for representatives that they believe will allow them to further their preferences. And to further their preferences they need a functioning, free market. Yet, as becomes apparent again and again in history, “[s]atisfying preferences does not automatically increase welfare [utility, happiness]. People may prefer things that are bad for them. Voluntary exchange is not always mutually advantageous.”16 In those cases there seems to be a general consensus amongst liberal individualists that the elected representatives should follow Mill’s rule of “the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.”17

In contemporary literature it has become difficult to separate economic/market ideas from political ideas. In fact the phrase ‘democracy’ is often used in such a manner that it includes the market functions and ideologies described above, i.e. open and accessible to any for almost all products or services. Naturally the elected representatives are individuals and as such participants in the market, often with detrimental consequences to the governance side of the state. “The most important of these [economic] generalizations is that people are materially self-interested, that they prefer more commodities to fewer, more wealth to less wealth.”18 The state is there to serve and protect them and to enhance their individual positions. The individuals are not there to serve the state.

15 (Kymlicka 2002, 102)
16 (Hausman 2008, 233)
17 (Mill 1999, 9)
18 (Hausman 2008, 236)
Communitarian democracy

Communitarian ideas appeared, in part, as a critical response to John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* (1971). Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer can be named as prominent communitarians where they criticize the individualism portrayed in Rawls’ work. Communitarians believe that they, as a part of a community or a group, should champion and uphold greater interests such as “common social practices, cultural traditions, and shared social understandings”\(^\text{19}\), not only their personal ones. The society the individual belongs to comes before him and gives him a platform to communicate his views, utilize his freedom and vote. ‘We’ instead of ‘I’ could be described as the stance taken. This, of course, does not deny the existence of individual nor does it remove him or her from the ideology of communitarians. Individuals are always affected by their own conception of the good, what they choose to focus on, as communitarians, is the common good.\(^\text{20}\) It can be said that the approach described above has, for the liberal individualists, been turned upside down, i.e. the individuals are here to serve and enhance the state, the state is not there to serve the individuals. Consequently, a voter would evaluate representatives in an election based on how they would maintain or enhance the common good. Furthermore, it is not as alien a thought as one might expect for a person to volunteer his time and effort to strengthen and enhance the state and the society he or she lives in, to bring forth the ‘civil’ in ‘civil society’. “For Hegel, ‘civil society’ is understood as the kind of community which develops out of individual people seeking economic advantage and being concerned to defend their property. This produces a system of law, or something like law, which protects these individuals… The social system produces practice of regulation, laws promoting welfare.”\(^\text{21}\) It is important to keep in mind that the civil society as such does not have to be built from the ground up, it is there already and has given legitimacy to the governments in the past and will do so in the future. This social system can be changed, by either a government chosen via a vote or the community or a combination of both (where the society gives the state the power to govern), by modifying a certain standard that has been referred to as the ‘common good’. It is a misunderstanding to believe there is only *one* common good and as such the name is a bit

\(^{19}\) (Kymlicka 2002, 209)  
\(^{20}\) (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 163)  
\(^{21}\) (Harrison 1993, 116 - 117)
misleading. The common good is promoted by the society and “is conceived of as a substantive conception of the good life which defines the community’s ‘way of life’."

But what is this ‘common good’? It is what is generally considered to be good for people, based on various sources, the zeitgeist of a society so to speak. As an example it could be mentioned that facilitating longevity among people is considered to be a common good. The methods to achieve that good can vary, examples include public healthcare, research into and eradication of common ailments that have mortal consequences, increased natal and neonatal monitoring, information about physical exercises, etc. Another common good that can be mentioned is education. Emphasis can differ between societies, where science and fact-based subjects are considered common good in some societies while in other religious studying can be considered equally good or better as a ‘common good’. These goods do not necessarily need to be defined by the state or enforced by the state, but as it happens that is the most common practice in modern times. Things get more complicated when the space of the individual, in terms of preparations for his or her life’s work or health, is exited and the common good is considered in correlation with other individuals. Property rights, human rights, privacy rights, etc. are in some form considered a common good but often the individual becomes the basis for that consideration, not the society – i.e. all those rights are to ‘protect’ the individual from the state or other individuals. I believe it is important not to put a negative connotation to these rights, they are there not to protect the individual but to allow him to participate and serve the society he or she lives in. In the words of one commentator, “[s]elf-determination… is exercised within… social roles, rather than standing outside them. And so the state respects our self-determination not by enabling us to stand back from our social roles, but by encouraging a deeper immersion in and understanding of them, as the politics of the common good seeks to accomplish.”

Democracy, with the emphasis on elections to public offices and the separation of powers into three, the judicial, the law maker and the executive arm, is perhaps the only true venue for politics that focus on the common good. Paradoxically, democracy can also be considered to be a common good, which in turn can only be realized through that same democracy. In essence it could be said that during each election the society comes together and decides upon the common goods by choosing between the available representatives. This might suggest that some goods are more essential than others, but I will not investigate that

22 (Kymlicka 2002, 220)
23 (Kymlicka 2002, 221)
claim further here. But regardless of this democracy-paradox it is through the democratic processes that “the shared practices and understandings within each society”\(^{24}\) can be presented and enjoyed by that society. Furthermore, it can be said that the communitarian framework “emphasizes the way that the good of individuals – indeed, their very identity and capacity for moral agency – is bound up with the communities they belong to, and the particular social and political roles they occupy.”\(^{25}\) This strongly suggests that communitarians have higher hopes for the democratic process than liberal individualists and deliberative democrats have. Democracy has a moral component for communitarians and as such it becomes prescriptive in nature. The ‘identity’ and ‘moral agency’ of the individual are intertwined with the society he resides in, creating an ethical duty to support (or oppose should the state go against the common good) the state. In turn the government has a moral obligation to enable the individuals to act as moral agents, thus making the entire governance structure more than the tool or venue the other two ideologies view as.

Historically societies have been localized, either due to natural reasons such as mountains or seas or due to political reasons such as nation state borders. The Internet can negate the problem of geographical location for individuals who want to assume social roles in a society that is not in their immediate vicinity, making it possible for the group or the community to be held primary. A real opportunity for active engagement in a community regardless of location should allow the development of a stronger and more robust social system that individuals can rally behind. Furthermore, the Internet helps with educating and informing individuals of the common goods, how they can be achieved and where amendments have to be made. Consolidation of information and further possibility of cooperation in action strengthens the society. Rawls’s idea of social cooperation, as he presents it in *A Theory of Justice*, relies on three essential features.\(^{26}\) Firstly, such cooperation would not be issued from a centralized authority but should come from the people. Secondly, he mentions reciprocity or quid pro quo where fairness governs actions. The terms of cooperation are agreed upon by all participating, with work flowing to and from the participant. Thirdly that an individual would further his or her position by cooperating, i.e. the individual sees an opportunity to gain something from the cooperation. The last item on Rawls’s list is questionable in the context of communitarianism as is evident in many

\(^{24}\) (Kymlicka 2002, 209)

\(^{25}\) (Kymlicka 2002, 209)

\(^{26}\) (Rawls 2001, 6)
cooperation programs such as the open source programming community\(^{27}\), the maintenance of online Wiki encyclopedias\(^{28}\), biotechnology\(^{29}\) and in academics where “[r]ecent empirical studies are finding that articles to which readers have open access – articles available for free download from an author’s website, for example – are cited significantly more often than are equivalent articles that are available only from libraries or from publishers’ fee-based websites. Antelman (2004) [reference made in original text] finds an increase in citations ranging from 45 percent in philosophy to 91 percent in mathematics.”\(^{30}\) Most likely Rawls would point out that the result of all these projects would benefit the individuals who decide to offer their time on these programs and an intelligent individual would foresee the return of his investment. This stance, however, is complicated by the fact that in many cases contributions to such cooperation programs are anonymous, so the individual gain could be questionable. Furthermore in some cases the individual will not live to see the results of his work. In that case he could be laying the foundations for his offspring to reap the benefits which again would question the individual gain for the person putting forth the work. But by doing so he is not personally gaining anything tangible in the form of an item or wealth, he might however feel good about it which could be cited as his gain and thus his reason for taking action.

Regardless of common good or the question of individuals and the state, the fact is that the Internet and other forms of progress complicate the world as “[t]here is considerable evidence to support the claim that technological advances in communication and transportation are eroding the boundaries between hitherto separate markets – boundaries which were a necessary condition for independent national economic policies.”\(^{31}\) A focus on the common good as a goal is very difficult to defend as economic policies affect the governance policies. That leads to changes in the views of the state, its function and its purpose and subsequently demands revisions of the common good. The difficulty of finding a coherent and a sharp definition of the common good becomes evident when the question is raised whether it can be found in welfare, utility, wealth or happiness. In light of this it is apparent that the idea of the common good requires a much more substantial discussion than

\(^{27}\) This refers to the practice of creating computer programs that everyone can modify if they have the skill, thus advancing the quality. This is usually done by communities of volunteers.

\(^{28}\) Creation and maintenance of these online information libraries is done by volunteers.


\(^{30}\) (Hippel 2006, 88 - 89)

\(^{31}\) (Held 2006, 296 - 297)
can be offered here. Deliberative democracy runs an end run around these deep ethical issues surrounding the conception of a substantial common good while retaining some of the benefits of the communitarian view.

**Deliberative democracy**

Deliberative democracy is thought of in terms of promoting “the democratic art of persuading or being persuaded in turn’ and the idea that people should ‘justify individual opinions in terms of the common good’…”\(^{32}\) This is often believed to be the fairest system for decision making.\(^{33}\) Unlike the preference-maximation of liberal individualism, deliberation is seen as essential and the final conclusion of a deliberation should be that all participants leave the table in agreement that the “best reasons have been given and fully defended. Participants attempt to come to an understanding of the interlocutors and to reflexively modify their pre-discursive positions in response to better arguments.”\(^ {34}\) The foundation of deliberative democracy is that the individual is rational, able and willing to spend time to reach an enlightened conclusion via his own methods or through a deliberative persuasion.

Joshua Cohen has identified five main features of the formal conception of deliberative democracy.\(^{35}\) First, he mentions continuity, where the democratic process is autonomous and available to the participants for the foreseeable future giving them the possibility of long term commitments to the process. Second, the deliberators adhere to the deliberation framework and the conclusion reached using the framework. The “free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy”\(^ {36}\) of the framework. Third, the participants are individually diverse but committed to the process of deliberation. Their goals within the framework are different but they arrive to it with the mindset that their values and preferences are not necessarily important for any other participant to uphold, their convictions will be respected but not necessarily adopted. The fourth feature demands transparency where the road from deliberation to conclusion is evident. Furthermore, since the deliberation legitimizes the whole system it *has to* be made public from start to finish. Without transparency the deliberation loses their legitimacy. And the fifth feature entails that members of the

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\(^{32}\) (Dahlberg, 2001a, 165),
\(^{33}\) (Held 2006, 237 - 238)
\(^{34}\) (Dahlberg, 2001a, 167)
\(^{35}\) (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 161 - 162)
\(^{36}\) (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 162)
deliberation treat each other with respect and recognition of individual capabilities, “i.e. the capacities required for entering into a public exchange of reasons and for acting on the results of such public reasoning.”

These five main features are to ensure that the discussion is fair, likely to be fruitful and capable of persuading the participants, i.e. not have them trade or ‘sell’ their preferences and goals but to rationally adopt the ones in the process of deliberation. Lincoln Dahlberg has investigated online deliberations to ascertain what requirements have to be fulfilled so they can be considered “rational-critical discourse”. His requirements are six and go as follows:

- “Exchange and critique of reasoned moral-practical validity claims. Deliberation involves engaging in reciprocal critique of normative positions that are provided with reasons rather than simply asserted.
- Reflexivity. Participants must critically examine their cultural values, assumptions and interests, as well as the larger social context.
- Ideal role taking. Participants must attempt to understand the argument from the other’s perspective. This requires a commitment to an ongoing dialogue with difference in which interlocutors respectfully listen to each other.
- Sincerity. Each participant must make a sincere effort to provide all information relevant to the particular problems under consideration, including information regarding intentions, interests, needs, and desires.
- Discursive inclusion and equality. Every participant affected by the validity claims under consideration is equally entitled to introduce and question any assertion whatsoever. Inclusion can be limited by inequalities from outside of discourse – by formal or informal restrictions to access. It can also be limited by inequalities within discourse, where some dominate discourse and others struggle to get their voices heard.
- Autonomy from state and economic power. Discourse must be driven by the concerns of publicly-oriented citizens rather than by money or administrative power.”

These requirements are largely congruent with the foundations stipulated by Cohen above, suggesting that deliberative democracy can use the Internet as a discussion platform.

37 (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 162)
38 (Dahlberg, 2001b, 622)
39 (Dahlberg, 2001b, 622 - 623) Italics removed from original text.
Dahlberg has, in relation to his requirements, identified several inhibiting factors to the ‘rational-critical discourse’. He mentions three explicitly. First, the possible lack of commitment to the ongoing discussion. Second, the inclusion in the discussion can be regulated without outside restrictions or to quote Dahlberg directly, “[i]t can… be limited by inequalities within [the] discourse, where some dominate [the] discourse and others struggle to get their voices heard…” but possibly excluding some willing participants. Finally, the discourse could be driven by other goals than allowing citizens to conduct discussions, for example, money. These limiting factors are all based on practicalities and can severely hamper or even mutate the framework away from the intended function.

If analyzed further it can be seen that Cohen’s foundations are five while Dahlberg’s requirements are six which can be explained with Cohen having autonomy coupled with the persistence of the framework, whereas Dahlberg however mentions the autonomy specifically. It is also noteworthy that although Dahlberg mentions that equal access should be guaranteed he neglects to mention the need for transparency of the deliberation and necessity of it being public like Cohen does. The transparency requirement could, however, be spelled out by reading carefully between Dahlberg’s lines, such as his demand that ‘every participant affected… is equally entitled to’ the discursion or that the ‘discourse must be driven by the concerns of publicly-oriented’ matters. It is however my opinion that Cohen’s condition is not spelled out effectively if Dahlberg is read in this manner and I’d like to propose another explanation. The Internet is inherently public and in fact all content therein is available to those with the (now very widespread) equipment. It could, therefore, be argued that the condition of transparency and public accessibility is automatically fulfilled on the Internet. Most modern communication platforms, such as blogs, forums, etc. keep a record of what has already been posted about a subject, thus offering full transparency. This could be stated as the reason why Dahlberg specifically says that the discourse can be restricted from the outside, i.e. he is specifically mentioning that a section of the Internet can be closed off (with password or other means), “[i]nclusion can be limited by inequalities from outside of [the] discourse – by formal or informal restrictions to access”.

More remains to be mentioned regarding deliberative democracy when it comes to realizing it on the Internet. Both Cohen and Dahlberg have provided a framework for discussions, but who is to decide what matters are discussed? And why should those matters

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40 (Dahlberg, 2001b, 623)
41 (Dahlberg, 2001b, 623)
be discussed by those who are deliberating? Should they be discussed in any particular order? Both Cohen and Dahlberg state that the participants themselves are to control the agenda and they should also try and arrive at a consensus on each topic, either with unanimous support or via “voting, subject to some form of majority rule.”\textsuperscript{42} Dahlberg further says that “[p]articipants themselves often encourage strong [discussion] management [online], not wanting to waste time dealing with unwanted [topics].”\textsuperscript{43} This type of moderation is well known and widely used on modern discussion boards. The purpose is most often not to censor the discussion but to remove ‘unwanted’ inputs that serve no other purpose than to take up space.

The Internet

The Internet appears to be a good venue for a democratic deliberation to those who have access to it. It has however been pointed out that in modern societies, time is a commodity that is not abundant and as such not all are able and willing to spend time to reach an educated conclusion on their own or through deliberative methods, which ultimately weakens the foundation of deliberative democracy.

“[A] deliberative democratic process would not be one which treats people’s judgements and processes as given, but one which effectively asks: do these judgements and processes meet an adequate standard of learning? And if not, how can they be improved?... no set of values or particular perspectives can lay claim to being correct and valid by themselves, but they are valid only in so far as they are justified.”\textsuperscript{44}

These shared attempts to reach a better and a fairer conclusion, either by improving the deliberation process or by including more participants, is a much desired system. It has been maintained “that rather than aggregating or filtering preferences, the political system should be set up with a view to changing them by public debate and confrontation.”\textsuperscript{45} This statement would classify the liberal individualism and the communitarianism as aggregating or filtering preferences while the deliberative democratic process would promote debate and

\textsuperscript{42} (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 163)
\textsuperscript{43} (Dahlberg, 2001b, 624)
\textsuperscript{44} (Held 2006, 233)
\textsuperscript{45} (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 148)
confrontation. Often it is claimed that the deliberative model is fairer, more realistic, taking the best from both and better thought through than the other two.\textsuperscript{46} No attempt will be made here to investigate those claims nor will value judgments be made about any of the systems.

It is quite clear that the Internet has so far not been the revolutionary tool for the democratic process as many had hoped it would be. The dramatic increase in the availability of information and the possibility for the citizens to communicate freely with each other has created many opportunities for improving democracy, but what is lacking is proper utilization. This technology could allow for active citizenship at the touch of a button, a “passage from an intermittent to a continuous democracy, others say to an endless democracy, in which the voice of the people could be heard in every moment and passive citizens could be changed to active ones.”\textsuperscript{47} This apparent inactivity of the citizens except during elections is one of the perceived flaws with today’s modern democracies, and it could be sidestepped with the Internet. But it hasn’t happened. Many explanations\textsuperscript{48} have been offered as to why, one the aforementioned inequality of access to the Internet and another repeatedly mentioned are concerns about security. In fact security concerns could be interpreted as the largest hindrances at the present time. Without detailed technical descriptions, four examples can be mentioned. The voting booth, either online or at a physical location, has to be secure and clear of tampering. Electronic voting systems are as easy to manipulate as any other software if not guarded against specifically. Secondly, the results of the election have to be securely stored, again because of the danger of malicious changes being made to the software or the data kept in those software architectures. Thirdly, complete disconnection between the votes and the voters (to protect the anonymity). Fourthly, voter authentication is problematic when it comes to online elections as the usual ‘username and password’ security measures have proven to be less than reliable. These challenges are slowly being resolved on other fronts, as can be seen with the progress made regarding online banking, online shopping, healthcare system databases and generally everywhere where sensitive information are stored and the demand of security is very high.

Even though the access to and amount of information has increased exponentially with the help of the Internet it has been questioned whether the ease of access really has increased the interest in democracy and the democratic method as voter turnout is generally decreasing

\textsuperscript{46} (Held 2006, 232)
\textsuperscript{47} (Rodota 2007, 19)
\textsuperscript{48} (King 2006, 22 - 23)
around the globe, despite the increase in the information available. “In the early 1960s, two authoritative volumes summarized the most important findings of political scientists and sociologists… patterns of voting participation are strikingly the same in various countries: Germany, Sweden, America, Norway, Finland, and many others for which we have data… The better educated [vote] more than the less educated… higher-status persons, more than lower... More than three decades later, these conclusions are clearly still valid.” 49 Granted, this study was done before the time of the Internet, but this trend is still visible if contemporary election demographics and voter turnout numbers are examined. It is further stated that the better education a person has and the better a person is off socially, the more political interest that person has and is thus more likely to cast a vote in an election. It has been suggested that

“access to information need not necessarily change our point of view or gain our interest in new topics, unless that is already part of our personal paradigm. In fact we are likely to become more steadfast in our views as we filter information out which challenges us and our understanding of the world.” 50

Keeping this statement in mind we can ask ourselves if the availability itself will actually spark interest in the political processes. It can thus be inferred in a convincing manner that the group that already holds an interest in the democratic process now has a larger advantage over those who don’t and that the knowledge gap between the two groups could have been broadened with the development of the Internet. Developing the skill and acquiring the equipment to participate in the process that opened up with the Internet requires ever more effort and time due to the amount of information available and the rate of development of the ideas in circulation. In essence the Internet might have prevented itself from becoming the revolutionary tool in democratic processes.

Predictably the approaches of the three different democratic ideologies to the Internet are fundamentally different. It is perceived by the liberal individualists as a tool to augment the capabilities of the individual and allowing him or her to further increase the chance of achieving their preferences. By being a source of tremendous amounts of information it allows the individuals to do their homework in order to increase their efficient usage of the

49 (Lijphart 1997, 3)
50 (King 2006, 22)
democratic tool. In short it allows the individual to become more competitive in an economic sense, the better he can perform the better the results.

Communitarians regard the Internet in a similar manner as the liberal individualists do, it allows individuals to access huge amounts of information and to seek out other individuals with similar ideologies. The goal with the usage of the Internet is however completely different. The betterment for groups of individuals, the search for the ‘common good’ and the maintenance of the state as a provider of individual freedoms and rights are the preferences championed by the communitarians. Removing the constraints of geographical locations the Internet allows everyone with access to seek out likeminded people on order to educate them or be educated in turn. Being able to study, compare and get feedback on ideals, the communitarian is empowered to carry out his or her convictions in the real world.

Those who discuss deliberative democracy mention that a public venue is needed for transparent discussions where predetermined preferences of individuals are not taken for granted, where the discussions are unhindered and the capacity for rational deliberations is sufficient. To those requests the Internet is an answer. The inherent transparency of the Internet, the ease of access and the persistency of the venue has the potential to enhance this ideology to a great extent. In fact this statement applies to all of the three approaches, the potential is there it just has to be utilized to a greater extent.

51 (Kymlicka 2002, 292), (Held 2006, 279), (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 132 and 160 ), (Kettner 2007, 62 - 63), (Vitale 2006, 745) and more.
Comparing democratic systems

It is certainly easy to compare different democratic systems and how they would use the Internet to further enhance their functions. But to me it is not self evident that democratic systems are what we should be focusing and spending energy on advancing. In my opinion it is necessary to investigate to some extent why democracy is so widespread during our times, especially in light of the detailed discussion above about democratic systems. In this section it becomes clear as we investigate Rousseau’s arguments for the ideal state that democracy is not necessarily chosen *only* because of its political qualities, economic reasons are also very influential when it comes to arguing for democracy. In fact the reasoning behind democracy relies both on political and economic ideas and it is very difficult to tell which one is which. The clearest example is the ambiguity of the term ‘equality’, where it is used interchangeably for economic equality and political equality when arguments are given for democracy. This will be investigated further a little later in this essay.

Through the ages there have been several systems that have been used to govern societies. The beneficial results that democracy has provided can be said to speak for themselves, longevity of the member of those societies, standard of living, security and more can be named as testifying for the success of democratic systems. In the following sections I will examine how the conclusion has been drawn from theoretical investigations that democracy is the best form of government. I will specifically look at how Rousseau visualizes his ideal birthplace in terms of the state, although he also mentions helpful properties such as “a charming location, a temperate climate, a fertile country and the most delightful appearance there is under the heavens…”52 I will only focus on his discussion about the state. Rousseau uses a thought experiment that has been referred to as ‘the state of nature’, i.e. where man is imagined as not being a part of a society. Rousseau’s aim is “to form conjectures, drawn solely from the nature of man and the beings that surround him, concerning what the human race could have become, if it had been left to itself… Since my subject concerns man in general, I will attempt to speak in terms that suit all nations, or rather,

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52 (Rousseau 1987, 28)
forgetting times and places…”

Simply put, Rousseau reaches the conclusion that a republic (a form of democracy) is the best outcome from the inevitable formation of a civil society.

Rousseau’s birthplace

In Rousseau’s *Discourse on the origin and foundations of inequality among men* he gives a description of an ideal society in regards to government, a society he would have liked to have been born into. His birthplace would have had a society of limited population size in order to ensure that it was possible to govern it well and where everyone is able to perform their assigned functions without being overburdened. In this society all individuals would largely know each other, their vices and virtues, and their patriotism would entail “love of the citizens rather than… love of the land.”

Rousseau continues and says that the legislator and the people would have to have the same interests and thus sharing the goal for common happiness. The only way to reach this would to be under a democratic government. Laws are to be fair and apply equally to everyone – which is the basis for living and dying as a free man – including the elected government and foreigners. If this would not be the case Rousseau claims that the entire society would be at the excluded person’s discretion. If a person operates outside the legal framework that the entire society abides to, it is a mark of elitism and consequently removes accountability from that person. He continues and states that his ideal society would be an established republic and not a newly formed one. His fear of a newly established republic is based on the danger of revolution where the new government can pass laws unsuited for the citizens or the citizens would be unsuited for the new government – no matter how just or fair the laws put forth would be. “If [the people] try to shake off the yoke [the just laws], they put all the more distance between themselves and liberty, because, in mistaking for liberty an unbridled license which is its opposite, their revolutions nearly always deliver them over to seducers who simply make their chains heavier.”

Peace and stability are necessary to his ideal society, both internal stability, where the need for expansion and conquest via violent

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53 (Rousseau 1987, 39)
54 (Rousseau 1987)
55 (Rousseau 1987, 26 - 28)
56 (Rousseau 1987, 26)
57 (Rousseau 1987, 27)
methods is not being considered, and external stability where the danger of invasion from
other states is not applicable.

The right of legislation is to be common to all citizens, i.e. all citizens are eligible to
become lawmakers via election, as they know best how to live with each other in a society. A
single person is not to have the ability to propose new laws at his whim, in fact it is to be
avoided at all times. Only elected persons are to possess this power, and those should exercise
that power with extreme caution and follow all preceding laws, constitutions and traditions
when they do so. Additionally, “the populace soon holds in contempt those laws that it sees
change daily; and that in becoming accustomed to neglect old usages on the pretext of making
improvements, great evils are often introduced in order to correct the lesser ones.”

Rousseau repeats his warning when it comes to governance by the unmediated public, as removing or
restricting the elected officials’ power creates an necessarily ill-governed republic as it is a
format of a new republic that is unstable and far from being tranquil. Rousseau’s ideal republic is

where private individuals, being content to give sanction to the laws and to decide
as a body and upon the recommendation of their leaders the most important public
affairs, would establish respected tribunals, distinguish with care their various
departments, annually elect the most capable and most upright of their fellow
citizens to administer justice and to govern the state; and where, with the virtue of
the magistrates thus bearing witness to the wisdom of the people, they would
mutually honor one another.

Resolution of conflicts within this republic would be done on amicable terms with the utmost
respect to all those involved.

Rousseau follows the example of other philosophers in his investigation and uses a well
known starting point to evaluate the best possible government, the idea of the ‘state of nature’
originally coined by Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century to explain how a state, and
consequently social order, could be rationalized. The state of nature was a situation where no
higher authority had been established and man was completely free, i.e. bound by no laws. A
simple example could be mentioned where in the state of nature nothing forbade one man to

58 (Rousseau 1987, 28)
59 (Rousseau 1987, 28)
60 (Hobbes 1985)
kill another, as neither was bound by any laws. By agreeing to a law that removed the right for a man to kill another, each man gave up a part of his freedom with the goal of increasing the overall security, thus taking a step away from the unruly state of nature and towards a civil society. The agreement of making such laws has been called a social contract, and by creating further laws and establishing an authority to enforce the laws, the society and governments were created.

It is not perfectly clear if Hobbes regarded this natural state a historical reality or whether he was simply creating a thought experiment. For Rousseau however it was perfectly clear that this state was only a theoretical tool and this state never existed as such. “[I]t is evident from reading the Holy Scriptures that the first man, having received enlightenment and precepts immediately from God, was not himself in that [natural] state… we must deny that, even before the [great] flood, men were ever in pure state of nature, unless they had fallen back into it because of some extraordinary event…”⁶¹ But why use this approach? What is the purpose of it? By removing any and all social frameworks and then visualize the progression from a stateless and lawless position towards a developed society with laws and government we have a measurement tool. With this tool it is possible to slowly insert an idea and extrapolate a result, put forth a second idea and witness the effect, etc. With this thought experiment tool it is possible to create different theoretical governance models and compare them. “A happy and tranquil republic”⁶² are the words Rousseau uses to describe his ideal birthplace, where the conditions for ‘happy’ and ‘tranquil’ are described above and with republic he is referring to the usage of elections to determine leaders of the state, a form of democracy. He obviously believes that happiness and tranquility are important to people and that it deserves to be sought out, at least through the state people are citizens of. We can draw the conclusion that he considers democracy to be better compared to other political systems since he is describing his ideal birthplace.

Equality is a recurring theme in Rousseau’s text, laws apply equally to all citizens, citizens have equal duties to fulfill those laws, all citizens have the equal right to be elected and those who are elected are to treat each other as equals. It is important to investigate further the concept of equality as it is very prominent in all literature regarding democracy. In the next section I will especially focus on how it appears in modern times.

⁶¹ (Rousseau 1987, 28)
⁶² (Rousseau 1987, 28)
Political and economic equality

It is somehow natural to think of politics as only having to do with political governance, not with economic matters. The reality is however not so simple. Those two are in many cases indistinguishable, sometimes it is perfectly normal and sometimes the connections can be questioned. What is potentially damaging is when economic factors weigh more in the rationale for democratic governance than political factors do. It is considered to be one of ideal of democracy and a just society, and something that must be visible to the citizens, that “political opportunities and powers must be independent of economic or social position…”63

Within non-normative theories of democracy, different theoretical models of democracy may compete for empirical adequacy or some other laudatory mark of sociological excellence. But we inevitably move from non-normative into normative theories of democracy as soon as a particular theoretically specified form of democratic governance has to be justified as being more recommendable as a form of political governance than other democratic (or non-democratic) forms of political governance. Normative theories of democracy vindicate particular forms of democratic governance as politically good governance (or politically better than x) by elaborating distinctive political rationales whose justificatory potentials can be compared and evaluated64

This description points towards one of the core problem with theories of democracy, how to compare them. Assuming that the ‘state of nature’ thought experiment allows us to conclude that democracy is the desired form of governance, like Rousseau did, we still end up with the difficulty of comparing different types of democracy. When I described the three prominent camps, the liberal individualists, the communitarians and the deliberative democratic I was doing so with the intent to make comparison possible. I believe however that any comparison of those three camps will be lacking if the concept of ‘equality’ is not considered further. Going back to the broadly worded conditions mentioned earlier in this essay, equal rights to the citizens, equal duties, equal treatment of citizens’ interests and equal access to political communities it becomes quite clear that the concept of equality is significant in theories about democracies. The question that arises immediately is what kind of equality as the difference

63 (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 160)
64 (Kettner 2007, 58)
between economic equality or political equality is very difficult to disentangle. Economics and politics, democratic or otherwise, are in fact so interwoven in modern times that separating them might be impossible.

By analyzing the conditions we can see the problem materialize – the concept of equality appears to be used in an ambiguous manner. The equal rights can refer to political rights and economic rights. That is, the right to free speech is usually read as being a political right while the right to property is an economic right. Both interpretations are encapsulated in the legal framework of the state. Similarly equally spread duties can refer to political duties, such as participating in political discussion or the political duty to vote. The duty to pay taxes to the state could be construed as an economic duty although that is not exactly clear since the state could not exist without tax revenues. Citizens’ interests can refer to political interests and economic interests. It is solely the equal access to political communities that is political, not economic, in nature – although that is in practicality dominated by economic factors. An empirical study\(^\text{65}\) has shown that a “higher equality increases the likelihood of good economic institutions, and the quality of democratic institutions does not necessarily appear to have a positive effect on the quality of economic institutions… democracies are more likely to implement good rule of law when inequality is low.”\(^\text{66}\) This study is thus saying that economic factors affect political factors more than the political factors affect the economic factors and if the pressure of redistribution of economic goods is low, that is citizens are not hugely differentiated in terms of wealth, it is more likely that good institutions are formed.

Continuing with the practicality stance taken above it has been noted\(^\text{67}\) in an empirical “review of the notions and understandings of democracy advocated by… dominant social agents\(^\text{68}\)… that, whilst notable differences exist, there is some degree of consensus [of these social agents] around an orthodox (neo)liberal, procedural model of democracy. This ‘working ideology’… is characterized by: (i) constitutionalism, the rule of law and (a particular conception of) human rights; (ii) the periodic election of political representatives via ‘free and fair’ multiparty elections in which (virtually) all the adult population is eligible

\(^{65}\) (Sunde, Cervellati and Fortunato 2008)
\(^{66}\) (Sunde, Cervellati and Fortunato 2008, 555)
\(^{67}\) (Ayers 2008)
\(^{68}\) Ayers mentions several Western states such as Canada, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, UK, USA, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Finland and Japan. Several governmental organizations are also mentioned; the World Bank, the IMF, the UN, the OECD, the EU and numerous pan-African institutions. Also, several non-governmental organizations are also mentioned; the National Endowment for Democracy, the Ford Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, International Foundation for Election Systems, The Westminster Foundation for Democracy and Amnesty International.
to vote; (iii) ‘good governance,’ characterized by minimal, ‘neutral’, accountable, transparent and participatory government with the separation of governmental powers and an effective bureaucracy; and (iv) an active, independent ‘civil society.’” Although this conception is closer to what we recognize from modern times, and to our intuitive definition of democracy, it just paraphrases the broadly worded conditions stated above. Equal rights are ensured by the rule of law as (i) stipulates, elections place duty on citizens in (ii), equal interests are maintained by ‘good governance’ as in (iii) where fairness dictates that one citizen should not be helped or hindered any more than the next citizen and finally access to political communities is ensured with independent civil societies as the (iv) characterization states.

Before I continue to the next section it is necessary to summarize the theoretical conclusions so far. Three different approaches toward democracy and the Internet, based on three different contemporary ideologies, have been identified and discussed. These approaches are diverse and hard to compare and when an attempt is done to do so, the problem of equality appears. The question of ‘equality’ in democratic theory has very strong ties to both the political side of the society and the economic side, so strong in fact that it is questionable whether they can be differentiated at all. In an attempt to do that I detailed how large influential organizations view democracy only to find out that the problem is not addressed by them. My broad theoretical conditions for democracy that I extracted from several sources in the beginning were present in these practical statements of democracy, all relying on the idea of ‘equality’ yet not differentiating between the political and the economic. Thus the problem regarding equality remains unsolved with me only drawing attention to it, not resolving it.

Having showed that the broad, theoretical conditions roughly align with what has been identified as common to practical applications of democracy, I will proceed on and investigate a case study of the players’ democracy in EVE Online, an experiment I participated in, aiming at introducing a democratic structure into an online society.

69 (Ayers 2008, 3)
Democracy in EVE Online: The Experiment

In 2007, CCP, the maker of the highly popular computer game EVE Online\(^{70}\) launched a program to introduce players’ democracy into a community of then 150,000 players (at the beginning of 2010 the number had risen to 300,000) in order to provide the means for them to affect their environment. The once simple community was beginning to emerge as a society with fully functional societal institutions – a market, an economic monitoring institute, an independent magazine – and adding players’ democracy to the mix was a logical step. With the additions CCP was aiming for a healthy society to encourage population growth and stability.

The opportunity to formulate and then implement a democratic structure, the Council of Stellar Management or CSM\(^{71}\), into a society where no such structure is present is rare. I was fortunate enough to lead such an experiment on behalf of CCP Games, when it was decided to enhance the society that had formed in the online game EVE Online. I sought the blueprint for the democratic structure in deliberative democracy, with the aim of promoting discussion amongst the participants in EVE Online on how to better and evolve their online environment. The discussion is conducted on three levels in EVE Online. Players, who are also voters, deliberate on topics amongst themselves and with the elected council members, the council members deliberate within the council and then the council deliberates with representatives from CCP. Through this deliberation the topics presented to CCP are those that most agree on after the deliberation is completed.

The goal of this section is to study and find out how successful the introduction of players’ democracy in Eve Online has been. First I will briefly describe the uniqueness of Eve Online among online games and how it matters to this experiment. Secondly, I will give a detailed account of the players’ democracy that has been running for over two years in EVE Online. And thirdly I will discuss in detail a survey that was sent to participants of EVE Online regarding the democratic system, voter turnout and awareness of the system.

\(^{70}\) See Appendix A
\(^{71}\) See Appendix B
The uniqueness of EVE Online

There is a fairly obvious reason why an online computer game holds out a promise for studying and advancing democracy on the Internet. Every member of such a game or society is by that very fact an active user of the Internet, but an unequal access to the Internet is often cited as a major limitation to using the Internet to further the democratic process.\(^72\) On the other hand, it can be questioned whether a computer game forms a society in any meaningful sense of the term. It is here that the uniqueness of Eve Online is perhaps apparent. The fact that EVE Online is operated on a single cluster of servers that are interconnected and designed to function in harmony makes EVE different from most other online games. All of its roughly 300.000 users use the same world to pursue their interest within the game (even if only 55.000 are online at the same time), while implementations of most other games only allow 5.000 – 10.000 users to access each world at the same time. The technical solution to service more than 10.000 users at the same time in the manner many games do is to have multiple identical worlds that are completely disconnected from each other.\(^73\) These individual servers are referred to as shards and a game utilizing this method is said to be sharded. Those participating in one of the game that uses the sharding method cannot use riches accumulated in another shard. So if a shard that a player frequently visits is unavailable for technical reasons and he or she were, temporarily, forced to use another shard, he or she would have to start from scratch. Nothing that belongs to a character, or the character itself, is available on another shard. An analogy could be drawn with diaries or note books. I can own many identical diaries or note books, but what I write in one of them is not automatically copied into all the others. And should the book I use most frequently be missing, nothing it contains would be available to me when I open the next book and I would have to start from the beginning to record my thoughts. In EVE however, there is only one book, so to speak, that keeps my records.

Because of the single world approach the emergent behavior that is witnessed in real life societies can also be witnessed in EVE Online. Examples of such behavior are several EVE banks that have been founded and run by users to handle the virtual currency ISK (Interstellar kredits (sic)) as there are no official banks, i.e. run by the operator of EVE, available. Formation of economic institutions was encouraged by the social situation the users

\(^{72}\) (Dahlberg, 2001b, 626) and (King 2006, 21)

\(^{73}\) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massively_multiplayer_online_role-playing_game#System_architecture (accessed 16\(^{th}\) of January 2010)
found themselves in, not by the creator of EVE Online. An economically efficient market for
game goods has been available since 2003, an official but independent magazine was founded
in October 2005 and a monetary oversight was established in 2007 with the hiring of a Ph.D.
economist and the foundation of the EVE economic monitoring institution. All sorts of further
specialized services related to the game are offered by users to other users for ISK. Examples
include limited webhosting services and web-advertisement banners that are related to
services only offered in EVE, yet advertised outside of EVE – both available for the virtual
currency. Adult entertainment and poker tournaments that use ISK are also known to have
cropped up.

Another example of emergent behavior is the need for mediators, for example in
business deals or diplomatic negotiations. That need has been answered by players who have
built up a reputation as being trustworthy. They offer their trust as a commodity in the game.
Several times a week these users accept large amounts of ISK as deposits or escrows as a part
of a business arrangement between two unrelated entities. The two businessmen depositing
the sums to a trusted user have no assurance of his or her integrity, other than the reputation.
Stealing, scamming and other general dishonest actions are allowed within the framework of
EVE which makes trust a very rare commodity. In short, there are no legal consequences to
dishonest or negative behavior, as it has been defined it in the ‘real life’, as there is no ‘state’
or another formal party to apply them in addition to this being allowed. The only
consequences of behavior of this nature are damages to the person’s reputation. One more
example of the emergent behavior is users that have been recognized as an objective media
with their blogs or podcasts.

As a result of these emergent and established behaviors a society is formed by the
inhabitants of EVE Online. The feeling of being one of several hundred thousand in the same
environment is familiar from our lives and when the complexity reaches these levels the
inhabitants start to assume certain functions. A formal representation is the norm for modern
democratic communities and the larger the community is, the greater the pressure for a
representation of some sort. Having a say in how the immediate surroundings are organized or
run is also a large part when it comes to communities. Having the option to oppose
development plans for the neighborhood or to request a playground to the neighborhood is a
real option in our real life democratic societies. This option is not necessarily connected to the
need for a formal representation but is often exercised through it. A community of the size of
several hundred thousand members and lacking both the representation and formal ways to affect the environment will be difficult to maintain.

The history and development of the council

As mentioned above the makers of EVE Online, CCP, decided in 2007 that some kind of a formal representation for the players, or a players' democracy, was needed in the society that had emerged within EVE Online. For a society of 150,00074 persons, a say in how their environment is developed was deemed necessary to ensure the health of the society and increase its life expectancy. This experiment offers a unique opportunity to study the introduction of democracy in an online game. Never before has players’ democracy been introduced into an online game of this size and magnitude. But two things can be mentioned in the line of anticipation. In 1993, the operators of LambdaMOO, a community of 3000 users, decided to introduce something like players’ democracy.75 Indeed, they went quite far with the idea of a direct players' democracy when they stated that their sole function as creators of the game was to maintain the environment and implement changes that the majority of the population wanted. In order to accomplish this, a system was devised. Every valid member of the community could put forth a petition for a change to the computer game if he or she had a required number of supporters signatures attached to the petition. If this requirement was fulfilled the petition was sent to the operators for a practicality check, i.e. to verify that the change proposed was actually possible from a technical point of view. Once verified by the operators, the petition in question was put up for a vote and if a majority voted in favor of it the petition was to be implemented.76 Several controversial changes were voted through and ultimately the operators decided to withdraw the power they passed to the community, while still maintaining the election system as a way for the community to express its opinions, i.e. as a polling tool. Given our theoretical framework we could say that this experiment failed because of its extreme liberal tendency. What was missing was the deliberation and discussion we associate with deliberative democracy. That, in any case, was my conclusion when designing the democratic experiment for EVE Online.

74 (Eyjólfr Guðmundsson 2009)
76 (Mnookin 1996)
Secondly, it should be mentioned that CCP itself had experimented with players’ representation before 2007. Indeed, from the start of EVE Online in 2003 the notion of players' representation had been an integral part of the game even though the exact specifics had not been formalized. A council of players, the Council of Stellar Management (CSM), was created in EVE Online as early as 2003. The first version of the CSM had twelve seats, nine for regular players that volunteered to the council and three for people invited by CCP. Any player could apply for a seat on the council and the selection process from the pool of candidates was simple, CCP chose the council members from the pool of applicants based on their age, experience within EVE, playing style, with whom they socialized in EVE etc., while the specially selected persons had only to fulfill arbitrary criteria. Furthermore a restriction was placed on allowed topics in the meetings between the council and CCP. The first version of the CSM was not deemed successful and was phased out due to lack of time on CCP’s behalf, homogeneity of candidates and the lack of formality of the process which caused lack of commitment from both parties.

The second version of the CSM (2007) was to be properly implemented taking full advantage of the experience the first implementation gave and to be created and nurtured by professionals. Furthermore the concepts of the new structure were to be drawn from deliberative democratic ideals. The most notable changes from the first version were four. First, a decision was taken of holding a general election for EVE players to determine which candidates should sit on the council. This was done to ensure uncensored input from the players. Having CCP selecting the council members would mean that CCP would in practice be directing the messages coming from the council. Second, the formality was to be increased by having regular meetings and an in-person meeting between the developers of EVE and the council. Third, I was put in charge of the project in light of my education in philosophy to ensure consistency in the design and to oversee the maintenance and adherence to the vision the council was to fulfill. Fourth, the number of seats was reduced from 12 to 9. In fact, the only thing that survived the revision of the CSM concept was the name, the Council of Stellar Management.

In the fall of 2007, a 25 page design draft was ready, detailing the relevant matters of the new CSM. The design stated that the new CSM was a democratic council elected by the players and the elected council was to have a voice regarding EVE Online, but not a vote on

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77 See Appendix B
how CCP would develop the game. Also, the emphasis was on the importance of deliberation between all parties involved, the voters, CSM and CCP. The eligibility of candidates and voters was also detailed along with a description of the voting mechanism, communications methods between the new council and CCP and CCP’s dedication to listen and follow up on the proposals from the CSM. The draft was publicly introduced to players attending the 2007 EVE Fanfest in Reykjavík, a CCP hosted and funded EVE Online conference sporting about 1200 attendants. Introducing the draft to the people who were ultimately going to use it was done with the purpose of reviewing and further polishing the design itself, i.e. by using the ideas detailed in the draft on the draft itself. In addition to that, gaming industry luminaries with over 20 years of experience and scholars were asked for their professional opinions about the design. Of the things most emphasized by the critics of the design was the apparent contradiction between the perceived power indicated by the word ‘democratic’ and the statement implicit in the draft that the council would not have any formal power.

The solution to this problem was rather simple, the message within the draft was clarified to underline the lack of power on two fronts. First, the title for the project was changed from ‘Democratic Representative Council’ to ‘Democratically Elected Representative Council’ and it was explicitly stated several times in the draft that the council held no formal power. This change satisfied the critics and reviewers. All subsequent discussions revolved around specific technical implementations of the design such as term length, number of terms per candidate etc. The overall view of the project was positive and players and game developers looked forward to seeing the structure put into effect.

The elections in EVE Online

Currently four elections have been held in EVE Online. The first elections were held in May 2008, the second elections in November 2008, the third in May 2009 and the fourth in November 2009. Each council sits for 6 months before elections are called again and each member can only sit for two terms, consecutive or not, before he or she is excluded from running again. Image 1 shows the numbers of votes cast in all four elections and the voter turnout.

When evaluating the results of the four elections it must be kept in mind that the pool of eligible voters has been growing constantly. The number of eligible voters was 4.8% higher
for the second election than it was for the first election but a giant leap was made between the second and third election where the electorate grew 18.3%. The growth between the third and the fourth election was however only half a percent. Another thing that has to be kept in mind is that in order to vote, a person has to have an account with EVE Online that is older than 30 days and that condition will eliminate all newcomers to EVE for the first 30 days as being eligible voters.

Still another important matter to keep in mind is that a single person can own multiple accounts in EVE Online, and can, consequentially, have more than one vote. Two reasons are for this setup. First, it is practically impossible to ensure that a single person will have only one vote. Any sort of restriction with registration to vote would make the process unattractive and diminish the voter turnout. The second reason is the question of fairness. If a person chooses to have more than one account to access EVE Online that person has as many votes as he or she has accounts. In a community where the participation is optional like in EVE and each access to the environment has to be paid for, it could be said that people who are better off financially could buy influence. That kind of influence can be considered detrimental to the whole process according to some EVE players. Others state that this is perfectly normal, they should get votes in accordance with the financial cost where they are willing and able to contribute more than others. This debate will not be solved here yet it is necessary to be aware of it.
General statistics for elections to the CSM

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>CSM 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Vote count</td>
<td>24651</td>
<td>20112</td>
<td>27848</td>
<td>21158</td>
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<td>Abstains</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>1149</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voter turnout - %</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average voter age (real life) - years</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>30.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average voter age (EVE) - years</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male voters</td>
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<td>97.10%</td>
<td>97.10%</td>
<td>96.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Number of candidates</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
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<td>Number of female candidates</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Number of male candidates</td>
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<td>Average candidates age (real life) - years</td>
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<td>Male candidates elected</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

A look at EVE's demographic reveals that the bulk of participants in the game are male with an overwhelming ratio of 95%. The voters' age goes hand in hand with the subscribers' age of around 31 years of real life years and so does the gender ratio.

Primarily the voters are EVE veterans, meaning that they have been participating in EVE on average for around 2 years. The EVE age has been climbing steadily during the course of the elections, it being 1.77 years for the first election, 1.94 years the second, 2 years during the third election and 2.2 years in the most recent election. This indicates that players who have invested more time in the EVE society are more interested in the election than the newer players are. Further number crunching shows us that 16.5% of those who created an account with EVE Online in 2003 are still playing, 18.5% of users registered in 2004, 19.9% from 2005 and 23.1% from 2006. The users who subscribed back in 2003 make up 2.8% of the total, 4.5% of those who began in 2004, 6.4% in 2005 and 13.0% 2006.
The candidates’ gender is generally on-par with the subscription ratio, 95% male – 5% female. The ratio of elected members has not followed that trend, usually having a higher female ratio compared to all the players. The first two councils had two female members aboard, i.e. 22%. During the third council only one woman was elected and the fourth council has no female members (Image 2). It is not fully understood why the gender ratio is as extreme as it is among the EVE Online players. Some have pointed out that the nature of game in question causes female adversity which might be the reason, yet that has not been investigated enough to support substantive claims.\(^{78}\) It has however been suggested that women who generally participate in online games "value intimacy and personal conversations… [and] female players prefer to relate to other players, while male players prefer to work together to achieve goals"\(^{79}\) – EVE can easily be described as being strife-oriented more than relation-oriented, thus giving one explanation\(^{80}\).

The Council of Stellar Management (CSM)

Any player interested in becoming a candidate for the CSM can run for the council\(^{81}\). Minimal restrictions are placed on those who become candidates and they are not connected to who the

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\(^{78}\) [http://www.eurogamer.net/articles/eve-walking-appeals-to-girls](http://www.eurogamer.net/articles/eve-walking-appeals-to-girls) (accessed 18\(^{th}\) of January 2010)

\(^{79}\) (Yee 2006)

\(^{80}\) See Appendix A

\(^{81}\) See Appendix B
player is, or their style of playing EVE. Clearly put, many of the candidates have not been vocal supporters of CCP. In fact notorious players have applied for candidacy and been accepted. Such a “bad” reputation in EVE Online is earned by taking the game as far as possible without breaking any rules, as odd as that may sound. Personal greed and the destruction of assets or the reputation of other players is one playing style in EVE Online. It can be argued that such a behavior is generally not good for communities and electing players with such a reputation as representatives sounds counter-intuitive. Yet playing the rules to the extreme requires knowledge of the rules and as such these players have, on several occasions, been voted on to the council.\textsuperscript{82}

There are only four conditions that a candidate has to fulfill. The first is to be 21 years old or more. The second is to be willing to commit time and energy to the function and be available to travel to Iceland (which includes having a valid passport). The third condition is that the player does not have a negative standing with CCP based on his actions as a player of EVE. This condition ensures that if a player breaches the End User License Agreement (EULA) or the Terms of Service (TOS)\textsuperscript{83} he or she can be excluded from candidacy. These rules stipulate norms that include a ban of reverse engineering the software that makes EVE, attacking the servers that run EVE, breaking into other players' accounts, threatening bodily harm to other players or employees of CCP, etc. The fourth condition is to be willing to sign a Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with CCP. The NDA is deemed necessary as the delegates of the council will be exposed to material that is not yet available for the public. Having an agreement like this is also a very solid foundation to build trust between the CSM and CCP. The CSM operates under the assumption that it might get to see something that CCP is not willing to share with everyone just yet, and CCP feels comfortable with sharing such things with the CSM having the agreement in place. Discussions between the two entities are thus freer and more open once this basic level of trust has been established.

Pre-elections or primaries and political parties are not a part of the CSM design. These are however not forbidden but they are also nowhere formally mentioned. That has not deterred the players from holding primaries and forming political parties. One corporation\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{82} (CCP Xhagen 2008) (CCP Xhagen 2008) (CCP Xhagen 2009) (CCP Xhagen 2009). Several names can be mentioned as being vocal critics of CCP or been known to play EVE in a manner that in many cases drives other players away from EVE.
\textsuperscript{83} See http://www.eveonline.com/pnp for further details (accessed 10\textsuperscript{th} of April 2010)
\textsuperscript{84} Each character – the online representation of the user – is, by design, a member of one corporation and only one at a time. A corporation can be run by either the EVE computers or by other users. The affiliation between
of 2137 members\(^{85}\) (currently the largest corporation\(^{86}\) in EVE Online) has held pre-elections for all CSM elections and has had two members present on all but one council. Also, two political parties have been formed and players have been running under their banners, 'Take Care – Party for EVE CSM'\(^{87}\) and 'EVE voice of reason Party'\(^{88}\). Take Care has had a member on the council since the party was formed during the second CSM. Voice of reason did not manage to get a member in the fourth election, but had a member on the second and the third council. The parties were formed to champion topics of interest to players who are not part of large organizations and subsequently do not have a large body of supporters at hand like the big corporations and alliances in Eve Online provide candidates with from their ranks.

Elections for the CSM are kept as simple as possible. There are three phases to each election, each phase lasting two weeks. First is the submission period where players can submit their applications to become candidates for the council. Secondly, after matching all candidates to the criteria mentioned above the promotion period is opened followed by an election period, where during the promotion and election periods the candidates campaign. Usually there is a delay between the submission period and the promotional period due to the verification needed on the applicants, such as if the applicant is the true owner of the account. Usually the promotion and the election period happen right after one another. The results are then announced once they have been verified and error-checked.

The election system used is the so called 'First past the post', where the candidate with the highest number of votes is placed in first place, the second highest number of votes earns the candidate the second place, etc. Places ten to fourteen are filled with alternatives. The role of an alternative is to be available to fill in for a delegate should he or she be unavailable during a meeting. The alternative then fills the role of the missing delegate for that meeting. If an alternative is needed for a meeting the highest ranking available alternative has to be called in, it is not permitted to choose an alternative at random.

There are no differences in power between the elected delegates based on number of votes except the highest tallying one. That member is automatically appointed the Chairman
of the council. The Chairman is responsible for making the council functional by calling meetings, chairing the meetings, setting the agenda and so on. A Chairman is permitted to step down and have the council elect another Chairman from all the delegates if he or she does not want the responsibility of being in office. Should the Chairman decide to step down he or she will still serve on the council as a regular member. So far the person receiving most votes has always accepted as Chairman and carried out his responsibilities.

Further three positions have to be filled by the council, the positions of Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Vice-Secretary. They are filled with a simple vote cast by the CSM during their first meeting. Their responsibilities are straightforward enough where the Vice-Chairman will assist the Chairman in general meeting management and act as a replacement should the Chairman not be available. The Secretary is responsible for recording the meeting minutes and making them public. As with the Vice-Chairman, the Vice-Secretary is an assistant to the Secretary and fulfills his role when he or she is unavailable for meetings. CSM meetings are held in EVE’s virtual environment at periods decided by the CSM, a tradition has formed of a meeting every other week.

In order to have the council handle a topic, it must be raised on the official EVE Online discussion forums by either a regular player or a council member. That topic must be open for discussion for seven days before it can be put on the council's agenda. This method is to ensure discussions about the topic before the council takes it up in order to call forth as many opinions as possible. Once the topic has been open for discussion for the required time period a council member can request it to be put on the agenda or the players can force the council to take it up. This option requires the support of 25% of those who participated in the last election, a change requested by the CSM from the original design where the requirement was 5% eligible voters. So far this article has not been exercised and it could be claimed that an option like this is redundant as the representatives are elected by the players.

When a topic has been put on the council's agenda it is discussed and voted on by the council. A simple majority vote will determine whether the topic is presented to CCP for further discussion or not. Topics put forth to CCP are then either rejected by CCP or accepted and put into the development process.
Topics brought up by the CSM

There are no restrictions put on what type of topics the CSM can bring up to CCP for handling, as long as they are related to EVE Online and the greater sphere that has formed around it. Over the course of three councils, the fourth having just assumed its position when this is written, 272 topics have been handled by the CSM and out of those, 189 have been put on the table for CCP's evaluation.

The topics can be sorted into five categories;

a) Enhancements to the user interface (UI) within EVE Online. EVE is a complicated universe with a wealth of information and configuration options available to its inhabitants. Having an intuitive, simple yet powerful interface to access and organize the data available is essential. During the first and second installments of the CSM the issue of an improved EVE-mail was brought up, EVE-mail being the e-mail of EVE Online. The CSM pointed out that the lack of tools to organize, label and search the EVE-mails made the system more or less unusable for players that received any significant number of mails per day. In fact they drew forth several examples of how this tool, the EVE-mails, was completely unusable for players that run large organizations. Furthermore there are automatic EVE-mails that cannot be opted out of clogging up the inbox in such a manner that mails from players were very difficult, or even impossible, to access. In December 2009 a completely new EVE-mail system was introduced to EVE Online, utilizing the CSM's reviews and recent approaches to e-mail user interface.

Another item brought up by the CSM is how cumbersome the Science & Industry interface in EVE Online is. When a player wishes to manufacture a ship, an armor plate or any other item, he or she first has to make sure the raw materials are available. Having both the materials and a recipe for the item the player opens the interface to start the manufacturing. Following that the process will take a certain amount of time, depending on the complexity of the items in question, and then the player can take the item out of the factory. The process for the user gets complicated if he is manufacturing on a large scale. As an example we can take a certain ship\(^{89}\) of technical level 2, where technical level 2 is higher than technical level 1 in terms of performance and quality. It requires 13 types of components of which only 3 are raw materials to manufacture one ship unit. Making two units requires

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\(^{89}\) The type had in mind is a heavy assault cruiser called 'Vagabond' - http://wiki.eveonline.com/wiki/Vagabond (accessed 27\(^{th}\) of January 2010)
twice as many components, three units three times as many etc. Furthermore components are manufactured from two to 7 different raw materials, depending on the component. This quickly ramps up the complexity level of a large scale operation where the user has to keep tabs on several tens of things in order to maintain continuous production capabilities. The manufacturing interface does not offer any shortcuts or easily manageable schemes for the user. Currently each component can be made in varying amounts, but every production batch of a component has to be entered into the factories by hand. Ordering into production 30 types of components means that the user has to make the same command 30 times, making this user interface a bit user un-friendly.

The CSM suggested a 'bulk production' solution where the user would be able to create a template that would enable him or her to enter several types of components into the factories at the same time. This would remove the tediousness of the process while at the same time requiring attention by the user. The suggestion has been received and accepted by CCP, although it has not yet been introduced to EVE Online.

In general the user interface has to provide clear, helpful and easy options. This also applies to asset management, fleet operations where hundreds of players are fighting together, market functions, what areas are dangerous to travel in and much more.

b) Changes to the roles or performance of objects\textsuperscript{90} in EVE Online. Generally this is referred to as 'balancing', i.e. where one object is compared to other objects and its performance or condition is evaluated. In some cases an object performs better than other objects which brings up the question of whether that one object should get a reduction in its performance (referred to as 'a nerf' to an object) or should all the other objects be brought up in performance (referred to as 'a boost' to an object) to match the over performing one. As this is a computer world the normal 'natural laws' do not necessarily apply. Imagine if, in the real world, captains of huge oil tanker ships would demand that they were as nimble and fast as small motorboats. That simply is impossible, but in EVE it is quite possible and as such, discussions about that kind of performance, is applicable to EVE.

There are several classes of space ships in EVE based on size. Sizes include (from the smallest to the largest) frigates, destroyers, cruisers, battle cruisers, battlehips, capital ships and super-capital ships. Each class has subclasses based and each subclass has several\textsuperscript{90} Objects here can be spaceships or space stations – generally this can be considered to be an object that players can interact with.
different ships that each has a role it is supposed to fill. Those roles are envisioned and decided upon by CCP and subsequently discussed by the users of EVE.

Discussions about balancing also extend to modules that can be placed on the space ships. Modules that enhance the defensive capabilities, increase the speed of ships, increases the damage a ship can do, different types and sizes of guns etc. Also space stations and their individual characteristics enter the equation. It is thus safe to say that this category is very complex and an overall picture of the performance of objects is difficult to maintain.

c) Changes or enhancements of the current rules that govern EVE. Unlike the category above this refers to the rules governing the objects, not the objects themselves. A question like “Should a player have to visit an office belonging to a corporation to apply for membership or should he be able to do that anywhere?” would fall under this category. The CSM suggested during the first period an enhancement to the rules relating to how ships belonging to the ‘Covert Ops’ class\textsuperscript{91} travel. When travelling within a solar system a player uses his ship's warp capabilities to travel. When a player wants to travel from one solar system to another he can choose between using a jump gate, a randomly generated wormhole or a jump drive. Jump gates are situated in most systems and players then travel from one gate to another within a system to visit the next system. A wormhole appears in random solar systems at random times, either leading to a system with a jump gate or a wormhole system without a jump gate. The only way to get out of a wormhole system is via another wormhole. It can, and has happened that a player gets trapped in wormhole space, finding no way out. The third manner to travel between systems is via jump drive. It requires the cooperation of two or more players, where one will activate a ‘cynosural field’ for the pilot in the jump capable ship to travel to. This method forces ships that have a jump drive to bypass the jump gates, as having a jump drive excludes you from using the jump gates. However, the pilot activating the field will have to travel to the solar system where he or she activates the field, a travel that requires the gate. When a pilot activates a cynosural field, everyone in EVE Online can see where it is. They might not know who activated the field and who is using it, but they see it is there. Covert ops ships can however travel using covert cynosural fields. That means no one can detect them like with regular fields, with the exception of other covert

\textsuperscript{91} Actually the ‘Black Ops’ ships classes are the ships that use the ‘Covert Ops’ Cynosural Fields. The ‘Covert Ops’ class includes ‘Black Ops’ ships. All ‘Covert Ops’ ships can use the ‘Covert Ops’ Jump Portal but only ‘Black Ops’ ships can use the ‘Covert Ops’ Cynosural Fields. To simplify things I will not mention the Black Ops ship class any further and I will leave the Jump Portals out as well. Jump Portal allows you to create a temporary Jump Gate between two ships.
The change proposed by the CSM was in two parts; one was regarding the jump range of the jump capable covert ops ships; the other was the effect of the cynosaural field jammers on covert ops cynosaural fields. Field jammers can be placed in solar systems under certain circumstances. The CSM wanted the jammers to have no effect on covert ops fields. These jammers prevented the creation of normal cynosaural fields and covert ops fields, until the CSM brought up the topic for the change. This rule has now been changed in accordance to the wishes of the CSM.

**d) New rules or objects that could be introduced to EVE Online.** This category covers all rules or objects that are not currently available in EVE and would have to be created from scratch. The introduction of Wormhole space is an example of this, although not requested by the CSM, i.e. solar systems that cannot be travelled to with jump gates or jump drives but only via randomly generated (by the EVE computers) Wormholes. Another example was the introduction of modular ships that are formally referred to as being of technical level 3. Regular ships are simply manufactured by a player. Modular ships are not manufactured but assembled from modules that are manufactured. Each modular ship is made up of five different modules types (defensive, offensive, propulsion, electronics and engineering) and of each module type there are (currently) four variations. The second CSM gave invaluable insight into both of these new enhancements.

New rules or objects have a much longer development time than changes or enhancements. The difference can be said to rival the act of modifying a car with spoiler kits or a paint job compared to designing and making a new car from the ground up. For example the first CSM brought up the topic of planetary Colonies, which would allow players to set up bases on planets and moons. These bases could serve many functions, like military installations, raw material gathering, trade-goods manufacturing and such. Currently players cannot interact with planets at all (other than flying to them and look at them) and moons can interacted with only in terms of moon mining, where resources are gathered by a structure placed in orbit around the moon. Introducing a whole new mechanic like this is quite a feat and in itself a new game within the EVE Online game. This is currently being worked on by CCP and the fourth CSM has given valuable insight and assistance to the development. A timeframe of two to three years is to be expected in development time when it comes to new rules or objects.
e) Changes or additions to components outside EVE Online yet directly related to it (such as the CSM itself, the EVE Online website and message boards etc.) Changes to the subscription cost on prepaid cards were brought up by the first CSM and is included in this category. Additionally, CCP is currently developing a new feature called the EVE Gate. Simply put EVE Gate is a social networking site, similar to Facebook or MySpace, for EVE characters and all topics referring to that project will be in this category if they come up.

![CSM topics by type](image3)

Topics that are eventually brought up to CCP are given four statuses by the company, (i) in the backlog, (ii) in the pipeline, (iii) finished and (iv) denied. The development process can be said to consist of taking items from the backlog and putting them into the pipeline and from the pipeline they reach the finished status – this is, mildly put, a simplification of the process as the context of each item has to be considered and then its impact of EVE as a whole. A simple topic such as ‘implement a medium sized cargo hauling ship’ has repercussions for every other ship type in EVE. Another topic that sounds simple is ‘give users the ability to build space stations’. Consequently questions such as ‘can other users take control of the station?’ , ‘can you destroy a station?’ and ‘where can you place a station?’ have to be answered and often such answers require an investigation into all aspects EVE’s framework.
The backlog contains any and all items that CCP wants to see in EVE. It is a list that is prioritized several times each year and based on that order items are moved from the backlog to the pipeline. An item being in the pipeline does not automatically mean that it will be available in the game within a short timeframe. Many items in the pipeline are complicated and require a lot of time to go from an idea to a working feature. Marking a topic as Finished means that it is currently available in EVE Online.

The end product of a topic brought up by the CSM is not necessarily exactly like the CSM initially proposed it. This is understandable as council members are not necessarily game experts or computer technicians. Furthermore they lack the inside knowledge of EVE's technology. The first CSM brought up an idea called 'Switching ammo in all guns at once'. To make this topic intelligible it is necessary to briefly explain the concept of weapons in EVE Online. Most space ships can mount 1 to 8 guns or missile launchers on their ship (depending on the ship class). In each gun a type of ammo is loaded, where some ammo is more effective at long ranges and other at short ranges. Switching out the ammo when the tactical situation changes is sometimes necessary. When the CSM brought up the change request, the method of loading a different type of ammo to your gun was rather tedious, it was needed to right-click every single gun and select the new ammo type from a dropdown list. Doing this as many times as the number of guns could mean the difference between victory and defeat. It was however possible to reload the same ammo type into all guns with a simple command and the CSM assumed that the lack of multiple ammo changes was perhaps a mistake or an oversight. That was not the case. This was a question of technical implementation. Reloading a gun causes minimal load on the database handling the space ships and all the information related to that, in essence it is only a single transaction where the ammunition is removed from the stack being reloaded from. Then the computer in the EVE server cluster would update the information for the gun automatically. Changing ammo for a weapon requires two transactions, i.e. it is twice as expensive as the ‘reload’ order. Since there is only one database for the entire server cluster but many computers in the cluster, the aim is to have the computers do as much work as possible and the database as little work as possible.

The solution to this simple request actually brought players more than the CSM had originally envisioned. Drawing on the philosophy of not using the database except when necessary, another way was found. Allowing the players to group weapons so they would function as a one gun was the solution. This allows players to change the ammo type for all
the guns they have grouped together in exactly the same manner as they would for a single gun. The added functionality was that instead of having to order each gun to fire individually, the group of guns could be ordered to fire with one command. The solution produced the same functionality as the CSM had brought up but a different technological approach. The difference can be traced to lack of knowledge by the CSM on EVE Online technology. Needless to say the change was very well received.

As per Image 4, the majority of topics brought up by the CSM have been put into the development process and are at various stages there; of the 189 topics brought up, 87% (164) have been accepted. The 25 topics that have been denied have all been denied on technological grounds. While everything is possible when it comes to software, many things are simply not practical. Thus the reason for the denial are most often due to the CSM bringing up topics that go against the basic design of the software architecture that has been put into place for EVE Online. An example: every user controls a character and every one of those characters is a member of a corporation. If an item is registered in the database as belonging to a character or a corporation it cannot be taken by another character or a corporation. A character can only approach an item belonging to a corporation if he is a member of the corporation and has sufficient privileges within that corporation. The only way
for an item to become available to another character or corporation is if that item is traded (for valuables or not) away from the corporation to another entity via processes that are present for that purpose. This is similar to if a stapler with my name on it, for some reason, got lost from my desk and ended up on yours. The system dictates that you are not able to see it – let alone touch it or use it – since it does not belong to you. Should I however hand the stapler over to you, or if I left it (intentionally or unintentionally) in a public place where you could take it, you would be able to use the stapler.

The CSM brought up a topic that would have bearing on this nature of the game. The suggestion was to allow a corporation to rent out their equipment to just anyone, in this case their mobile laboratories and manufacturing facilities. Due to the access restrictions mentioned above this suggestion was denied as property of this type cannot be accessed in EVE Online by many corporations, only change ownership. This means that instead of a corporation putting up mobile laboratories and renting access to them, they would have to rent the laboratories themselves. And not all players in EVE Online can set up or run such mobile structures.

Clearly put, the dominating reason for CCP to deny a topic from the CSM is because the council members do not have enough technological knowledge of the software architecture that is used for EVE Online – which is of course not the CSM’s fault.

Survey

In November of 2009 a survey was sent to all registered players of EVE Online with the aim of getting empirical data regarding the awareness of the players’ council, participation in the elections compared to the awareness and demographic information about the respondents. In all 1477 persons completed the survey. The survey consisted of multiple choices questions, where the election asked about was open for two weeks prior to the survey, November 12th to November 26th 2009. First question asked if the respondent had heard of the CSM, with a yes or a no choice. Second question asked the participants to divulge whether they had participated in the last election or not. Third question asked how long the respondent had been participating in EVE Online and the fourth question asked those who had not cast their ballot why they had not done so. The final question asked participants to rate how the CSM was performing according to their expectations.
The awareness is quite high among the respondents of the CSM, where 87% have heard of it before:

![Have you heard of the CSM?](image)

Image 5

Much fewer respondents actually voted in the CSM elections held in November 2009, compared to the awareness ratio:

![Did you vote in the elections for the 4th CSM?](image)

Image 6

EVE players’ turnout for the fourth election was roughly 8% which means the CSM survey was widely attended by those who voted. Therefore results from this survey cannot be considered representing all of EVE’s population, but rather only of the survey respondents. This lack of participation in the vote, despite knowing it was ongoing, is indicative of voters’ apathy although the reason behind the apathy shown by EVE’s voters cannot be surmised
from this survey. It has been suggested in studies about voter turnout that information regarding candidates is the prime reason for low voter turnout. “First, most citizens are predisposed to vote. Surveys consistently show that roughly 90 percent of Americans believe they should vote even if their preferred candidate is certain to lose… Second, some citizens abstain because they are unable to evaluate the candidates… Citizens who do not even go to the polls sometimes explain that they are too uninformed about the candidates to vote.”92

The CSM awareness is higher among players who have been participating in the EVE society for an extended period of time. Although the awareness of the CSM goes down in relation to participation time in EVE, more than half of those who have little experience, 1 to 3 months, with EVE has heard of the CSM.

Image 7

Three choices were offered to those who stated they had not participated in the election; ‘do not believe the CSM can bring a change’; ‘did not support any of the candidates’; and ‘was not aware of the elections’. A fourth option was given in the form of a text field, where participants could state their reasons in their own words. The majority of the responses from the text field can be sorted to three categories. No knowledge of the candidates or their agendas; no interest in EVE politics; and finally lack of knowledge of the CSM structure and its purpose.

92 (Matsusaka 1995, 92 - 93)
The survey revealed that participation in the election does not trend with how long the respondents have been part of EVE Online. Furthermore it is clear that awareness of the election is not followed by the decision to participate.

When comparing the answer to whether respondents vote to how the CSM performs compared to expectations there is a strong trend emerging. The better they believe the CSM is performing the more likely it is that they will go and cast their ballot.
The age distribution roughly follows the average age of EVE players of 31 year, 60% are 30 years old or younger, 40% are 31 years old and over.

Comparing the age of the respondents to whether they participated in the election reveals that older group is less likely to participate than the younger group is. The age group of 30 years
and younger has consistently higher participation rate, on average 46.38% while the group of 31 years and older is only at 37.05% on average.

The accounts’ ages are represented in the diagram below, average age of accounts taking the survey is 2 years, which corresponds to the average age of voting accounts; 44% of respondents are veterans with 2 years or longer of EVE experience:
Breaking down the sections of EVE age and looking at the respondents’ age groups within each section reveals that the highest proportion of 36 years and older are to be found in those who have been playing for 4 years or more and those who have been playing for less than 1 month. There is no one under 15 years old that has been playing for more than 4 years nor is there anyone of that age range that has been playing for less than 1 month.

![Age groups grouped by account age](image14.png)
Conclusion

How successful was the introduction of players’ democracy in Eve Online? Measuring the success of players’ democracy in EVE Online is a complicated matter. In light of the discussion of democracy above, we can identify at least four perspectives to this question. To begin with, the experiment might have a general value. It might increase the democratic consciousness of the players of the game, who, after all, are members of real life communities. Raising the democratic awareness in the game might, of course, raise the democratic awareness in real life. Secondly, it can be asked whether the democracy introduced in Eve Online is a democracy in our ordinary sense of the word, as opposed, for example, to a gigantic marketing ploy. Thirdly, I want to consider whether general lessons about the role of the Internet in furthering democracy can be gathered from this experiment. Finally, we need, of course, to ask whether this experiment had anything to do with deliberative democracy.

The players’ democracy in EVE has made a contribution to democracy in general as a political tool of governing. With the introduction of a democratic structure to a virtual environment there has been conducted an experiment that is not possible to repeat in the real world. The value gained is undeniable as it provides information that can be used to further and enhance our current democratic systems. Furthermore the players’ democracy has enriched a virtual world and brought democratic processes to the attention of 300,000 persons. The transfer of opinion to and from the virtual world is unavoidable as the actors participate in a society that is outside of EVE. People living in different countries, participating in different democratic models with different traditions and methods, now have a palpable experience of another democratic system, a system that is a part of a society they choose to join. If an interest is sparked in a person participating in players’ democracy that interest is likely to carry over to the real world. It is, of course, difficult to assess to what extent this has actually happened. But looking at the level of participation among players as well as the awareness of the CSM (87%) among the players, it is likely that this may have happened to some degree. Furthermore, if we look at the participation numbers for the CSM election as they appear in the survey, neither real life age nor EVE age appears to be a factor in voter turnout. We do not have the data to support the claim put forth earlier that the better
educated and those with a stronger socioeconomic status are more likely to vote\textsuperscript{93}, but we can see from our data that a lack of information about candidates can be cited as a large factor in why voter turnout is not stronger than it is.

There is no common standard of what is democratic and what is not. Our broad criteria for democracy outlined earlier in this essay provides a rudimentary measurement that can be used. Intuitively it can be stated that according to this criteria for democracy something is lacking in EVE Online’s players’ democracy. Formal power of elected representatives is nowhere mentioned nor is the preferred division of the democratic institutions into three branches, the executive power, the legislative power and the judicial power. Yet these conditions are not present in all systems. The formal power of those elected is severely limited in many cases, for example where the executive arm has to get bills through parliaments. Another example is where two parliaments are present within a single system, one having a veto power of the other. The variations are many and far from being uniform across the board. Because of this lack of standard it will be complicated to compare the players’ democracy in EVE with real world applications of democracy.

The criteria mentioned first in this essay were that the citizens are to be granted equal rights, equal duties, their interests should be treated equally and all citizens are to have equal access to the political venue. All of these conditions can be found within EVE’s players’ democracy and as such the institution established in EVE is democratic. Every player of EVE online has a right to vote granted that he is of age, regardless of status, wealth or position as all players start on the same economic footing with the exact same futures in front of them. Duties in EVE Online were not so much tied to the environment itself as they were to the rules governing the society, i.e. the rules all players have to accept before they are eligible to participate in EVE. These duties can however be said to be personal duties or duties for the individual, as if a player does not conform to the rules he is in danger of being expelled from the society. However with the development and introduction of players’ democracy in EVE Online a tacit communal duty was introduced. Similar equality is also evident in terms of players’ interests and access to political communities. No individual or group has more weight behind them than others within the political framework and the formations of power blocks or lobby groups are rare. The reason for this is the nature of EVE’s environment. When a change is done to the environment it affects all players regardless of their status,

\textsuperscript{93} (Lijphart 1997, 3)
wealth or position. Because of that all agendas put forth by players aim at improving the environment for all. Should an individual put forth a topic designed to enhance or elevate the position of few members it will change in the political process instituted to EVE as described above.

We can look at the democratic system as having two layers. One layer containing the citizens/voters and the sphere they exist within. The second layer includes the actual government, the circumferential system around the public sphere. In this light it can be stated that the system in EVE Online is fair and egalitarian if looking solely at the citizens and their sphere, a quality all democratic systems value. Equal opportunities exists should a person wish to go forth and participate in the players’ democracy, equal access to all resources to promote oneself and equal right to express one’s opinions. The one exception that has to be named again is that some players have more than one vote if they have more than one account to access EVE Online. Although this gives some voters increased sway over the vote, it still does not affect the deliberations, unless that voter wants to deliberate with himself. Furthermore, because of the voting system, the effort of voting to power sufficient number of people to have a majority in the council is simply impractical. The persons with the nine highest numbers of votes earn a seat on the council meaning that several thousand accounts would have to be used in order to get more than one into the council. Having one member on the council does not remove or diminish the role of the deliberations. Because of this I feel comfortable stating that the conditions within this sphere are as democratic as one can imagine and with clear and simple rules. Also, it could be argued that a real life person with two accounts in EVE Online is indeed two persons in that society. The society is constituted by characters not by real life persons. Each character (each account) has only one vote. This would still mean that a particular character in EVE Online could have a closer connection to another character (owned by the same account holder, a real life person) than any two persons can have in real life. But we can think of close relations in real life that resemble this relations, e.g. between couples.

The second layer tells another story. The elected council has no formal powers over the state of affairs, its only option is to bring up topics it deems necessary for resolution to the party that has the formal powers. This certainly does not sound like a democratic structure when phrased in this manner. As stated before, intuitively we agree to the statement of something being missing when the formal power is absent and as such this fails to meet our
intuitive criteria of democracy. Yet due to the ambiguity present when it comes to defining ‘democracy’ it is always possible to weaken statements about what should and should not be included in the concept. And we might have good reasons for wanting to do this in case of EVE Online since one of the fundamental insight behind the idea of democracy is to give every member of society an opportunity to effect his environment.

Following this discussion, the obvious objection specific to the players’ democracy in EVE is that of the lack of formal power of the elected council. In essence the role of the council could be interpreted as being advisory only, i.e. a focus group of some sorts. As such the same effect should, theoretically at least, be achieved with surveys that the players participate in or via some other opinion polling mechanism. This observation is however flawed in two ways. One is that as human beings we tend to sway towards what we like and away from what we dislike. When reading, it is a natural tendency to skip what does not interest the reader. When asking questions, the one asking has a subtle influence on the receiver of the questions through the actual questions. Getting an opinion from someone might be best achieved by handing him a pen and a piece of paper and tell him to write it down and hand them in. Giving the person a venue to speak to other people before writing up opinions might serve him even further. Constructing a deliberative democratic system so a person can converse and interact with other people with the aim of improving his or her environment should provide higher quality information than surveys or questioners because the information is all coming from ‘below’, not ‘above’. Instead of seeking answers a format was created so they could emerge without any assistance from the creators of EVE. Clearly put it is a more honest and transparent method, aimed at getting good information, to build up a system or a platform for a person to present his opinion through.

The other answer to this objection, that the experiment was just a gigantic marketing ploy, is related to the deliberation between the two parties, the elected representatives and the creators of EVE Online – that should not be underestimated. Deliberation that is conducted face-to-face is more effective than via a written medium or during a presentation for a large audience. Personal communication between few people has a very strong effect on the participants, especially if they are trying to reach a conclusion about clearly defined matters.

The players’ democracy is said to be based on the ideas of deliberative democracy. Is it possible to give arguments to support that? As mentioned earlier in this paper, there have been
defined five main features of the conception of deliberative democracy, continuity, adherence to the framework and the conclusion arrived at, the members are diverse but committed to the structure, the methods used are transparent and easy to follow and finally the “members recognize one another as having deliberative capacities...” Using these features as rulers on the players’ democracy reveals that it fulfills them all. The players’ democracy structure is reviewed regularly and CCP has made the commitment to keep it running for the foreseeable future, thus fulfilling the continuity demand. As an example of that there have been made changes to the structure in cooperation with the fourth CSM that will take effect when the fifth council is elected in late May 2010. The changes include the removal of the term limits so everyone is allowed to run as often as they are willing to. Connected to this change the term length has been increased from six months to twelve months in order to increase continuity within the council and allow for a more efficient follow up on topics by the council. Coupled with the increase in term length is that each elected council will meet with the developers of CCP twice per term, not once as was the case during the first four councils. Adherence to the deliberative framework and its conclusions are actually maintained by two entities, the council itself and by CCP. Together they form a strong whole that monitors each other ensuring that the framework is followed. The third foundation mentioned is achieved with a simple and effective election system, ensuring that the representatives are as diverse as possible while avoiding arbitrary selection. Taking full advantage of the Internet and its inherent transparency the council is able to conduct their business without being veiled in secrecy or obscurity. All meeting minutes are made public, all discussions relating to topics brought up by the voters are public and open for all and as such the route from premises to a conclusion is clear. And finally, although each member of the council has their preferences and perhaps a personal opinion of their fellow council members, they consistently make it their priority to work together and reach a conclusion based on discussion. Furthermore, we can confidently state that methodologically speaking the experiment reveals that this structure can work within a virtual environment housing a society. It is possible to erect and maintain a structure of this kind on the Internet.

I have argued that the players’ democracy in EVE fulfills the five main features of deliberative democracy. When writing up the design for players’ democracy in EVE I used the deliberative democracy ideas as a guideline so the adherence to the five features should

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94 (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 161 - 162)
95 (Goodin and Pettit 2006, 162)
not come as a surprise to anyone. I also want to take a closer look at how the players’
democracy performs when held up to Dahlberg’s six requirements\(^\text{96}\) and consequently if the
discourse conducted in EVE can be considered to be a rational-critical discourse.

(1) exchange and critique of reasoned moral-practical validity claims are performed in EVE’s
players’ democracy. Since the whole of EVE is open for discussion within this system,
fundamental matters such as the nature of the environment, or the game philosophy, are
within the discussion boundaries. For example questions about consequences for deliberately
attacking other players in EVE, or the lack of consequences, are based on how players want
EVE to be, according to their moral views. Lack of consequences would suggest that a player
wants the game to be more engaging and ‘cutthroat’ than the person who wants harsher
consequences. Discussions of this nature require the participants to provide arguments for
why they believe EVE should be so and so.

(2) the reflexivity and the necessity of critically examining ones cultural values, assumptions
and interest during the discussion mentioned in (1) are very visible. In order to provide
arguments for harsher consequences to a certain actions within EVE, the person maintaining
that opinion has to provide convincing arguments to their fellow participants or else he or she
will simply be ignored in the following discussion. Those arguments can very well include a
critical examination of their cultural values or interests.

(3) Understanding the arguments from other peoples’ perspective is fundamental in the
players’ democracy in EVE. This became evident when the consequences for player attacks
were discussed by the CSM. Understanding why the miner or other non-combat oriented
players would like harsher consequences to player attacks is necessary in order to convince
them that their stance might be counterproductive to their goal. Assuming that those players
want to enjoy EVE in a ‘quiet’ manner, gather resources and raw material and build
spaceships and other items then they would probably have a high preference for peace. The
people of the opposite opinion, i.e. that the consequences should be kept the same or lessened,
have pointed out that should the number of attack decrease the amount of spaceships
destroyed will go down. And the decrease in demand for spaceships might affect the ‘quite’
manufacturer in such a way that he or she will simply leave the game because their preferred
play style is no longer an option. It is easy to see why both parties understand this situation.

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\(^{96}\) (Dahlberg, 2001b, 622). Also p 12 in this essay.
(4) The sincerity and honesty of the deliberators is actually ensured by the other participants. The easy access to information and data on the Internet about the subjects regarding EVE increases the transparency of all arguments. Should a deliberator withhold information for his or her benefit, other members of the discussion will very likely find out about that. In short it is so likely that lies or deceptions will be found out that it is actually safer and more likely to produce positive results for a cause to withhold nothing. The inherent openness of the Internet simply cannot be perfectly guarded against.

(5) Dahlberg’s fifth requirement is discursive inclusion and equality. By design, EVE’s players’ democracy is open to all that have an account with EVE Online. It is ensured that policies about common courtesies and that other participants are to be treated with respect are upheld. Other than that, no restrictions are made in terms of inclusion or equality. The only way to be barred from participation is to break the policies and thus exclude his or herself from the discourse. And even after breaking the policies, people are allowed to return, only to face a longer exclusion, never a permanent one, should the member not be respectful of his fellow participants.

(6) The final requirement is autonomy from state and economic powers. It is not perfectly clear if it can be confidently stated that it is fulfilled. The players’ democracy is designed and maintained by CCP and ultimately at its mercy so to speak which begs the question of how it can possibly be said to be autonomous. I believe two reasons can be offered for its autonomy. First is that it CCP wants it to be autonomous in order to provide feedback about EVE to make it better, as has been stated above. If at any point CCP believed that the council was not autonomous it would simply disband the whole thing in favor of something more efficient. Clearly put it is CCP, or more specifically I as the project leader, that wants the players’ democracy to be autonomous and because of that it is autonomous. The second argument is of a purely practical nature. Ultimately CCP is a company selling a product and as such it looks out for its financial interests. Spending money on a democratic structure, that we have already established is not a marketing ploy or a public relations stunt, does not make sense to a corporation if it does not expect a return of its investment. Because of this I maintain that the players’ democracy is autonomous and driven by concerns of inhabitants of EVE Online, not by CCP’s concerns.
It can thus be concluded that the deliberation that takes place within the players’ democracy of EVE Online can be considered a ‘rational-critical discourse’ as it fulfills Dahlberg’s requirements.

How is the players’ democracy in EVE Online when compared to the other two democratic variants discussed in the paper, the individual liberalism and the communitarianism? Individual liberalists base their decision making on preference-maximation, where bartering is the primary method. This method is not applicable to the CSM structure. As can be seen from the section above, ‘Topics brought up by the CSM’, the main concern has been enhancing and making better the environment in EVE and the tools the players use there. For example, all topics regarding the user interface will benefit all users of EVE, not just a limited group of people. Another example is that changes to travel methods within EVE will never benefit just one group of players because due to the nature of the environment all participants have the (very real and practical) opportunity to take advantage of the changes. So if one group of voters believes that a certain change can benefit them, and only them, they are mistaken. The change, and the options it brings, will be available to all other users from the moment it is made. Furthermore, when analyzing the discussions both between voters and within the council itself, it can be seen that if something comes up that could be described as being an individualistic preference it is usually dismissed by the other participants. It is self evident that a statement of ‘I want MY spaceship to fly faster than anyone else’s’ will be dismissed by everyone but the one who made said statement. And via discussion those kind of statements are usually exposed if they have been disguised.

Communitarians have, in their search for the common good, higher hopes to the democratic system than the other two ideologies. To them democracy is the way to make life better for all, they share a prescriptive or normative conception of democracy. By visualizing the common good and trying to achieve it they assign an ethical value to the system, something that does not happen in EVE. Within the CSM structure people are not trying to lead the good life or locate or promote the common good, at least not in any substantive sense of that term. What is being done is changing the environment with the aim of making it less obstructive without removing the challenges and more enjoyable and engaging. The members of the council or the voters will not be able to elevate a discussion about how EVE is ‘supposed’ to be or what goals players ‘should’ seek. EVE is what you make of it, it is without ends dictated by the environment – all destinations are decided upon by the players.
An example is something that has been called ‘suicide ganking’. This describes the action that one player performs to destroy the spaceship of another player, i.e. the attacker decides to sacrifice his spaceship, for whatever reason (fun, gain, retribution, etc.), in order to destroy the victim’s ship. The majority of the players and council members agree that this should be kept as a possible tactic, not an easy tactic or without consequences but possible. Speaking clearly, it is the general consensus that neither the CSM nor the voters should dictate what should be the preferred behavior in EVE. The CSM should not decide what the common good in EVE is.

As has been described previously, everyone can raise whatever topic he or she believes deserve the attention of the council. It is mandatory to have the topic publicly available for discussion for a whole week before the council is allowed to put it on its agenda. During this time the topic is discussed by all those who wish to speak their mind, opinions are exchanged and people do their best to convince each other of the merits or flaws of each idea. The participants generally believe that this method will bring forth viable and relevant ideas from the initial topic. Many of the players and the council members assume a public standpoint by deliberating about their common concerns, some run as spokesman for new players, some for those who are less inclined to destroy but would rather build and yet others advocate for those who like conflicts. All of these standpoints are valid as such and should be kept in mind, but none of them is ‘the’ standpoint, none of them is the normative view. This is a very good example of deliberative democracy, where neither preferences nor the idea of the common good is the guiding light of the participants, but the discussion of the topics.

The experiment of EVE’s players’ democracy has revealed that the Internet is quite capable of being a venue for political discussions. The ease of access and retention of information make it a superb tool and a valuable addition to the democratic structure, regardless of what ideology is looked at. The ability to engage in an asynchronous discussion with your fellow citizens, whether in EVE or elsewhere, regardless of location or time zone can only strengthen democracy. Being able to read, research, construct answers and communicate them at your leisure makes the participants more confident, better prepared and thus their input to the democratic discussion more valuable. Often moderators make the discussions even more productive and focused, but it must be emphasized that moderation of that sort should not be editing or censoring, only the removal of spam, clearly inappropriate contents, etc. The ease of search and subsequent cross reference of topics or discussions
increases documentation provides a hoist data that can be used. Maintenance of information is easier and updates are handy to put out. In short the Internet offers all of the recent information technology to enhance the democratic system. However, despite the sophistication of the Internet as a medium it is my conclusion that it is still unable to replace direct and personal meetings in terms of efficiency and results. The complicated interactions in face-to-face meetings simply cannot be replicated at this time by the Internet. This conclusion should however not diminish the importance of the Internet, it is naïve to believe that it can replace human interactions. As a field for communications and information it offers unprecedented potential that has not been utilized to any extent yet when it comes to democracy and the democratic method. Voting, revision of policies, exchanges of opinions and other ‘mechanical’ (if I may use that word) functions that lead to decision making can be easily be performed using the Internet, while the ‘end’ discussion (so to speak) should be conducted in personal meetings. Learning about and developing democracy and democratic practices requires experiments, discussions and analysis. This unique case has been detailed and explained and while it might not give concrete answers it can help us to further hone and clarify our questions.
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Appendix A – EVE Online, the game\textsuperscript{97}

EVE Online\textsuperscript{98} is an open-ended Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG). Most other MMORPGs focus on a structured playing style with predictable outcomes and monotonous advancements of the game characters. This seemingly innocent fact is why EVE is so different from almost all other MMORPGs, as the players, through their actions in the game, have an incredible impact on how the game develops.

One could compare this to the difference between a playground, such as EVE, and a theme park, which would be the traditional MMORPG. In a playground you have access to different kinds of toys and rides, and you are allowed to use your own imagination to figure out how to create games you enjoy. In a theme park all the rides have been created for you and are either good or bad by design. The playground clearly offers more freedom but it requires you to think and be an active participant, while the theme park has taken those responsibilities away from you and you can just go with the flow. As an interesting side-note, "theme park" style MMORPGs commonly develop lines, just like real world theme parks, as players wait for monster spawns, rare items, or quest requirements.

Players that enjoy the freedom and opportunities for creative thinking an open-ended game offers have become mesmerized by EVE, while others that depend on structured, repetitive game style have not. For this reason it is not contend that EVE is for everyone, but for those that enjoy a bit more of a challenge.

A unique aspect of EVE is that it is run on one server. In EVE you can find over 35,000 players at any given time interacting in the same persistent universe. Other MMORPGS are played on multiple servers called Shards; these have a limited number of players on each, usually between 3000 and 9000.

The bottom line is that EVE is a rich and immersive universe centered on human interaction. Players can play the game as a simple space trader or endeavor to control the

\textsuperscript{97} This text is mostly taken from http://wiki.eveonline.com/en/wiki/About_EVE_Online and http://www.eveonline.com/faq/faq_01.asp
\textsuperscript{98} http://www.eveonline.com
largest, most powerful company in the universe. CCP provides the rules and tools, but it is the players themselves who create the adventures.

EVE takes place approximately 20,000 years after our times in a galaxy on the far end of the universe. When you join EVE you assume the role of a freshly graduated ‘Capsuleer’, a relatively small group of elite spaceship pilots capable of controlling powerful spaceships on their own from within their capsules. Capsuleers are often referred to as ‘the immortals’ due to the fact that the highly advanced capsules they are connected to from the inside, are capable of instantly downloading their consciousness to a clone of themselves in the case of physical destruction.

Your character is an employee of one of the corporate/military powers in EVE affiliated with one the four great empires, Amarr, Caldari, Minmatar or Gallente, and placed in the heart of your Empire's controlled space. The choice of race and education determines its starting employment, but from there it is free to choose any of the myriad employment opportunities out in the universe.

Your character starts off in EVE Online with a frigate-class starship, a basic vessel capable of several tasks, but achieving none with spectacular effectiveness. There are many types of starships, with each empire having their own unique designs and varied abilities. According to your preferences, you might want to work towards a ship with a larger carrying capacity, is better suited for mining, has a more powerful array of weapons, or rockets through space much faster.

Space consists of star systems. Each of these is assigned a security rating, from 0.0 (Lawless) to 1.0 (Secure). Many star systems form a constellation, a group of constellations form a region and several regions can constitute an Empire. In addition to those large empires, though, there are also Regional Alliances who endeavor to control the untamed systems on the outskirts of known space. These are run by player controlled corporations, giving them the ability to use the lucrative resources in non-empire space.

In EVE your character does not level up like in most games. You purchase skills which then your character trains in real time until finished. The skills train even while you are offline. Skills give you a myriad of different abilities. Some allow you to fly specific types of ships or use a particular weapon while others focus more on general things. Each skill has five levels which all give the same percentage bonus to whatever field of your game play they
affect. Each level however takes increasingly longer to train so that players are always faced with the choice of specializing in one field, or spend the skill training time equally on many different fields.

In EVE you are free to choose your own destiny. You are not restricted by predefined character classes or professions. You can trade to make a living, conduct mining operations, market your fighting skills as a mercenary, camp the space lanes for profit as a pirate, conduct espionage and infiltration, focus on research and manufacturing, or perform increasingly profitable missions for NPC (non player controlled, run by the EVE system) agents. What you choose to do day by day is up to you. You can play alone, form a corporation (equivalent of clan or guild) with a close group of friends or seek entrance to any of the large player run corporations and alliances already established. The EVE Universe and its 7500 unique solar systems are yours to explore and conquer.
Appendix B – The CSM design paper

The Council of Stellar Management:

Implementation of a deliberative, democratically elected, council in EVE

By Pétur Jóhannes Óskarsson

Prepared on behalf of CCP Hf. – 2007

Last revised: March 2010
A comparative analysis of real structural social evolution with the virtual society of EVE Online

Analyzing structural social evolution begins with understanding the fundamental behavior of individuals. Aristotle argued that there were three general activities of man: *theoria*, or the pursuit of truth; *poiesis*, which is the drive for production; and *praxis*, or “practical”, which is the genesis of action.\(^\text{99}\) Hannah Arendt criticized this comparison in the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century, stating that it only applied to free men, and suggested another division: *labor*, the most basic process of staying alive via either biological processes or food gathering; *work*, the process of creating ‘artificial’ items distinctly different from natural environments; and *action* as the only activity that goes on between humans without any assistance of intermediary things or matter. *Action* is the necessary condition of public scenes that comprise a public sphere. A public sphere is in turn where all politics take place, and power comes into being where people gather for *action*.

Whenever people gather, activity is present in at least one of three forms: awareness of the self relative to the environment\(^\text{100}\); identifying value for themselves within the environment; and taking necessary action to pursue self-oriented values. Existing within this environment and sharing it—willingly or otherwise—with other persons encourages the development of social structures in which people must either create space and livelihood for themselves, or compete with others for it.

But, applying this observation as a means of quantifying sociocultural progression is problematic. One modern social theory speaks to a “unilinear” evolution in which society marches along predefined “milestones”, beginning with hunter-gatherer status, advancing to tribal status, and then ultimately a “stratified” status which yields the emergence of civilization. Yet examples abound of “multilinear” evolution as well, in which disparate cultures merge and either accelerate, retreat, or even branch away from the original progression of societal emergence into different directions entirely.


\(^{100}\) In this context, “environment” is a reference to “one’s surroundings”.
In fact, the only consensus in the study of sociocultural evolution is that no single theory can aptly describe the universal development and progression of any society. Myriad factors ranging from geographical location to religious beliefs, and even weather conditions—prevailing or roguish—all complicate the analysis; introducing the most subtle variable could drastically alter the course of two societies that would have otherwise evolved along similar paths.

Thus, it is these general paths—or unilinear milestones—that this paper will draw real-world comparisons from. The purpose of the analogy is to establish the foundation for implementing a deliberative, democratically elected, council in EVE. This is by no means an endorsement of any social evolution theory; a comparison with actual civilizations is beyond the scope of this analysis. But it will demonstrate the striking similarities between this theory of real life societal development and the virtual society evolution of EVE, while also relying on one key assumption about individuals in both realms: that they are motivated by the pursuit of value, the core of which is driven by their instinct for survival.

**Hunter-Gatherer**

This was how EVE began. When the game was officially launched in May 2003, no established player infrastructure existed, and all players started with equal opportunity to advance within the society. Hunter-gatherer structures emerged even before the launch date: anticipating the release of the game, groups of players participated in the game beta, gathering data and hunting for as much advanced knowledge as possible, including possible advancement paths in the virtual world and identifying which resources would likely hold the most value once the game went live.

The important distinction is that the beta—and thus the initial virtual society—was only available to selected individuals, since its purpose was to run a live test of the game’s technology before official release. Thus, the society existing before May 2003 could be regarded as a partly elitist society, which carried forward to the real launch in the sense that these players had advanced knowledge of how to accumulate value quickly once the official

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103 The pre-launch version of the game used primarily as a testing resource.
simulation began. At this stage, when EVE opened its doors for all, the society quickly evolved from hunter-gatherer status to tribal status.

**Tribal Societies,**  
*in which there are some limited instances of social rank and prestige*

Immediately after the game world opened, the first corporations\(^\text{104}\) formed. These social structures advanced EVE towards a tribal society, in which “structure” was necessitated as the population grew. Once in place, players began to claim physical (virtual) space for themselves, with one or more leaders providing direction to the “working force” of corporations. Identical to the real world’s tribal behavior, wars were fought for control over regions\(^\text{105}\) in space; even when individual members had differing notions about how these regions created value for themselves or their organization, corporations with strong leadership were able to maintain uniformity of purpose. Naturally, some corporations—or tribes—flourished in this sociocultural environment, often times at the expense of others.

**Stratified Structures,**  
*led by chieftains*

As more inhabitants entered the game, societal evolution was increasingly shaped by the need to manage conflicts of interests within the corporation. This precipitated the formation of stratified divisions: diplomatic, mining, manufacturing, and fighting units all emerged to maximize the strengths of the corporation as a single entity. Those organizations with spare capacity began offering specialized services to other corporations, primarily as protectors or attack forces, and occasionally as resource gatherers.

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\(^{104}\) The corporation is the primary social unit of EVE Online, complete with a CEO and “template” organization hierarchy that is intended to be shaped by players.

\(^{105}\) “Regions” are groups of constellations and form the largest individual “physical” entities in space. A single region typically holds dozens of star systems and contains vast resources.
Civilizations,
with complex social hierarchies and organized government institutions

As the relationships between groups of collaborating corporations matured, alliances were formally introduced in the game. This step marked the transition of EVE to a civilization, in which member corporations shared power in an advanced society with an established government structure. Just as individuals adapted to specialized roles within the corporation, entire corporations adapted to specific roles within the alliance, and the collective value of this collaboration flowed from the individual to the group and back. Players enforced alliance command chains on their own—only rudimentary technical support for an organizational hierarchy existed at the time. Socioeconomic pressure was the main driving force behind the creation and implementation of this structure. Powerful regional governments thrived in these conditions, claiming vast swaths of space to the envy of other citizens in EVE.

Clearly, a political evolution took place at the corporate, alliance, and society level as well. Corporate ambitions aligned at the alliance level were at constant odds with opposing alliances in the competition for resources. Players at each tier of the society were bound by the political mandates of the group, such as defining where players could and couldn’t travel, or which resources were accessible as determined by the group’s politics versus other alliances.

Different political models for value disbursement in support of the group also emerged autonomously. Fiercely capitalistic ventures appeared in which group members competed directly with each other to accumulate the most wealth, believing that the collective sum of individual gains would make the entire group stronger. On the other extreme, some purely communistic enterprises required members to surrender ownership of personal items to the group, believing that common ownership of value was paramount to thriving in the greater society.

But since this entire socioeconomic dynamic must exist within the technical framework provided by CCP, it must have also evolved in part because of CCP. In that sense, the inhabitants of EVE could view their society as a dictatorship, since they have had little direct say in how it has been governed. Any influence citizens may have exerted was more a consequence of the vendor-customer relationship, as expressed in the business terms of growth projections and client relations.
Yet feedback between CCP and its customers—or members of the society—was always present in the interest of adapting the product to meet consumer demands. In examining this with a political view, describing the relationship as a “dictatorship” would be inaccurate, since it implies absolute control over the society with little regard to the opinion of those residing within it. On the contrary, constructive interaction and open dialogue between the legislator—CCP—and society members took place with the mutual aim of improving the society as much as possible. To the extent that the success of this arrangement can be measured, consider that as of the time of this writing, EVE’s society has grown from approximately 30,000 in 2003 to more than 300,000 in 2009.

Until now, comparisons of political philosophy and social structures in the virtual world have been drawn from parallels with the real one. But it cannot be stressed enough that today, with this many people comprising the civilization of EVE—and the potential ripple-effect of any change in the way this society is governed—further legislative applications based mostly on CCP’s interpretation of the real world are likely to cause more harm than good. To achieve continued success, EVE’s society must be granted a larger role in exerting influence on the legislative powers of CCP. Governance of virtual worlds is a unique endeavor; there is no precedence to follow. Thus, governance between CCP and society will be crafted with three specific observations about the game in mind:

First, every individual starts their experience in EVE on equal footing. There are no class differences—economic, educational, racial, or otherwise—to disadvantage the potential that any new player has to thrive within the game. All members of this society have the same opportunity, limited only by their own ambitions, innate abilities, and to a degree, luck.

Second, there is a social contract system in effect in EVE. New players cannot join the society without agreeing to the terms of the EULA, or “End User License Agreement”, which spells out not only the technical restrictions imposed, but also establishes the conduct by which players may treat each other in a real-world context via interactions in the game. Individuals have complete freedom in choosing whether or not to agree to these terms, and

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106 “5k and a frigate”, specifically. A reference to the 5,000 ISK—the fictitious currency used in EVE—and starter ship that every player begins the game with.

107 The social contract is one of the most influential thought-exercise (John Rawls, Theory of Justice 1971) in political philosophy in the 20th century. In short the theory states that in order to have a completely secure/just/rightful (depends on the author using the idea) every single member of the society has to accept the laws of the society before he joins it.

108 The exact terms defining the limits of player-to-player interactions are defined in the Terms of Service (TOS), which is incorporated in the EULA by reference.
may even join temporarily to evaluate EVE’s society before committing to sustained participation. But in the end, becoming a permanent part of EVE requires entering into this social contract.

Third, although CCP establishes the rules by which players may interact with each other in a real-world context, they do not interfere with how individuals treat each other in a virtual context. Strictly speaking, CCP has the power to govern actions in the virtual world via “natural laws”, or the literal technical limitations of the game. But within this same virtual universe, abusing the trust of other individuals is an affair that is left to society itself to contend with. Crimes are not persecuted by the legislator here: the fate of peers who commit wrongdoings such as theft, fraud, destruction of property, and even “murder” is determined exclusively by the society. Justice, as it were, is in the hands of those who choose to exercise their right to take it, and under no circumstances will the legislator interfere—again, provided that the means of execution complies with the “meta-law” of the EULA and Terms of Service (TOS).

These unique circumstances allow for the creation of a legislator-society partnership that employs the best of all political worlds by using the concepts of utility and the preservation of individual free will as guiding principles. The intent of CCP is to reach a solution which maximizes the benefits of being part of this society, with the greater goal of encouraging its continued growth.

109 Technically, wrongdoings committed within “high security” space are persecuted by a non-player law enforcement agency known as CONCORD. But they only intervene when one ship opens fire on another within these enforcement zones—they do not intervene in cases of theft or fraud.
110 No player is ever truly “murdered” because each one has a “clone copy” of himself. But there is always a steep cost for being murdered, measured in any combination of the following: lost time, skill points, money, and possessions.
111 Utility as it is thought of in Utilitarianism where the goal of the legislator is to maximize the overall happiness of the society.
112 Subject’s rights as thought of in Kant’s political thought where each subject has an irrevocable right to pursue his wishes and dreams, his right to property etc.
A review of player rights by participating in the EVE community

By becoming part of the EVE community, players can be said to possess three intrinsic, broadly described rights. These rights are integral to the continued growth of virtual society and establishing the optimal balance in governance between individuals and the legislator.

Freedom from Undue External Influences

First, individuals have the right to be free of undue external influences in the virtual society. To enforce this right, the EULA, TOS and other legal documents define the boundary which separates a player’s real-life actions from his or her virtual ones. As mentioned earlier, this is a non-negotiable social contract that is essential for maintaining the cohesion of any virtual society. These rules establish a framework for real-world personal behavior and decision making that limits the amount of external influence that can be leveraged in the game world.

Unlimited Interaction with Other Individuals

Next, individuals have the right to unlimited interaction with other individuals in the virtual society. Players are free to take any action allowable within the “natural laws” of the game, and as such are governed only by their free will. This right is universal to all individuals, regardless of intent. As such, this freedom leaves them wholly unprotected from the consequences of their actions, regardless of if those consequences are just or not.

Influence on How Society is Legislated

Finally, individuals have the right to influence how society is legislated. Until now, this right has not been fully accessible. The goal of CCP is to provide EVE’s individuals with societal governance rights. In similar fashion to a real-world democracy models, candidates will be selected by fellow peers to be the voice of their interests to the legislator. Once elected, the responsibility of these representatives will be to uphold the society’s views as best they can.
via direct contact and dialogue with CCP. Central to this concept is the idea that increasing the “utility” of EVE’s society will encourage more individuals to join it.

As the population grows, so does the urgency for individuals to participate in the society’s political environment. A government model in which a single power holds all authority weakens the bond of trust between individuals and the legislator, and impedes the growth and overall utility of society. In most democratic models, government legislators can either be replaced by popular vote or are limited by finite term durations. Because EVE is a virtual society that relies on the technical support of CCP, this model cannot be emulated.

What can be done is to redistribute some power back to individuals and increase the contact points where the most direct influence on society can be exerted: by awarding selected player representatives the same opportunity to discuss and debate the ongoing evolution of EVE that CCP employees have.
Origins of the Deliberative Democracy

History

Recognizing that the unique socioeconomic climate of EVE would eventually necessitate the implementation of a formal government structure, the idea of establishing a player representative body originated as early as 2001, when the game was still in its design stages. Two years later, the first attempt to create a “Council of Stellar Management”, or CSM, concept was spearheaded by then-acting community manager Valery ‘Pann’ Massey. In her words:

“This was a group of player representatives that would meet in-game every other week to discuss the most pressing topics related to the EVE game world with various members of the EVE dev team.

Even before the first iteration of the CSM, the need for a council of some sort was something that the CCP guards knew would arise some day and they discussed it from time to time. The CSM v.1.0 was a crude, fundamental experiment in how to go about it, but it was far from being the perfect solution. Something more was needed, even if no one was quite sure how to go about it…

In time, the program was abandoned for a number of reasons. Chief among these was that due to the nature of the text-only chat, it could be a bit dry and boring, and not very efficient, because of the long wait time for people to enter their questions or responses; only a handful of topics could be covered in each meeting. It was also inconvenient for the developers to take time out of their day to participate. Finally, putting the council together could be quite time consuming.”

In this first implementation, CSM members were selected from a pool of player applicants by CCP personnel. Selection criteria included factors such as the size of their respective corporation, total time spent online, and “visibility” on the EVE Online forums. Each week, representatives from differing play styles would meet CCP developers in a private chat channel to discuss the game. Each council operated for six weeks at a time, with three to six
total meetings occurring during period. At the council’s conclusion, the selection process started over again\textsuperscript{113}.

At the 2005 EVE Fanfest, CCP’s Dr. Kjartan Pierre Emilsson presented the idea of a democratic voting system for EVE in a lecture he called “Empires: Managing Emerging Social Structures”. In it, he suggested the possible use of a constitution as a means of “deciding how to decide” among groups. Because of its “universal” visibility, the precepts of a constitution would scale to each tier of society, even without enforcement, among both individuals and groups. This very concept, combined with the idea of player representation in a formal governance structure, lends itself to the paradigm of a deliberative democracy.

\textbf{Definition}

The deliberative democracy is a hybrid governance solution which combines consensus decree with representative authority. In this system, every individual is considered equal and has the right to voice an opinion whose relevance carries just as much weight as every other voice in society. Since creating an authentic deliberative democracy is impossible due to the technical means through which EVE is supported, the proposed implementation of this concept will rest more upon representative individuals to steer a common voice. In this way, the consensus of deliberative minds and the open discourse of issues will be the primary vehicle of political change within society.

\textbf{Implementation Concepts}

The public election of the nine representatives will be performed via democratic methods. Every active account—or social contract—holds a single vote. Victory conditions are straightforward: the candidates with the nine highest vote tallies at the close of polls are selected. This resulting council would have the responsibility of identifying what the most pressing electorate issues are and voting to determine which ones will be escalated to CCP for resolution; only a 51% approval vote would be needed to pass.

\textsuperscript{113} A news item detailing the application process can be found here http://myeve.eve-online.com/news.asp?a=single&nid=216&tid=1; the date being 21st of November 2003.
Every topic that passes these layers must then be examined by CCP. From here, one of two outcomes is possible: either the issue is “supported” with plans for an implementation or otherwise prudent follow up; or the topic is denied upon grounds that are publicly documented with supporting arguments. In summary:

- Deliberations on public issues take place on four general levels: among individuals, between individuals and Representatives, among Representatives, and between Representatives and CCP.
- The legislator will not be permitted to intervene anywhere in the discussion chain, except during “meta-circumstances” in which conditions of the EULA or TOS are violated. Otherwise, the only appropriate forum for official discourse on public issues is between the CSM and the CCP Council.
- Once an elected issue reaches council-level discussions, players cannot interfere with any decision making on that specific topic. Should players disagree with how the issue is being managed, they must start another topic thread stating their grievances, effectively re-launching the democratic process to bring the matter to vote.
- Any topic can be raised by the players. But the burden is theirs to both convince others of its merit and then win continued support to push the idea into the hands of representatives.

Because representatives have clearly stated obligations once they are elected, there are almost no restrictions on candidate eligibility. There is little risk with leaving the eligibility format open because of the limited duration of term periods (twelve months) and complete transparency of the CSM’s work to voters. As such, the performance of representatives will be under the constant scrutiny and evaluation of peers. The council’s actions, good or bad, will not be forgotten by voters easily, and no representative can go against the wishes of voters for long.

114 Restrictions are explained in below.
Political Theory and the Case for democratically elected council in EVE

To draw comparisons of this solution with real political theory, both John Locke$^{115}$ and Montesquieu$^{116}$ identified the need to distribute power within a state in the 16th and 17th century. The evolution of EVE passed this “social age” at least two years ago, and thus the case for acting in accordance with these theories is apparent. To an extent, societal development already began moving in this direction with the establishment of EVE TV and EON, an independent media presence within EVE. Delivering news that is unedited and uncensored by the legislator is considered a key requisite for a democratic state today.$^{117}$

Further, in December 2006, a Ph.D. economist was hired by CCP to become the effective director of the “EVE Central Bank”. His responsibility is to monitor the economic state of EVE, analyze market data, and produce quarterly reports detailing monetary conditions. This effort offers more transparency to individuals about the society and its legislator, empowering them with insight on how to maximize the value of economic trends around them. But more importantly, it provides data they can use to raise topics which impact their personal utility to Representatives.

The key difference between a deliberative democracy and representative democracies is that Representatives do not rule on behalf of constituents. Instead, they act with the consensus of the entire constituency as they present collective interests to the legislator. Every citizen owes the others justification for the laws imposed upon society; in this way, the theory is “deliberative” because of the social cooperation required to bring issues to “lawful” conclusions before a governing assembly.$^{118}$

Metagaming Considerations

There is a metagaming component to the proposed implementation in EVE, particularly where it concerns voting. For example, each real-life individual can hold many game

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$^{115}$ John Locke wrote about the separation of power in his Two Treatises of Government (1689) where he argues against one supreme ruler holding all power over a society.

$^{116}$ Montesquieu (1689 – 1745) wrote extensively about the Separation of Powers within a state.

$^{117}$ Freedom of the press and the media in general have the role of criticizing the government and prevent corruption and/or ignorance of the general public (the voters) according to many political philosophers. In fact they often refer to the media and their freedom as the ‘fourth’ branch of government. The other three pillars being the legislative, the executive and the judiciary branches.

$^{118}$ (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, 126)
accounts, each of which has at least one virtual persona controlled by a single owner. Although this technically gives more weight to individuals with an external monetary advantage, the impact is negligible in the greater scale of participating voters. Furthermore, the possibility exists that constituents will be apathetic about their voting power, just as in real-world politics but being aware of that possibility is the most powerful weapon in countering it.
Implementing a deliberative, democratically elected, council in EVE Online

Representative Candidate Eligibility

Anyone who has held an EVE Online account for more than thirty days is eligible to campaign for a representative seat on the CSM, with the following exceptions: employees, volunteers, interns, affiliates, strategic partners, and family members of CCP are all ineligible. People in these positions already influence the legislator in some capacity; irrespective of how slight that leverage may be, it is always greater than a single vote holder, and as such disqualifies them from contention.

Also, players with a serious warning or ban on any account in their possession can be excluded from candidate eligibility. However, in-game behavior, regardless of play style, will never be a criterion for candidacy unless the rules of the EULA and/or TOS are violated.

All candidates must verify their identity to CCP before they can officially be acknowledged as a candidate. All candidates must to be 21 years old or older in order to qualify as a candidate. In addition, a valid passport is required for travel and admission to Iceland and participation on the CSM. Because election winners will ultimately make appearances on EVE-TV and EON, candidates must run under their real-life names, and may either create a new character or use an existing account name to give themselves an in-game identity.

Voter Eligibility

Anyone who has held an EVE Online account for a full thirty (30) days, and said account is active, is eligible to vote. Only one vote per account—not per character—is permitted. The thirty-day account exclusion rule is to limit undue metagaming influence in the election, and is in line with the precepts of a modern democracy that imposes a minimum age for voting.

119 “Serious” warnings include, but are not limited to: real life threats against other players or CCP representatives, hacking or explicit abuse of CCP’s software, etc.
privileges. The only exclusion rule for voting is CCP employee accounts, which are ineligible. Affiliates, volunteers, partners, and interns are permitted to vote.

**Election Mechanics**

Each account may only cast one vote for a single candidate. This is true no matter how many candidates run for election. Thus, if candidate A receives 5000 votes, it implies that five thousand unique accounts—or individuals—physically voted for this candidate.

Ballot casts are anonymous, and vote tallies are counted electronically. To maximize the participation opportunity for individuals, the polls for elections will be open for two full weeks. Active campaigning for votes, which is available to any eligible candidate, is unrestricted during this period provided that the rules of the EULA are observed.

The top nine candidates with the highest number of votes win CSM seats. There is no difference in “power” between the first and ninth place Representatives. Candidates who finish in positions 10 through 14 in the vote tally will win Alternate positions with the CSM. The alternate pool is only used when an elected council member voluntarily steps down, is removed from office because of a EULA infraction, or cannot attend the council meeting, whether that is during a regular online meeting or in Iceland.

**The Council Structure**

By default, the Representative with the highest vote tally is awarded with the responsibilities of Chairman for the CSM. Within seven days of the general election, the Representatives must hold an internal vote to determine a Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Vice-Secretary. Failure to hold this vote, or if the vote is inconclusive, awards “granting” authority to the Chairman, who may then appoint council members to the other positions as he or she sees fit. If the Chairman decides to step down or rescind his responsibility during this time for any reason, a vote must be held among Representatives to elect another Chairman – should the Chairman voluntarily step down as one he is still eligible for the position during the vote for a new Chairman.
The primary responsibility of the Chairman and Vice-Chair is to keep societal topics focused and on track. They may summon Representatives to schedule council meetings; they may organize council meetings with players; and they must take responsibility for all management-related tasks during the council term. The task of the Secretary and Vice-Secretary is to keep records of all council meetings and publish them for the voters to read. All Representatives have equal right to raise topics during CSM meetings following the rules of topics stated below.

A meeting is not considered valid unless seven council members—in any combination of Alternatives and Representatives—are present. The published meeting notes will display the members in attendance, and the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Vice-Secretary will keep a running tally of the meeting attendance of all Representatives. Where applicable, Representatives are encouraged to post chat logs as a supplement to the meeting notes as well. The recommended guideline for meetings is at least once every other week, with a minimum of nine Representatives present.

Alternates may not be chosen arbitrarily to fill in at meetings if a Representative cannot be present. Instead, they must be selected in the order in which they were elected, beginning with the first Alternate (which was the 10th highest vote tally in the general election), and going up the last (14th highest vote tally) as determined by their availability. There are three reasons for this: to discourage reliance on Alternates, to prevent collusion with Alternates, and to honor the “weight” of each Alternate as determined by votes during the election.

**CSM Term Limits and Duration**

Council durations, inclusive of all elected Representatives and Alternates, will last six months, and elections will follow the expiration of each term. This timeframe corresponds roughly to the expansion release cycles of EVE Online. Again, once a Representative completes two terms in office—consecutive or not, and regardless of if the Representative cannot complete his term for any reason—he or she cannot run as a candidate again. An Alternate can be voted multiple times as an Alternate and he or she can serve as one as often as he or she is elected as one.
Voter Communication with the CSM

A dedicated electronic forum will be provided for voters to formally present issues to CSM Representatives. Because this is a “gathering place” where topics deemed important to society are heard and acted upon by democratically elected Representatives, moderators must be present to keep discussions civilized, ordered, relevant, and lawful\textsuperscript{120}. These measures are necessary here, as they are in real society, to keep the unruly from disrupting any civil institution ranging from courts of law to the halls of legislative government bodies.

In the spirit of encouraging as much debate and discussion as possible, any voter may present any topic at any time in this forum, and there is no limit to the number of topics they can introduce—as long as they are genuine, relevant, and well-articulated. In addition, they may participate in as many existing topics opened by fellow voters as they please. The burden of demonstrating the legitimacy or urgency of the issue rests with the voters themselves. A good idea will generate momentum all on its own, and it is the task of the CSM to not only track these discussions, but to engage the populace as much as possible in the interest of sustaining that momentum until the issue is brought to closure.

To further support the introduction of ideas from society members, a forum mechanism will be introduced which allows topics to be “marked for resolution”, ensuring that the matter is brought before the CSM. Using their own judgment, Representatives will have the power to mark topics as they deem necessary—namely by gauging which issues voters are generating the most debate about. Once a topic is marked, voters will be able to indicate their support or disapproval\textsuperscript{121}.

When a topic is introduced, a seven-day counter begins. During this time, the topic is open for all individuals to deliberate. \textit{Should}, after seven full days, 25% of the total participants in the last general election support a topic, \textit{the CSM is obligated} to allocate time for that issue in their next meeting, the results of which will be posted in the public meeting notes. The time limit of seven days applies to both Representatives and voters, meaning that a Representative \textit{cannot} bring a topic up at a Council meeting without having it go through deliberation on the public forum. A 25% support is however not required for a Representative to bring up a topic to the Council.

\textsuperscript{120}As defined in the EULA/TOS.
\textsuperscript{121}Representatives may ask the original poster to rephrase the issue as a question that can be answered with “Yes” or No”, or otherwise make the terms as clear as possible to the voting audience before marking it for resolution.
CSM Communication with Voters

Council Representatives will communicate with the voting community through the topic forums mentioned above, but also with individuals as necessary through any means they agree upon. Although private communications between Representatives and voters can be kept confidential, transcripts of all CSM meetings are considered public property and are to be made.

CSM Deliberations

In addition to topics brought up by the Representatives themselves, issues marked for resolution are considered by the CSM for determination on whether or not they should be brought before the CCP Council. After each CSM member presents their opinion to support or disprove a motion, the matter is brought to vote; a majority rule passes the issue for escalation. All CSM deliberations are to be documented by the Secretary, including the reasons for supporting or denying the measure.

The key question that council members must consider before casting their vote is whether or not the issue at hand has the potential to improve or otherwise benefit the entire EVE society, and not just a select group within the community that was successful in bringing attention to their unique case. Seeing the big picture—in this case, the needs of a society with over 300,000 individuals—is the primary responsibility of a CSM Representative, and reconciling that view with the interests that won them the election is the greatest challenge they will face in this implementation.

CSM Communication with the CCP Council

Topics which pass the CSM Representative vote will be answered in person by the CCP Council during the meeting in Iceland. Prior to this trip, the list of topics must be documented, prioritized and delivered to CCP at least four weeks before arrival, stating clearly what the
issues are, why they are important to the EVE society, and what course of action(s) are sought to bring “satisfactory” closure to them.

Before CSM Representatives arrive in Iceland, the CCP Council will deliberate on as many issues as possible and prepare preliminary judgments. Following a formal presentation by Representatives upon their arrival, ruling will be announced, along with mandatory, detailed explanations of judgment rationale, and an outline for future action, if appropriate. From here, the table is opened for discussion: it is possible, based on the counterarguments of the Representatives, that CCP will rescind the original judgment in lieu of this debate. Otherwise, the ruling is final, and the meeting will continue on to the next topic.

CCP is unable to accommodate any issue considered detrimental to the collective interests of EVE, particularly if the issue(s) touch upon meta-level concerns. Topics considered outside the scope of the CSM or immediate societal concerns will be stated as such before the council’s arrival in Iceland. In addition, CCP is not obligated to comment on issues not included in the pre-arrival list.

Outside of the direct face-to-face meetings, group communications between the CSM and CCP is limited to no more than two times during the term. This compels Representatives to group important questions and concerns into a single inquiry that can be addressed at once, rather than piecemeal. The resource of time is limited for the members of both councils, and so this measure is necessary to keep the process moving forward as efficiently as possible. CCP will respond to questions within two weeks of receipt, but the “communication counter” advances regardless of how many questions are included in the batch.

The Role of the CCP Council

The primary role of the CCP Council is to act as the direct interface between player Representatives and CCP. All issues brought before this council will receive the due process defined in this document. The first council will consist of CCP employees selected by the company CEO. Depending on the types of issues brought forth by the player Representatives, subject matter experts from various disciplines within the firm will be brought in as necessary.
Removal of a CSM Representative

Should a Representative be unable to attend a meeting – by being present and active during the meeting – he or she is to inform the Chairman and the Vice-chairman of the absence. The next serving Alternate will serve in the absent Representative's place during that meeting.

If a Representative is absent from a CSM meeting and gives no notification of absence the Chairman will announce the Representative's absence and the next serving Alternate will sit that meeting. Should the same Representative be absent for two meetings in a row without a notification, the next serving alternate will take the absent Representative's seat and serve as a full Representative for two meetings, during which time the absent Representative will be unable to reclaim his seat - he will have to sit the meetings as an Alternate. If absent for the third meeting in a row, the next serving Alternate will serve as a full Representative of the CSM for the next three meetings and should the absent Representative return during any of those meetings, he will have to sit them out as an Alternate. During the fourth meeting in a row a Representative is absent the Chairman is to announce the absence and notify the council that a removal of that Representative will be requested to CCP, who in turn will make sure that request is legitimate and valid. Should a Representative be removed he or she is still considered having served a whole term.

CSM Representative Conduct

Any behavior or actions considered being a material breach of the EULA, TOS or the NDA by a CSM Representative is grounds for immediate dismissal and permanent exclusion from all pending and future participation in the council. There are no exceptions, regardless of the infraction. Representatives are not only expected to uphold the social contract that all society members are held accountable to and adhere to it, but should also set a behavior standard for everyone else to follow.
The NDA

CSM Representatives and Alternates must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement, as all volunteers and affiliates are required to since the proximity of their relationship may expose them to information not intended for public release. Council Representatives and Alternates are bound by the terms of that agreement, as all other participants are.
Bibliography for Appendix B


