Of spaceships and men - Mapping the polity of EVE Online using Latent Dirichlet Allocation topic modeling

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In this study the institutional and discoursive landscape of EVE Online, and birth of civil society around it is mapped using Latent Dirichlet Allocation topic modeling, using a very large dataset of discussion forum messages from EVE’s official forums in 2003-2011. This requires methodological development, which is the study’s second objective. EVE Online is a massively multiplayer online game developed by the Icelandic game developer CCP.

This was achieved by approaching the primary objective from two points of view – an institutional analysis of the EVE polity, and analysing the discourse on EVE politics. In the methodological part, LDA topic modeling was used as a method of quantitative textual analysis on a corpus consisting of discussions in the Corporation, Alliance and Organizations Discussion (CAOD) subforum of EVE. There is a close relation between the methods used in the analysis, and the second research question. If the analysis yields results, the second objective can be considered reached.

The first part of the analysis, a look at social institutions formed by the players in EVE institution was done using a combination of source materials ranging from the discussions, to official CCP material regarding their product and a series of journalistic articles examining the workings of EVE. In this analysis, institutions in EVE can be divided into those run primarily by CCP and those run by its customers: EVE players or citizens. CCP in EVE does not seem to even try to take themselves out of the equation when it comes to governance in EVE. EVE does have CCP-created institutions and policies that at least on some levels hand out the responsibility and power of governance to players. These methods include such things as electing a Council of Stellar Management, a liaison body between the players and the developer.

The discursive landscape of EVE was examined using LDA topic modeling. The resulting topics were then validated using both internal validation methods – that is, testing for the coherence and viability of the top words in a topic, categorizing the topics and comparing the categories and contents to the qualitative analysis of the raw source material that the topic is made of. In external validation, several sources covering EVE, such as books and media institutions were used.

In conclusion, EVE does seem to have a sophisticated system of governent institutions, both originating from the players and from the developer. They players devote much of their political discussion to topics of governance. Much, though not all, of it is still traceable to their objectives inside the game.
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1. Introduction
1.1 What is a place, anyway?

“Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts. A graphic representation of data abstracted from banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding.”

-Gibson, William: Neuromancer (1984)\(^1\)

During the last two years I have written this thesis in many different locations from a cafe in Ivalo to the University of Helsinki library. Yet there has been only one space – the Dropbox folder which contains the data, my notes and this finished text. In this sense, my physical location is next to meaningless, while the virtual space where I write comes to the fore.

This example is easily criticized – it might be called trivial because wouldn’t a notebook create a virtual space just like the one I described? Still, the digital revolution during the last 20 years has pushed the boundaries on the limitations that are imposed on us by physical locations. Technological progress is widening the gap between virtual and physical spaces, making the former increasingly autonomous. Internet is nearly ubiquitous in the developed world, and it is conquering the third world faster and faster. The proliferation of smartphones has brought virtual spaces to the daily lives of over one

and a half billion people. Both the sophistication of these places and
the number of their users will undoubtedly rise in the coming years.

Virtual spaces that exist inside computers, but which approximate the
real or imagined characteristics of the physical world are called
virtual worlds.² In these worlds, the user is generally portrayed by
their, again, real or imagined likeness – an avatar. Perhaps the most
typical examples of these worlds are massively multiplayer online
games, or MMO(G)s, such as World of Warcraft or EVE online. There
are exceptions – for instance, the popular Second Life had little to no
game-like elements. Instead, it was a digital sandbox for its users.

Even in the age of cloud computing, data is all virtual, or digital, has
its roots in the physical. The spatiality of these virtual worlds has two
facets: The place as a social construct manifests itself on computer
screens around the world, while physically it exists somewhere in the
world, encased in aluminum and glass and silicone, scattered in
server farms, sometimes across continents.³

As telegraphy or phone communications before them, virtual spaces
and virtual worlds have fundamentally expanded the site of human
activity. They have lessened our ties to a certain geographical location
by introducing spaces overlapping our material reality. This has led to
many advances and freedom for those privileged to take part in these
new spaces. They are, however, also spaces of control. These spaces
have enabled unprecedented surveillance of people’s movement,

Explores the Virtually Human. Princeton University Press, Princeton, USA,
238.
³ For clarity, I will use terms such as ”not material” when speaking about the
virtual and the digital. While, as I mention, are physical, the space where
social activity happens is outside of the material realm.
speech and interaction. The documents leaked by the whistleblower Edward Snowden showed us the totality of surveillance on Internet by intelligence agencies, especially NSA and GCHQ.

Virtual spaces have profoundly impacted our relationship with physical spaces. This is not to say that physical places have lost their significance – even if a terminal can be carried all the time, one is needed to enter virtual spaces. Many countries limit their citizens’ access to these places, and even if these limitations do not exist, the poorest rarely have resources to obtain access. Access is also a question of having sufficient literacy in the geography of the virtual. Nevertheless, it is possible to exist in many places at once: eating dinner with friends, while at the same time devoting a part of one’s existence towards one or more virtual spaces. And even though virtual spaces can function asynchronously, they haven’t escaped temporality – time zones still affect people in these spaces, even if messaging is nearly instantaneous.

In this study I will examine how people are coexisting in virtual worlds: What kind of institutions they build (and what are built for them) to govern themselves and others. This is why the case chosen for the study is EVE Online. EVE is, in many ways, an extraordinary virtual world. It hosts probably the largest number of concurrent users in its world.\(^4\) It has a laissez-faire developer\(^5\), a highly developed

\(^4\) EVE is not the biggest MMO, but unlike most others, hosts most of its players in one server or shard, when most games split the playerbase into dozens or hundreds of shards. This naturally means that even though the total amount of players if EVE is smaller than in the biggest MMOs, the player density and thus amount of interaction is greater. Data on MMO userbases: [http://www.mmodata.net](http://www.mmodata.net). Retrieved 18.6.2015.
civilization with organizations that count their membership in tens of thousands, some of which have full-time employees, propaganda departments and social services. Material damages in space battles are sometimes measured in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.\(^5\) The users have written the histories of the world\(^7\) and elect a Council of Stellar Management (CSM) to represent their interests towards the developer and owner of EVE, CCP Games. To study the political and institutional history of EVE, how its users live and govern, I take as my source material the online forum dedicated to the politics of EVE. This forum is the public sphere of EVE, where discussions on conflicts, institutions and politics takes place. Since the sheer amount of discussions makes traditional methods of text analysis unfeasible, I will employ the digital humanities methodology of topic modeling to distill the essential out of the very large dataset. Furthermore, having been a long-time observer and sometime participant in the world of EVE, this thesis is also my contribution as a participant observer to the writing of the history of EVE.

Thus, in my analysis, I will first (Analysis I: The institutions) discuss the political history of EVE through describing the institutions on a general level: politics and polity in EVE, the political actors, participation, citizenship and the evolution of the EVE civilization. Then, I will move on to analyzing a topic model of these institutions in action (Analysis II: The discourse).

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\(^5\) Laissez-faire in the sense that they do not directly interfere in happenings inside EVE, or limit the ways in which the game can be played. The ways they do interfere will be explored in later chapters.

\(^6\) EVE currency is translateable via several mechanisms into real money. If virtual currency can be converted into, for instance, dollars, one might say it is as real money as any. In this case, real money refers to money accepted in the physical world, issued by central banks.

1.2 Virtual worlds

The concept of virtual is not without its problems. Virtual, in common parlance, means something not material, and thus less real. When considering virtual worlds as sites of social activity, it is clear that interactions in the virtual are as real as those happening elsewhere. This is not to say that the approximated experiences – such as flying a space ship – would be comparably real to their physical world counterparts, but rather that the social and institutional meanings and consequences originating from the virtual are real.8

Drawing a line between virtual and physical spaces might seem easy. Especially when talking about games as virtual worlds, it may seem tempting to separate them with a magic circle, a concept introduced by Johan Huizinga.9 An example of the magic circle might be a sumo-match: When the wrestlers step inside the circle, rules change, and what would be considered assault outside the circle is permitted in it. In the last decade, this dichotomy has been questioned, and the porous nature of the borders of virtual words emphasized.10 In his 2010 article, “Virtual Worlds Don't Exist: Questioning the Dichotomous Approach in MMO Studies”, Vili Lehdonvirta presents

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10 Castronova, 102.
the the argument against drawing a border between physical and virtual worlds.\textsuperscript{11}

In the article, Lehdonvirta argues that conclusively separating virtual and physical worlds results in so many exceptions to the rule that the distinction loses its usefulness. For instance, virtual worlds are connected the physical world via the physical locations of their inhabitants, who live within the timezones of the physical world, the relationships formed in virtual worlds do not stop at the border of the virtual world, virtual economies interact with physical world ones and the rules and laws of virtual worlds often intersect with the laws of sovereign nations – for instance, cyberbullying is sometimes a crime.\textsuperscript{12}

If the boundaries are muddled enough to be nearly useless, how to define them? Lehdonvirta proposes that one answer is the social world perspective introduced by the sociologist Anselm Strauss.\textsuperscript{13} For Strauss, social worlds are discourse universes, whose borders are defined by effective communication. In this perspective, the social reality is built from multiple social worlds, for instance, family, school, hobbies and religion. The borders of the social worlds are subject to constant renegotiation.\textsuperscript{14} Strauss also brings up the role of activity in social worlds:

"In each social world, at least one primary activity (along with related clusters of activity) is strikingly evident; i.e., climbing mountains,

\textsuperscript{13} Lehdonvirta.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
researching, collecting. There are sites where activities occur: hence space and a shaped landscape are relevant. Technology (inherited or innovative modes of carrying out the social world’s activities) is always involved. [...] In social worlds at their outset, there may be only temporary divisions of labor, but once under way, organizations inevitably evolve to further one aspect or another of the world’s activities.”

Following these lines, Facebook would not be defined as a discrete social world. It would rather be a space or a technology, in which a social world would represent itself in. EVE, however, could form a social world that manifests in the game, or the primary mode of activity, as well as in the chat rooms of player groups or meetups. Lehdonvirta suggests, that the social world formed by for instance EVE is comparable to the social world of banking in the City of London: They both have their own distinct institutions built around the primary activity built on an advanced division of labour.16

1.3 Coming of Age in Second Life

During 2005-2007, Tom Boelstorff, an anthropologist from California was doing field work for his upcoming ethnography. He made friends, participated in the society and took notes – conducted his participant observation as any classically trained anthropologist would. The only thing out of place was that this was done in front of the computer, in a virtual world called Second Life. The resulting book, Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human is

16 Lehdonvirta.
the first ethnography of Second Life\textsuperscript{17}, and one of the first ethnographies in the second-generation virtual worlds.\textsuperscript{18}

In the book, Boelstorff examines the virtual lives of people in Second Life. Second Life is not a game in any traditional sense – it can be seen more as a digital sandbox where people can own property, manufacture items (such as furniture or clothes), do business and socialize. Second Life was also one of the first virtual worlds to embrace so-called Real Money Trading (RMT), traditionally forbidden in most games. RMT means that game goods and currency are translateable to real money. Linden Lab’s decision to allow RMT as well as sell land inside the world resulted in increased economic activity within Second Life, with some players allegedly making millions and many real-world institutions such as companies and universities buying advertising and land inside Second Life.\textsuperscript{19}

Focusing on the mundane lives of people inside Second Life, Boelstorff makes several interesting observations about the governance of Second Life, and virtual worlds in general. He notes, in the vein of Foucault’s concept of governmentality, that ”while sovereignty is self-justifying and ‘possesses its own intrinsic instruments in the shape of its laws’, governmentality ‘resides in the things it manages … the instruments of government, instead of being laws, now come to a

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{First Generation} The first generation can be seen as the research done in Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) and MUD Open Orienteds (MOOs) in the 90s. The second generation begins around the millennium with the advent of modern, graphical virtual worlds. For more, see Boelstorff, 54.
\end{thebibliography}
range of multiform tactics”.\textsuperscript{20} In virtual worlds, the owners hold absolute sovereignty, but governmentality must be manufactured and nurtured. Linden Lab, and indeed other developers as well, tries to mitigate the effects of their displays of power and governance.\textsuperscript{21} He describes two strategies used by Linden Lab in Second Life:

1) Actively claiming \textit{not} to govern if it is not necessary, because Second Life is borne out of the creativity of its residents and they do not want to stifle that.

2) Outsourcing authority to residents by implementing limited, small-scale governance run by residents (or more accurately, customers).\textsuperscript{22}

In the coming chapters we will examine these two, but especially the latter method in more detail.


\textsuperscript{21}Boelstorff, 222.

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid, 225-226
2. Materials

The main source materials used in this thesis are the discussions on EVE Online forums dedicated to discussing the politics of EVE. These discussions span eight years of EVE, from July 2003 to September 2011 - from the beginning of EVE, to a migration to a new forum system, where there is no similar forum for discussion.

The said forum was used as a resource, because while discussion about EVE politics exists in other forums and locations such as forum systems for specific alliances, instant messengers, podcasts, videos and other types of media, this forum is the major hub of discussion where different types of players gather, from space-trucking tycoons to warband leaders to solo mercenaries. Given that the forum’s activity begins at approximately the same time as EVE Online starts operating, it also provides a rare temporal starting point - there has not been a state / community / polity such as EVE before the source material starts. The forum can be considered a Habermasian public sphere\textsuperscript{23} - it is the real in which the polity of EVE discusses both its relation to the state, settles conflicts between each other, and discusses important issues.\textsuperscript{24}

The forum in question functions mostly as such forums tend to do. There is a theme, or a superimposition of conversation topics. In this case, this title is “Corporation, Alliance and Organization

\textsuperscript{23} Habermas, Jürgen (1989): The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, Polity, Cambridge.
Discussions” (CAOD)\textsuperscript{25} with a description of “From political conflicts to battle reports, news, and corporation press releases – this is the in-character\textsuperscript{26} political center for all things corporate”. Other forums have topics like “Eve Fiction” or “Test server feedback”.

There are 10466 conversation threads in the forum, which have varying amounts of posts, or messages in them - anything from just one to hundreds and even thousands. The posts all contain the poster’s avatar name, corporation, alliance, timestamp and the message itself. The amount of data as raw body text collected is, in non-encoded plaintext, approximately 500 megabytes, which is the approximate equivalent of 200 000 pages.\textsuperscript{27}

Specific data from all posts from the forum was collected: body text, timestamp and the alliance the poster belonged to (if any). These three types of data were chosen for several reasons. When studying patterns of discussion, the body text is obviously the most important piece of source material. The time stamp was chosen in order to temporally anchor the resulting topics and to measure the level of activity in the forum at a given time. Alliance is, politically, the key identifier in EVE (as outlined in the second chapter), instead of player avatar name or corporation name.

\textsuperscript{26} In-character does not, in this context generally mean role-playing. Rather, it means that it is assumed that people talking in the forum represent the opinion of the character that is writing the post.
\textsuperscript{27} Besides the main text, messages typically have many kinds of metadata - a topic, information about the writer, date of the post et cetera.
The data was collected with a custom web scraper, coded by the author in Python. The source code for relevant programs is attached. The scraper was programmed to collect the body text, timestamp and alliance separately. When collecting a data set of this size from a source that is often messy, it is inevitable that the scraped result will not be perfect. For example, alongside alliance names in the “alliance” dataset, some body text was found as well. Verifying data integrity is necessary. This has been achieved in two ways:

First, the scraper was coded in a way that emphasizes redundancy. That means that it will collect everything that is specified in its data type, erring on the side of caution. Nothing will be left out, if anything, it might collect something belonging to another data type. This is easily fixed - if there are extra timestamps in either alliance name or body text data types, they are easily discernible in topic modeling. The reverse is of course also true. Because the alliance name data type is only used in frequency analysis, extra text that is not an alliance name is also easily spotted and removed.

The integrity of the data was verified by using natural language processing tools and word frequency analysis to check for an unusually high concentrations of special characters or non-English words. The scraper was tested on select samples of the dataset and validated by hand in order to ensure the rarity of data corruption.

Besides these two ways of verifying data integrity, the chosen methods are very resilient using very large datasets, which means that relatively small errors are drowned in the noise. Thus

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28 See Appendix 1: Source Code.
theoretically undetectable variations in data integrity are unlikely to affect the model and analysis in a meaningful way.

3. Analysis I: The institutions

EVE Online is a MMO developed and owned by the Icelandic game studio, CCP. It started operating in May of 2003. Its user base has generally been growing ever since – in 2013, there were over half a million active accounts. Users or players inhabit a galaxy, called New Eden, where they can conquer space for themselves, fight against each other, mine minerals from asteroids, or trade with each other. For many, a central activity in the game are aligning with a larger group of players and fighting wars against other groups. Users pay a monthly fee to keep their access to the game.

EVE is set apart from the typical MMO in a few ways. First, like mentioned in the first chapter, all users exist in the same shard. EVE’s denser concentration of players enables larger alliances and a more sophisticated economic system compared to other MMOs. That economic system is another differentiating factor. Most of the most desired items – be they spaceships, minerals, space stations or weapons – are built entirely by users. This means someone had mined minerals from an asteroid, sold them in markets, where someone had bought those minerals to build, for example, a spaceship. CCP observes the trends in economy keenly, having a dedicated economist

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29 Exact numbers are hard to get, because game developers usually do not want to reveal them to competitors.
and publishing periodic reports on EVE’s economy.\textsuperscript{30} For some, market manipulation and trading is their main activity in EVE.

Due to the relative efficiency of these markets, most things in EVE can be converted to real-world currency. This is done either by selling the items directly in online marketplaces, such as eBay or sites dedicated to the sale of virtual goods. This is forbidden in EVE’s end-user license agreement, but it still happens.\textsuperscript{31} Another way is to use money in EVE to buy an in-game item, called PLEX, which functions the same as paying the montly fee to keep the account active, but can be transferred between people. These items can either be sold for real money – again, forbidden, but rather common – or be used in online, EVE related gambling sites with safe bets, not unlike physical world money laundering. In practice, the supply of PLEX in real-money markets determines the exchange rate of the in-game currency, ISK.

The following is an illustration of the scale of activity in EVE:

Two large coalitions, both counting tens of thousands of members in their ranks, the Clusterfuck Coalition (CFC/RUS) and N3/PL had been waging war for the control of a certain piece of New Eden since the October of 2013. The war had been going on as a series of small engagements where N3/PL was gaining a slight upper hand. However, the situation changed in 27.1.2014, when a CFC/RUS fleet commander noticed that a strategically important region controlled by their


enemies had its defenses shut down, because a midlevel N3/PL commander had forgotten to pay an administrative bill related to owning space. CFC/RUS decided to press their advantage and attack, so the fleet commander alerted his colleagues and they started massing fleets in order to attack before too many defenders could realize that the bill had been left unpaid.

Said commander lives in the United States, and noticed the situation at approximately 06:00 UTC. A large part of CFC/RUS members live in Russia, which made the situation tricky: They would not be able to get out of work for hours, and US players were starting to head to bed. It was too good an opportunity to pass up, though, and the fleet commander decided to mobilize the forces he could, attack, and try to hold on until the Russians could come. Fleets were mobilized via internet chat rooms and text messages, and even translators were brought in – the said commander spoke only English, and many French and Russian pilots would need orders in their own languages.

Finally, the battle started. It ended up lasting for 22 hours, or as long as was possible before EVE was shut down for routine maintenance. In the end, 7 548 players from 717 groups were involved. Thousands of ships were destroyed, valued at approximately 300 000 US dollars at the time. The war went on, but replacing the ships would end up taking months.32

This scarcity of time is one of the defining factors of EVE. Most MMOs impose scarcity on their players – scarcity of currency, desired items, 

and, in more abstract terms, success. In EVE, training and building takes long, fixed periods of time. Usually in MMOs the speed of progression is determined mainly by how much the user plays, but in EVE, it might take months of real time to train a skill, or build a large spaceship. This greatly increases the value of in-game assets – not everything is replaceable with money.

Another feature setting EVE apart is the metagame surrounding it. Metagaming means activity that relates to the game, but happens outside of its obvious way of activity. Whereas the act of gaming in EVE is, for example, flying a ship, mining minerals from asteroids or building industry goods, metagaming covers diplomacy and spying between alliances, manipulating markets via rumors in forums, and waging propaganda wars against enemies. Many players, especially those in leadership positions in their alliances, almost exclusively play this metagame. For instance, the leader of CFC/RUS’s vanguard alliance, Goonswarm, is known (among other things) from the fact that he leads his organization full-time, and has for years focused on the metagame, rarely actually starting the game client and logging in.

This metagame is also the place where the magic circle around EVE starts to blur. Is it morally wrong to spy on someone, betray them and steal everything they have worked for months or even years if it happens in a virtual world? Is it a crime to run a ponzi scheme if the money used is ISK, while valuable, not issued by a central bank?

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33 Castronova, 116.
3.1 Politics and polity in EVE

In this chapter, I will examine EVE as a *digital polity* and discuss the various actors in operating within EVE. Many of these actors live both inside the game world of EVE and outside it - they are part of EVE's metagame, a concept which I introduced in the previous section. There are actors that exist only inside the game or only outside the metagame: such as players who play EVE as they would play any other computer game, or the company developing EVE, CCP, which, at least according to legal theory, should have little interest in the metagame. Their goal is to run and develop a game which attracts as many paying customers as possible. There are conflicts of interest within CCP, however, as many developers play the game they work on.

The ultimate arbitrator, with at least theoretical godlike powers over EVE, is, of course, the owner and developer of the game - CCP Games. CCP can make changes to the game as they see fit, and, indeed, the rules or natural laws of the game are, at least in theory, in constant flux. When a strategy or a weapon is deemed too strong, it is weakened (or "nerfed") or competing strategies are made stronger ("buffed"). EVE is a world of perpetual conflict. This is because CCP

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34 In general, publicly traded companies in Iceland (and elsewhere) have a legally mandated goal of generating profit to shareholders. See Björgvinsdóttir, Áslaug (2004): “Icelandic Company Law”, Scandinavian Studies in Law, vol. 45. 50.
has the incentive to keep as many players as possible playing the game. If one faction would become so strong that no one could challenge them, others would likely stop playing, thus decreasing the revenues the game generates.\textsuperscript{36} The CCP at least tries to act the part of an impartial arbitrator or referee - they keep the game interesting for the players. It is important to note, however, that developers are not all-powerful. After all, citizens create the state. More so than in many (but not all) established states, citizens of EVE can leave quite easily, after all, players must pay even to \textit{remain} in the world. By leaving, the player leaves behind friends, communities, and even property.

I approach the digital polity from two viewpoints: the grassroots, that is the player-created political institutions, and the developer-created institutions.

3.2 Outlining the political actors of EVE

EVE is, obviously, comprised of players. These players buy a citizenship in the game world, called an account, either by paying CCP a monthly fee or by buying game-time with the in-game currency, ISK. These accounts can support multiple characters, that is, the avatars who actually fly the spaceships around the game world. However, only one character per account can be logged in at a time. Some other game functions are limited on the basis of accounts as well, such as voting in elections. It is not uncommon for players to own multiple accounts. Unlike in many other MMOGs, owning multiple accounts isn't prohibited, and the official game pages even

\textsuperscript{36} There are numerous examples of an alliance wiping out their biggest competitor, only to see the strategy they used be made un-viable or the rules changed so that the new empire is next to impossible to maintain. GROEN
guide the player on how to play multiple accounts at the same time. In these situations, one account is typically the main one, while another is used for repetitive or easily automated tasks such as asteroid mining for money. Extra accounts are often necessary in the espionage metagame: Professional spies can create "clean" identities with a few clicks of their mouse and start their progress in infiltrating competing alliances. After all, there are almost no ways of detecting a careful spy, because all personal information given to CCP is confidential and is not shared with other players.

The basic unit of player organization is the corporation. In game terms, characters belong to corporations, but in a general sense, the question is much more difficult. At least the larger alliances involved in politics tend to demand exclusivity from their members. Even though there are only a few ways to know whether a player belongs to more corporations than one, the counter-espionage departments do their best to find out. Some alliances have even enlisted computer forensics professionals for help.

Corporations can then go on to form alliances or coalitions. They can be understood as states within the game. Alliances often control vast regions of space, enforcing their laws and customs within the controlled zones. Alliances are complicated operations that require members with specific roles. Often corporations specialize in different roles: some might do reconnaissance work, others fly large capital ships, others take care of logistics and so on and so on. The decision-

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38 LassieME.
39 Forming alliances is sometimes also a mechanical necessity, as corporations can only have 12601 members at the maximum. Large alliances can have several times that many members.
making structures of alliances vary from deliberative democracies to communist autocracies to capitalist dictatorships. Of course, as in EVE in general, these are all voluntary communities. Leaving might cost friends, property and ostracism, but it is always possible. Alliance organizations are often highly sophisticated, with directors responsible for different areas of organization, unique cultures within the organization and support services for players. For example, Goonswarm utilizes a system of basic income combined with monetary incentives to work certain kinds of jobs within the alliance.

Perhaps the most obvious way to play EVE politics is by waging war for control over territory or resources. However, many people prefer to stay in the sidelines of the great wars. EVE has an expansive financial sector, with multiple private banks operating inside the game. They operate largely as their counterparts outside the game, although the risks to the players' savings are far greater. The EVE banking sector has been rocked with scandal many times when banks have turned out to be scams. For instance, in 2011 an investment scheme called Phaser Inc. promised 5% weekly returns to invested capital. This turned out to be a ponzi scheme, and the fraudsters made off with over a trillion ISK, at the time roughly equivalent to 51 000 US dollars.40

EVE also has its own media sector. There are several different actors working in this field: Alliances and other official instances have their own communications departments, many gaming magazines (such as

Joystiq, Ten Ton Hammer, EVE24, The Mittani and more) cover politics in EVE and of course players talk about EVE on discussion forums and Twitter.

3.3 Democracy and participation

Even though EVE as a game world and intellectual property is owned by a corporation, the polity of EVE is built by its community or citizens. This means that the developer can’t simply dictate the rules of the game, and must, in a sense, legitimize their actions when they intervene.

Responding to a possible threat in the legitimacy of their rule over the game, CCP formed a council to mediate issues between the players and the developer. This body is called the Council of Stellar Management (CSM). The council’s stated purpose was to implement a form of deliberative democracy in EVE. The council works in cooperation with CCP, discussing issues either party finds important enough to be brought up. The members of the council are elected annually through a vote among the players. The election works like it's many counterparts outside EVE. There are campaigns, interest groups field their own candidates and try to get their members to vote for them. There is even a voting advice application.

The council works by meeting biannually in Reykjavik, as well as holding online meetings when necessary. Meetings are usually structured so that they last a few days and are divided into smaller segments where developers of a certain facet of the game present

41 Óskarsson.
issues to the council. The council used to select four officers from among their ranks, but this practice has been abandoned with the most recent CSM elections. The CSM in session as of this writing is CSMX, or the tenth elected council.

The voter turnout in the CSM elections has been declining in recent years (figure 1), at least when looking at absolute voter numbers. It is, however, difficult to say whether the proportional turnout has declined as well, because CCP does not reveal accurate subscription statistics. It is unlikely, though, that subscriptions would have fallen in tandem with the voter turnouts, because a 50% drop in subscription fee revenues would have been catastrophic for the company, and would have been noticed from the massive layoffs it would have resulted in.

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42 Óskarsson.
45 CCP used to release the figures until the CSM7 election. Before, the voter turnout varied between 7 and 15 per cent.
The CSM election has in recent years switched to using single-transferable vote (STV) as the preferred system for voting. CCP claims that the amount of enfranchised votes, that is, votes that affect the final composition of the council have actually increased, even though the voter turnout is falling. The ballot data is open-source and available online. There has been some speculation among the EVE community on why the voter turnout is dropping. Some say that the council has no real power over the game, while CCP insists that they have failed to communicate the influence CSM has.

While the CSM is a watchdog for the developer, it is also a site of the metagame. Alliances have interests in what direction the game should go, and they form voting blocs along these interests. For instance,

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46 Ibid.
alliances that often engage in wars for resources might oppose changes that make it easier for other players to acquire said resources without fighting or paying for them.

There is another interesting democratic element to EVE - its history. Since the public relations metagame has been active for such a long time, there are layers and layers of stories about conflict and politics in EVE. When the game turned ten years old, CCP started a project to collect the history of EVE. The project is aptly called “True stories from the first decade - History is made by those who write it.”. Players wrote stories of the (meta)game, discussed and revised them and ultimately voted on whether or not the account is true or valuable. Players value their history - ultimately almost 700 stories were written and voted on, with the most popular gathering dozens of comments and over a thousand votes for and against. Because many of the popular stories are of wars, espionage, deception and betrayal, it makes sense that they are also the most controversial. It is, as well, a winner’s history. Most of the popular accounts are told from the perspective of the winning alliances.49

3.4 Constructing citizenship

At the heart of EVE is the conflict between being a citizen and being a customer. In the end, CCP owns EVE absolutely, but again, it would bring little good to them if they had no citizens. An interesting caveat to this is the fact that not nearly all EVE players pay for their game time with dollars. It is possible to buy game time with ISK, either directly from CCP or from the market. The relationship between CCP

48 True Stories From the First Decade.
49 Ibid.
and these players is naturally different, at least philosophically, from those players, who pay to be a part of the polity. Maybe an allegory could be made to the effect that in order to stay a citizen, the subject must either pay a tax each month, or work hard enough for the government as to keep their status.

Previously in this chapter I wrote about how players participate in the EVE polity. All these methods of participation can be seen as ways of generating a sense of ownership in the players. Obviously players own the societies and structures they create, but the phenomenon goes further than that: via the CSM, players might “own” the game itself, in addition to the stories created via the initiative to make the history of EVE official. Yet, there is some irony in this process: When players write down the history of EVE, they at the same time acknowledge that it becomes the property of CCP, and that it may be used in their products.\(^{50}\)

For CCP distributing the perceived ownership of the game world is a preferred state of affairs. As a corporation defined in Icelandic law, they have no special interest in the game world - only in their subscriber numbers. If the world brings them value only when it is constructed by the citizen/customers, why not distribute the ownership as much as they can?

In many ways, they have succeeded. For instance, when asked about the most important question the CSM needs to address, most of the candidates are concerned about the new player experience, and how could EVE attract and retain more new, paying customers to the

\(^{50}\) Ibid.
game. They have internalized the goal of CCP as their own. Then again, the relationship between the players and CCP could be described as symbiotic. If CCP suffers enough to abandon EVE, the players who are committed to the world would suffer as well by, losing relationships, power, and assets.

3.5 Evolution of a civilization, metagaming and postgaming

The chief political scientist behind the design of EVE’s Council of Stellar Management, Pétur Óskarsson, has studied the evolution of the "EVE civilization", as he calls it. He identifies four distinct phases in the evolution of co-operation in EVE:

1) Hunter-gatherer bands with little to no internal organization.
2) Tribal civilizations whose defining feature are some social status within the organization and spatial expansion, by war if necessary.
3) Stratified structures, which have internal division of labor within the primary group, the corporation.


4) Complex civilizations, which are highly specialized alliances of coalitions with corporations specialized to succeed in specific tasks such as diplomacy, industry, or capital warfare.⁵²

Óskarsson posits that while these modes of civilization have more or less linear trajectory from 1 to 4 during the early years of EVE, not all players live in the same level of civilization - as is true of civilizations of the "real" world. The future came, but it is not evenly distributed. This model is still centered around gaming and metagaming. The same holds true for Edward Castronova’s model of social complexity in virtual worlds.

Castronova argues that virtual worlds can be classified by the social complexity they exhibit. The simplest are first person shooters, supporting a small amount of players and very limited social interaction. Social worlds, such as Second Life, are much more complex, but paradoxically the lack of structure in them prevents them from unlocking the full potential for complex social activity. The most complex, in his model, are MMOGs, that have the positive aspects of social worlds, but also include more specific goals and structures for their citizens.⁵³

While it is maybe debatable whether or not social worlds are less socially complex than MMOGs – Second Life for instance has a very advanced civil society. It is probably true that MMOGs such as EVE do have a more complex political system. I would argue that this is due to the fact that, in addition to the scarcity introduced in the first

⁵³ Castronova, 105.
chapter, there is a scarcity of winning combined with the fact that winning is not authoritatively defined by anyone else than the citizens themselves. The players are allowed to want different things at the same time, but not all can fulfill those wants – that is, win – as much as they want.

The practice of metagaming refers to playing EVE in ways that do not happen within the game world. Metagame, in its broadest definition, might include any and all EVE related activities, but more commonly it is understood as including diplomacy, espionage, politics in the Council of Stellar Management, discussion on the game forums and media covering EVE.\textsuperscript{54,55} It is as difficult to clearly define the boundaries of the metagame as it is to define the boundaries of conventional politics. After all, what isn’t political? A crude metaphor to the real world might be that gaming is to metagaming what a parliament in session is to politics.

Moving one step further from metagaming and social complexity, I want to introduce the next level of civilization and social complexity, that is non-gaming in a game world, or postgaming. Postgaming means activity that happens inside the Straussian social world, but has moved past gaming and even metagaming that still defines itself with the goals of the game. Postgaming would be for example, in EVE’s case, examination of the political system of EVE or EVE the social world.

Postgaming is the next level of civilization, because it needs sufficient complexity to exist and sufficient resources and activity to emerge. Very few would debate a world’s political structure if all its inhabitants were wandering bands of hunter-gatherers. Like other levels of civilization complexity, it is not binary, but discrete. In the following chapter, I will analyze EVE’s discursive landscape using the concepts of gaming, metagaming and postgaming.

4. Topic modeling

Topic modeling is a method of text mining, which, using specific algorithms and software, identifies patterns in a corpus. These patterns, or words that often occur together, are called topics.\textsuperscript{56} It is a method that is generally used with very large natural language data sets as source material - often of a size that would be inconvenient or practically impossible to read and code by hand.

Topic modeling is now one of the most important methods in the so-called digital humanities.\textsuperscript{57} Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) has become almost synonymous with topic modeling.\textsuperscript{58} LDA was introduced by David M. Blei, Andrew Y. Ng and Michael I. Jordan in their 2003 article “Latent Dirichlet Allocation”.\textsuperscript{59} In the article, they

\textsuperscript{57} Mohr, John and Bogdanov, Petko (2013): ”Topic models: What they are and why they matter”, Poetics, Vol. 41, No. 6.
outline the key concepts of LDA topic modeling and the mathematics involved in generating the topic model. 60

LDA works as such: There is a corpus, which is comprised of documents, which are, in turn, comprised of words. There is a specific number of patterns of word use occurring in documents. These patterns are called topics. Topics are, quite simply, lists of which words often occur together and how often. They are usually represented as a list of the ten most common words in that topic. The number of topics is decided when the model is built - it is an important determinant on what kind of results LDA will yield.

A topic model always explains the entire corpus to the best of its ability. That means that when choosing a low number of topics, they are very general, while a larger amount of topics will yield more specific topics. The bigger the corpus, the bigger the number of sensible topics it can support. It is not obviously better to choose the largest amounts of topics, but rather, it depends on the research question and the results the model yields. Choosing the right amount of topics is not an exact science, nor is there a formula to determine the maximum amount of topics a corpus can support. The model augments human reasoning, providing tools for understanding the material.61 In my case, since my source material is very large, and I am looking for fairly specific content relating to institutions of governance within the history of EVE, I chose a 100-topic model using

60 Because of LDA’s widespread use, LDA and the more general term topic modeling are used interchangeably in this text.

MALLET, the Machine Learning for Language Toolkit.\textsuperscript{62} I will go into more depth about constructing the model in the next section.

It is assumed that all the documents in the corpus exhibit a number of these topics to varying degree.\textsuperscript{63} Documents, regardless of their original format, are treated as a bags-of-words - that is, the order of the words is irrelevant.\textsuperscript{64,65} Topic-modelling is used to find out how often certain words co-occur in the documents. Thus, the "topics" it creates can be said to be analogical to factors in factor analysis. If a topic is described by words 1 2 3 4 5 6, what it means is that these words often occur in same documents, in different combinations.\textsuperscript{66}

Thus, a key analysis choice is how to divide the material into documents, since LDA outputs topic distributions by documents. In my case, a discussion thread is a document, since discussion threads consist of a particular discussion with a temporal beginning and an end.

This assumption is key to the fact that to get relevant results, LDA models require a rather large dataset. By treating the order of words as irrelevant and so essentially eschewing a large part of how humans process language, some meaning and nuance is lost. Yet, when a sufficiently formatted and carefully chosen set of documents is chosen,\

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{64} Blei, Ng, Jordan.
\item\textsuperscript{65} There are several technical procedures used to make this possible. The natural language structure of the corpus is broken by \textit{tokenizing} the material - that is, each word is separated from its context. The words are also lemmatized in order to achieve uniformity and remove inflection from the word bodies.
\item\textsuperscript{66} Mohr, Bogdanov.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
LDA enables us to use corpora of sizes next to impossible to analyze by manual reading. It is *distant reading* as opposed to the more established close reading. The point of LDA is precisely to enable analysis of huge datasets by discarding as much irrelevant material as possible and distilling the relevant. However, the method is not as crude in its assumptions as may seem: it has been argued that LDA actually fits social scientific analysis of culture quite well, since it acknowledges the relationality of language by emphasizing word co-occurrence, and it takes into account the fact that words carry different meanings when in different contexts. Topics can be interpreted as discourses.

Besides the number of topics and how the corpus is divided into documents, there is a third variable to building a model. This variable, or variables, is called the *stopwords*. They are, quite simply, words that are simply ignored while building the model. Generally used stop words are filler such as *and, yes, I, but* et cetera, which do not carry any meaning on their own. Often, especially when using a corpus that uses natural language or lingo specific to a subculture, additional stopwords are required. Stopwords, if not removed, water down the topics because they are ubiquitous in written language. The

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problem is exacerbated in natural language datasets - many forum posts tend to use similar language tropes.⁶⁹

Topic modeling has increased in popularity within the digital humanities especially during the current decade. Historians, especially, have undertaken projects utilizing topic modeling with digitized archive sources. A good example is Robert K. Nelson's project, *Mining the Dispatch*, where he utilizes topic modeling in following the social and political life during the American civil war in the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia.⁷⁰

Nelson's project serves as a basis for the topic model produced for this work. His work utilizes topics in creative ways. First, he combines the algorithmically generated topics into themes. For instance the theme *slavery* contains the topics *fugitive slave ads* and *for hire and wanted ads*.⁷¹ His work also includes the occurrence of topics and themes over time, which is of special interest to this study as history. This way of grouping topics as themes is used in this work as well.

Topic modeling isn’t automatic textual analysis, though, and digital humanities scholars have been criticised of blindly following algorithms they have no deep understanding of. Benjamin Schmidt criticizes the assumptions that the topics produced are *stable* – meaning that meaning in them topics are transitive, and *coherent* – meaning the assumption that words occurring together means they

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⁶⁹ Grimmer, Stewart.
⁷¹ Ibid.
have something in common.\textsuperscript{72} This criticism is something scholars using topic models should take seriously. Still, these criticisms can be addressed. Grimmer and Stewart introduce principles for this purpose, two of which are of especial importance – first, the idea that topic models augment human thinking and analysis, not replaces it.\textsuperscript{73} While automated tools produce the model, the interpretation of the topics is sadly still left to the researcher. Most modeling tools produce topics that are essentially strings of words that often occur together. They are made of, but are not, natural language, which is why rigorous \textit{validation} is key.\textsuperscript{74} This is also important, because of the size of the corpus used in this research, it is not feasible to close read even a significant portion of the documents making up a topic, let alone of all topics used. We will get into validation in more detail in the next section.

Topic modeling, then, is an algorithmic method of textual analysis, blending together elements of quantitative and qualitative methods. In topic modeling, text is geography and topic model a detailed map - it reveals varying landscapes and formations – a discursive landscape. A map does not care for a single flower, but a meadow might be drawn. Nuance is lost, but then again, this study is about the major currents of EVE history. History, in this sense, is decided by what people have spoken. Sometimes the results may be surprising and unintuitive - the death of a diplomat may be more visible than some wars.

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\textsuperscript{73} Grimmer, Stewart.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
4.1 Constructing the model

This study, as said, uses LDA topic modeling and a large dataset collected from the EVE Online forums. In terms of LDA, the corpus is all collected body text. The alliance data type is not used in the topic model, and while the time stamp provides a temporal dimension for the topic, its numbers are not part of the model. A document is a discussion thread. There is no distinctive classification for the unique posts contained in the thread. Because the thread serves to label the discussion, it is not necessary for the purposes of this study to bring the discussion within the topics into the model.

Stopwords were chosen by first training the model with a list of standard English stopwords provided by MALLET. Then, specific words related to the subject material were added, as well as some more technical additions to the list. The EVE-specific words include such terms as server, bug, patch, lag. The complete list of stopwords can be found in Appendix 2: Stopwords. The process of adding stopwords was repeated until the topics generated showed no signs of corruption from non-relevant recurring words.

The number of topics modeled for this study is 100. As explained in the previous section, this choice is not exact. The topic model was tested with 50, 100 and 200 topics with preliminary analysis done on each. The very large corpus used could support even a higher number of topics. Still, a hundred topics supported Nelson’s concept of

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75 Language used in the internet is rife with situation-specific filler words, such as lol, or some common forms of misspelled words.
thematically grouping similar topics well. A hundred topics were chosen to assure sufficient, but not too great granularity within the corpus. The level of granularity is important, because with too small a number of topics the temporal axis of the source material starts to get muddled, and it becomes more difficult to follow the flow of topics through the time they span.

Topic models sometimes assign equal importance to all topics, but MALLET uses hyperparameter optimization to construct a model in which topics are assigned dirichlet values that take into account the explanatory power of each topic. The dirichlet value $d$ allows comparisons between different topics: it 'answers the question of how commonly a topic occurs in the corpus as a whole, relative to other topics'. I weighed all the topics using their proportion of the dirichlet value out of the total dirichlet value $d_{\text{sum}}$, which is calculated by adding up all topics' dirichlet values.

In this thesis, the topic model is further developed to allow for a temporal axis to be added to analysis, that is, to follow the topics over time. The base for this analysis is the number of documents $n$ in a specific topic at a specific point in time. As conversations in online forums move fast, I use years and quarters as my metric for time. This allows for sufficient accuracy, without losing sight of the big picture. The amount of documents in the discussion forums vary over time. Since the object of analysis in the study is to examine proportions of topics, or discourses, mainly related to each other, it is prudent to

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76 Nelson.
account for this instability. Topic modeling already brings up more topics during busy times than quiet ones, because when there are more word combinations, there usually also is more word clusters. In order to facilitate topic comparisons during quieter times, a time stabiliser variable $a_{wgt}$ was added. It is calculated by looking at the busiest time in the forums, and for that point in time the $a_{wgt}$ of 1. Other points of time were then added an $a_{wgt}$ that is in proportion to the difference of posting activity. For instance, if at time x there would be 10 documents, and time y 5 documents, y would get $a_{wgt}$ of $10 / 5 = 2$.

Yet one more factor was considered in the analysis: Because MALLET produces an equal amount of documents for each topic, but not all topics are created equal in explanatory power, the percentage of how big part the topic is of a specific document $t$ was used.

This means that the weight of a topic in a specific point of time $w$ can be formulated as

$$w = n \cdot \frac{d}{d_{sum}} \cdot a_{wgt} \cdot t$$

Dirichlet variables are widely used in topic modeling, but there is no standard approach to how temporality is depicted with topic modeling.\textsuperscript{78} This is why the variables described above were developed for use in this study.

There does not exist a common measurement on assessing the qualitative relevance or strength of a topic. Because they are natural language word-clusters, no algorithm can, again, qualitatively, tell us what the words mean or what is relevant. Topic modeling must then be always accompanied by strong knowledge of the source material.

Several methods of validation were used in this study. These methods can be divided into internal validation and external validation. Internal validation methods include testing for coherence in top words, i.e. whether they make sense in the light of the author’s knowledge on the subject. This preliminary method of validation was supported by reading the top 20 documents of each topic. External validation methods mean using external sources to verify events or concepts in topics. In this study, three main sources of external validation are used: Andrew Groen’s popular history of the first five years of EVE, Empires of EVE: A History of the Great Wars of EVE Online\(^79\), the True Stories from the First Decade mentioned earlier, and different sources of EVE Media – most notably EVE News 24\(^80\), The Mittani\(^81\) and Crossing Zebras\(^82\).

Both of these methods were exclusive – that is, topics that failed either test were dropped, instead of the model being fitted to accommodate them. This was done because the source material yielded a sufficient proportion of usable topics, so sacrificing accuracy to

achieve coverage was not needed. Choosing and validating topics is an iterative, back-and-forth process.\textsuperscript{83,84}

\textsuperscript{83} Evans.
\textsuperscript{84} Eranti, Veikko; Kukkonen, Anna; Ylä-Anttila, Tuukka (2015): "Topic Modeling the Global Climate Policy Debate", International Conference on Computational Social Science, poster session.
5. Analysis II: The discourse
5.1 To be

In this chapter, I use grouped topics to analyze what it means to exist in EVE Online. I do this using three groups of topics – or meta-topics – war, economy, and Goonswarm. These meta-topics represent the different ways of operating inside EVE Online. They are, in essence, what people actually do when they start the game client and log in. Thus, with these topic groups, it is possible to explain the part of EVE’s public sphere related to being a citizen of EVE.

As I wrote in chapter 3.5, the activity in EVE can be categorized into three groups: gaming, metagaming and postgaming. All topics used in this topic model were categorized into one of these groups. The meta-topics presented earlier all contain topics from each of these modes. For instance, topic 53, polity structure, belongs to the meta-topic governance, and the discursive mode postgaming.

*Warfare* encompasses topics which have to do with ship-to-ship combat, *trade* includes economic activity from mining to piracy to ponzi schemes. The last of these meta-topics, Goonswarm, I use to describe the primary social activity in EVE – belonging in an alliance and working together with other players.

The nature of the source material as discussion forum has a great effect on these topics. Topics are public speech about the activities in question. This means that, for instance, the topic Goonswarm does not include topics concerning living as a member of an alliance, but a rather significant amount of disparaging speech about them, or that economy topics are rarely concerned with the practicalities of mineral trade, rather than speech of new enterprises or complaints of piracy.
I will go over these meta-topics, introducing a single key topic from each of them, and then go over them in general. The validation process described later has been done with each single topic belonging to the topic group. For more information on topic validation, see the chapter *Methods and materials*.

These groups of topics serve as a backdrop or a reality check to the topics oriented more towards post-gaming. By comparing the relative intensities of topics that represent, essentially, gaming, to topics that are more concerned with governing the game world, we can compare the two and draw some conclusions on what people discussing EVE deem important.

### 5.1.1 War

Out of all the topic groups presented in this thesis, *war* is probably the most obvious in the sense that it is, for many, the primary method of existing in EVE, and certainly the most well-known in public. Wars between coalitions are what news outlets outside of the EVE civilization publicize, not variations in mineral prices. It is because of this that it would be dishonest to speak of EVE without speaking of war.

Many of the topics seem, at first sight, rather hard to understand. While in using topic modeling it is generally preferred that the top words in a topic are easily recognizable, that must be understood in the subcultural context of EVE. EVE includes such a variety of being and acting, institutions that do not exist outside of the social world, and, in general, a register that is rather cynical in its *realpolitik*
approach to diplomacy and government – not to mention the names of alliances and famous citizens. It is because of this that special care has been used in validating the topics. One cannot hope to accurately portray these topics without careful knowledge of their contents. Internal validation was done in two phases – first, a rough culling of topics was done based on the most common words exhibited in the topics and they were grouped into preliminary thematical groups. Then, of these topics which fit in with the thematical groups, top 20 documents were read and qualitatively assessed. If the documents matched the thematical grouping, the topic was included in the final model. If not, it was abandoned. To the model’s benefit it must be said that of 35 topics chosen to the second phase, only 6 were "not what they seemed" based on the top 20 words in the topic in question. Thus, the final tally of topics included in the model is 29. They are further divided into groups of topics to facilitate analysis.

The purpose of examining some topics is not to provide an authoritative close reading of, for instance, EVE civilization’s relationship with the media, but rather pry open the topic model and paint a qualitative landscape of a specific topic. Topics are tools for analysis, but more than that, tools for the reader to gain insight into how the topics are formed and validated.

Table 1: Topics in the topic group War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic ID</th>
<th>Weight (w)</th>
<th>Top 20 words</th>
<th>Topic label</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1,15</td>
<td>pos system tower dread fleet defend attack reinforc sov capit put day kill station time pose fuel moon larg forc</td>
<td>Fleet combat</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>2,01</td>
<td>fight fun good smack respect side battl great time engag nice win number lot local bring fleet alway fought pilot</td>
<td>War stories</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>0,60</td>
<td>stand blue reset allianc list insurg red shoot nap darth neutral solo inarg everyon</td>
<td>Cold wars</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The topics belonging to this topic group can be seen in Table 1. The table contains the topic number (Topic ID) in the topic model, the topic weight (w), top 20 words in each topic, the label assigned to each topic and whether the topic is about the discursive mode (D) gaming (G), metagaming (M) or postgaming (P).

An important issue with speaking about war in EVE with this source material is that the forum used is a forum for the politics of EVE. Thus, it only contains what citizens of EVE consider to be political speech related to war. It makes sense that there are no technical topics related to how different types of ships or weapons work. As can be seen from table 1, the only topic in the topic group war related to actual combat is topic number 12, fleet combat. It is probable that this specific type of combat in EVE ended up in this discussion forum because it is by its nature related to alliances and corporations. An individual is not a fleet, no matter how formidable their ship, and fleet combat is the primary method of alliances engaging in war. One-on-one battles are very rare when both sides can field thousands of pilots. Two topics, 73 and 80 are speech about war. They are named differently for their contents – war stories refers to reports and arguments of skirmishes around EVE. They are often stories of wins and losses, tactics, humiliations and heroism. For instance:

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85 This was left outside the scope of this analysis because of the difficulty in categorizing it – the topic has strong elements of all these discursive modes.
86 And indeed the consideration of the moderators of the EVE forums as well – as they move discussions considered off topic to other forums.
"After only a short bit the Thanatos undocked and warped to the same safespot it had been at only a few minutes before. The logistics crew had docked and all 13 active Shroud of Darkness members who were online were ready for action. Part of the gang was already near by the Thanatos while the majority formed up in Litom to head out for the kill. NightHawk took the gang out and headed for YKE4-3 to wait for orders to jump in.

[...]

Finally, when the Thanatos was was down to structure, Sylia called it, "All damage on the Thanatos, take that F***er down." Within 60 seconds the Thanatos was dead. By this point the enemy gang had been able to regroup and SOD pilots were going down.

Even LV had shown up, ever so late, to try and halt SOD's assault. At the end the order to warp out and dock up was given as SOD was ridiculously outnumbered. SOD did not hold the field at the end, but the victory was phenomenal none the less."87

87 CAOD, 446266. The number is the document’s unique identifier.
Figure 2: Topic group war occurrence over time, years and quarters. The y-axis denotes the combined \( w \) of topics in the topic group.

The other topic about war, histories of war is responsible for the peaks of activity in 2007 and early 2008. It includes one of the most important conflicts in EVE, the Great War of EVE, which was certainly the biggest war at the time and an event that shook the power relations between alliances in EVE.

Goonswarm, or the RedSwarm Federation\(^{88}\), which their alliance of alliances was called, were retaliating against the Band of Brothers (BoB), who had invaded their space in the first great war. The war was in a stalemate, with RedSwarm unable to break BoB’s defenses in their home region, Delve. The second great war was also the site of one of EVE’s most well-known and notorious acts of metagaming, noted even by mainstream press at the time. It involved a high-ranking leader of Band of Brothers defecting to Goonswarm, resulting

\(^{88}\) Consisting of Goonswarm, Red Alliance and TauCeti Federation.
in massive material losses via theft, and the disbanding of the Band of Brothers -alliance. The alliance was disbanded on name only, but it had repercussions in the EVE universe. When the BoB was disbanded, all their defensive positions immediately went offline, having no owner or orders on who to protect and who to shoot. Afterwards, Goonswarm humiliated them by claiming ownership of their alliance name. Now-former BoB had to reform themselves slowly as KenZoku. Goons and their allies quickly got the upper hand and conquered most of Delve, since the static defence is the main element which slows down wars of conquest. Even after their reformation as KenZoku, the alliance former known as BoB would never regain even a fraction of the assets or space they once had, and their demoralized membership scattered into other alliances in EVE.

Interestingly, even though qualitative validation from the documents reveals that the topic 80 has a large concentration of documents dealing with the Great War, the top words in the topic do not include participants of the war, but rather more general words on war and time. This can be explained with the fact that the war went on for a long time, much longer than wars usually had done in EVE. It is because of that the discussion has an element of looking back in time, reflecting on the conflict’s past weeks and months. Take for instance this post from the first activity peak:

"in 47 days bob have:

89 The effect is similar to that of a completely computerized security system going suddenly offline and unlocking all doors at the same time.
90 For a more detailed account of the two great wars, see Groen.
-invaded and secured an undefended omist, installing tenants who have now been removed and dispatched back to empire
-lost lots and lots of pos
-lost a titan
-been replaced by the MC as the alliance people respect for pvp ability
-begun fitting t1 and named mods instead of faction loot (:( when looting their wrecks now)
-lost their most loyal pets when they evicted them from fountain

So far so good hmmm? Looks like the bob bbq will be a celebration for the ages. My main observation is how the demise of bob as a terrifying force occurred around the same time they allowed large amounts of shinra into their numbers.”91

In general the topic group is perhaps less prevalent than the violent nature of EVEs politics might lead one to presume. While some of this is explained by the fact that a part of the discussion about war would happen outside of the forum, this analysis seems to indicate that war is something that one does, and speech of it is channeled mainly into diplomacy.

5.1.2 Economy

The economy of EVE is a topic that has interested economists in the recent years.92 To simplify, this is because EVE is primarily a player-driven economy with complete transparency - to the researcher, not

91 CAOD, 553294.
the citizen of EVE. Being a player-driven economy means that most of
the products circulating in New Eden are made with player-mined
minerals from moons, which are then transported to market hubs and
sold to industrialists, who then in turn manufacture ships, guns,
weapons and space stations and, in turn, sell them to the highest
bidder.\textsuperscript{93} CCP is involved in creating money and materials in the
game via mechanisms called \textit{faucets}, such as free ships for new
players, rewards for completing predetermined missions. The \textit{faucets}
are balanced by \textit{sinks}, which represent the designed entropy of the
world, such as players quitting the game, spaceships getting
destroyed or using in-game currency to pay for EVE’s monthly fee.\textsuperscript{94}

Table 2: Topics in topic group \textit{Economy}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic ID</th>
<th>Weight (w)</th>
<th>Top 20 words</th>
<th>Topic label</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>isk pay money buy billion sell mil cost million offer give month work time price scam paid day week send</td>
<td>Banking and ponzi schemes</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>mine miner ore ship price market sell product build industri profit haul trade system hauler buy suppli empir refin veldspar</td>
<td>Markets, mining, industry</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>iss outpost share station neutral build count shareholder trust tbb public built issn ipo system invest market butter charter investor</td>
<td>Initial public offering</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>corpor work good goal pilot oper provid time mani success interest organ univers great member futur howev group high becom</td>
<td>Service economy</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{93} This is naturally a gross oversimplification of the system -
\textsuperscript{94} Lehdonvirta and Castronova, 212.
Table 2 lists the topics in the *economy* topic group. Three out of four topics are above the median dirichlet value for topics in this study – which means they are quite prevalent topics which make up a significant share of the data. It is notable that among this group, the aspects most clearly associated with playing the economy game in EVE – that is, mining, manufacturing and even playing the markets – are all concentrated on one topic, topic 42. The other two strong topics in this group, 41 and 20, deal with entirely player-generated institutions.

Topic 41, banking and ponzi schemes, includes activity in EVE’s player-driven financial sector. While the game system provides a bank account, it does not include interest, and especially in the first years of the game banks started operating, promising varying amounts of interest. Sometimes these banks were ponzi schemes, sometimes scams (with the banker taking everyone’s money and vanishing), and occasionally even honest entrepreneurs using the capital gained to work the EVE markets. The following is an example of a loan scheme:

"the BMBE is now accepting t2 BPO’s as security for loans.  
*In combination with this, two new loan types have been introduced as well, with a decreased interest.*

*This was revealed in the (#2 - 2006.03) BMBE Shareholder Report yesterday.*

*In that short timespan, interest has already been nearly alarming.*

*A handful of people have already expressed interest in taking out a 50B ISK loan (the maximum the BMBE is currently able to handle).*
While this looks as a potential for lending 250B ISK to clients for the BMBE, it is actually not.

The reason being that, as it turns out, all of those people are interested in the same ongoing auction. So no, the BMBE is not losing out on business, due to only having a working capital of 50B ISK. As in the end, only one of those potential clients will actually be needing the 50B loan.

Topic 20, service economy, includes citizens of EVE selling their services to others. Sometimes these are ventures that are focused on skills needed in the metagame: There are multiple political and communications consulting firms offering their services to alliances and power blocs. Several graphic design studios also offer their services. This advertisement is a typical service economy document start:

"Red Sun Industries, an all-purpose conglomerate based in Amarr and Gallentean space, announced its incorporation today. Providing support services for newer pilots, the organization also has extensive mining operations, salvage operations, and offers public relations and graphic design services for corporations and individuals.

"Red Sun Industries offers a wide variety of products and services to the marketplace. We are dedicated to the concept of an honest and straightforward organization with low tax but a high level of support and assistance. Those interested in contracting our services, or

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95 CAOD, 324189.
applying to join this highly upwards-mobile organization, are encouraged to EVEMail Marcus Dreddlin.\textsuperscript{96}

Figure 3: Topic group economy occurrence over time, years and quarters. The y-axis denotes the combined $w$ of topics in the topic group.

An interesting development can be seen in Figure 3, when the topic group activity plummets in mid-2007. Two factors can be found to potentially explain this. Before 2007, one of EVE’s major powers was the Ascendant Frontier, which was the wealthiest alliance at the time and whose manufacturing prowess was without peer. In 2006, however, their former allies the Band of Brothers attacked their territory and, in all meaningful senses of the word, utterly destroyed them. The other factor is the second great war, which was discussed

\textsuperscript{96} CAOD, 514145.
in the previous sub-chapter. Even though that topic’s activity begins after the drop in economy activity, the war itself started in 2007. It is plausible that discussing peacetime endeavors such as mining or ponzi schemes gave way to other topics, more related to the multi-alliance conflict raging in the south of New Eden.

5.1.3 Goonswarm

This topic deals with Goonswarm (GS, or goons). Goonswarm is arguably the most well-known alliance in the game, and for the last five years has been at the vanguard of the most powerful coalition in EVE, the Clusterfuck Coalition (CFC).\footnote{Later rebranding as the Imperium.} Goonswarm is used in this thesis to explore the primary way of existing in the EVE political sphere, that is, belonging to an alliance.\footnote{It is of course possible to participate in EVE without being a member. However, alliance membership allows participation in the diplomacy metagame and wars, which are large parts of EVE life and in which it is difficult to partake while independent or a member of a nonaligned, small corporation.} Much of Goonswarm’s existence during the years covered by the source material is defined by their conflict with the Band of Brothers (BoB).\footnote{Sometimes GBC, for Greater BoB Coalition, is used instead, as technically the conflicts did not involve only Goonswarm and BoB, rather than coalitions headed by these two alliances supported by others. Goonswarm’s coalition at this time is called the RedSwarm Alliance, for the Goons’ alliance with EVE’s Russian alliances.} GS and BoB are the top alliances to make appearances in topics (8 and 7 topics, respectively). For this topic group only topics that deal primarily with goons were chosen. Left out were topics that are only tangentially related to Goonswarm, such as recruitment, where they are mentioned because of their tendency to scam potential recruits, as they almost exclusively recruit from outside the EVE community.
Table 3: Topics in topic group *Goonswarm*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic ID</th>
<th>Weight (w)</th>
<th>Top 20 words</th>
<th>Topic label</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,09</td>
<td>goon goonswarm goonfleet caod bob gooni troll general spam stop pretti actual coad time poster someth mittani fail terribl bee</td>
<td>General discussion</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>0,29</td>
<td>ding bismaru usn vuk rawr karttoon lau ambit shinma free caod cvn mitten moll phreez god gay heath love mittani</td>
<td>GS hate</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>1,18</td>
<td>bob coalit war pet allianc alli space fight goon side win lose attack delv month region titan friend lot north</td>
<td>GS / BoB war</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>0,58</td>
<td>goon delv allianc goonswarm kenne sov space fail bob kenzoku disband mittani caod gooni troll lose terribl aaa lost tower</td>
<td>GS disbands BoB</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0,41</td>
<td>tcf gbc pet fail exe kill bob tri goon cap caod goodfella stop cippalippus max titan stupid fleet aaa unl</td>
<td>GS wars</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The combined $w$ of the topic group is 3.55. This is an impressive proportion for discussion essentially on one group in EVE.

Why choose to speak of Goonswarm, and not for example the Band of Brothers? The choice is both quantitative and qualitative. Based on sheer explanatory power, the topics dealing with goons are by far the most important of all alliances – nearly all appear in only one or two topics, and even the second most profilic alliance does not reach the topic numbers of Goonswarm.

Qualitatively speaking, Goonswarm is an interesting outsider in the EVE community. It originates from outside of EVE, and it is known for acting in a manner that is not acceptable according to the social norms of EVE.

Goonswarm has been one of the fixtures of EVE, both because of their rags-to-riches origin story, but also because of their often abrasive and
aggressive behavior as well. They have been involved in most of EVE’s major conflicts, and they are widely considered to have been one of the most successful innovators in the metagame. They, for instance, popularized the use of organized spy and diplomatic operations. For these, they are often hated.100 Especially in EVE’s early years, use of such “cloak-and-dagger” strategies was considered dishonorable and despicable. It is no surprise, then, that when Goonswarm toppled one of the then-largest empires, the Band of Brothers, by using a defector in the latter’s leadership to actually disband101 the BoB, their victory wasn’t exactly celebrated by the community at large. Goonswarm is also one of a few major players to originate from outside of EVE as the common denominator of its members are the forums of an online humor site called Something Awful.102 This is significant - much of their success comes from being able to recruit new recruits not from the limited pool of present EVE citizens, but rather expand the citizen pool from outside of the current user base. Because the players are socialized into EVE culture primarily through the lens of their own alliance, they are both loyal and distrusted. This is because they more often than not do not share the same experience other new pilots have, and are, rather, primarily members of Goonswarm, and secondarily members of the EVE community at large.

In many ways, Goonswarm acts in ways one is not allowed to act in the EVE community, but while they do so, they are the most

100 “The only good goon is a dead goon” is not an unusual phrase in the discussions. One topic is mostly dedicated to hating goons and especially their longtime leader, the Mittani.
101 Disbanding means that the alliance as a construct does not exist any more - think of a large company with tens of subsidiaries, with the mother company suddenly just ceasing to exist.
successful group in the assumed goals of the Kiplingesque *Great Game of EVE*\textsuperscript{103}. Thus, their refusal to participate in the culture leads to them claiming dominance of it. This seemingly dichotomous situation leads to Goonswarm being at a breaking point in EVE, and thus giving a clearer sight into what it is to be in an alliance, and what it is to be in EVE.

![Figure 4: Topic group goonswarm occurrence over time, years and quarters. The y-axis denotes the combined $w$ of topics in the topic group.](image)

Figure 4 shows the activity in the topic group. Activity starts in the end of 2006 – this is to be expected, because Goonswarm entered the public consciousness of EVE around that time, being a minor alliance before that. Activity is mostly high during the Great War, with the

\textsuperscript{103} The Great Game refers to the Anglo-Russian strategical and political conflict and machinations for the control of Central Asia from the 19th century forwards. It was popularized in the Rudyard Kipling novel *Kim*. 
exception of a dip in mid-2008. That is in line with the other three meta-topics discussed thus far. This indicates that the dip tells of general diminished activity, rather than anything related specifically to goons.

5.2 To govern

The biggest meta-topic created in this study is the topic of governance. Studying this topic, we can attempt to verify or dispute Péturssón’s claim of the increasingly complex nature of EVE as a civilization. Indeed, it seems that citizens of EVE are very concerned with their Governance, in this work, includes a wide variety of topics related to the public sphere in EVE. The topics range from ones focused on media outlets, to managing the corporations and alliances people operate in, to discussions on implementing socialism or full communism inside their groups. Because of the variety of topics and their significance to this work, I will go into detail on more than one of them: Topic 38, media, deals with one sector resulting from the division of labor within the business of governance in EVE. Topic 68, communism, describes how alliances in eve take up ideologies and discourses from outside eve but use them creatively for different in-game purposes. Topic 53, polity structure, is about post-gaming - large structural societal issues of EVE

Governance, in this case, refers to ways of existing in EVE that are usually either markers of an existing public sphere (such as topics on media or the political system), are related to alliance politics in a not obviously violent manner (diplomacy, treaties, espionage, geopolitics)
or refer to the governance of EVE (methods of government such as communism, corporation management).

Table 4: Topics in the topic group *Governance*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic ID</th>
<th>Weight (w)</th>
<th>Top 20 words</th>
<th>Topic label</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>allianc point mani chang big play differ idea problem number someth reason major power actual everyon lot work agre time</td>
<td>Polity structure</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>corp member corpor join ceo work leav time start left run form mani activ month part found good week creat</td>
<td>Communism</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>neutral friend shoot attack space stand pilot member nap alli hostil diplomat fire enemi war polici contact shot allianc action</td>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>corp alt member trust account steal spi stuff charact leav asset kick access told back theft ceo stole someon anyth</td>
<td>Ethics of war</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>allianc region space claim control area empir system live territori corp fountain npc hold defend close home tri curs map</td>
<td>Future of governance</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>war declar corp empir allianc fight dec hour surrend end pay week target wardec alt involv retract start cost corpor</td>
<td>War declarations</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>council vote free law peac polit state call govern world nation word order presid meet follow freedom repres unit parti</td>
<td>World government</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>corp ceo share vote corpor role member offic access director give manag hangar creat wallet skill executor hanger titl chang</td>
<td>Corp management</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>report news stori write inform articl battl press event interest releas bias isd good sourc interview guardian side week involv</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>allianc aaa pet space russian atlas legion blue solar red fleet moon sov sys cow goon stain pandem caod pretti</td>
<td>Future of alliance system</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>north iron razor south allianc northern tri rizr sparta deklein fla nap fatal pure fred friend branch nfc fade venal</td>
<td>Geopolitics</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.1 Topic 38: Media

Top words: report news stori write inform articl battl press event interest releas bias isd good sourc interview guardian side week involv

This topic deals with the EVE community’s media sector. EVE hosts many media outlets, some of which are official. EVE’s volunteer corps, the ISD, includes a media wing, ISD-IC (IC standing for intergalactic correspondents). The dirichlet score of the topic is 0,7 – thus it is the ninth most relevant topic in the group governance. While the topic is not among the topics holding most explanatory power quantitatively speaking, it is qualitatively an important topic in explaining the institutions of EVE.

Figure 5: Topic media occurrence over time, years and quarters. The y-axis denotes the \( w \) of the topic.

The top words of this topic are very explanatory of its contents. A few of the words are of special interest: guardian refers to the most
profic news organization at the time in EVE history, EVE Guardian. There is also a strong presence of words relating to journalistic integrity – *bias, side, source*. This was omnipresent in the source material. Several of the close-read documents were primarily about journalistic integrity and the rules for journalists to ensure unbiased, neutral reporting. Documents describing the founding of new publishing houses or newspapers also indicated that they are disappointed in the current state of media in EVE. Accusations of bias are usually related to inter-alliance conflicts or wars and lack of coverage of specific events. Interestingly, as CCP bias is such a common theme in alliance politics, it does not seem like the official media outlet ISD-IC is especially strongly represented in the complaints – other established media such as the EVE Guardian are criticized for these issues as well. This discussion of ethics includes attempts to formulate a code of conduct for EVE journalists, but also statements made by media about their rules for journalists sometimes to ensure their name is not tarnished by scandals related to spies or journalists selling information or public relations to a party in a conflict they cover. Generally, the population – excluding journalists – seems to take a cynical view on their impartiality. Besides spying, another reason, this time from the journalist’s side, to discuss due process in media can be found in the words *battl(e)* and *event*. Some

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104 More recently, other news outlets such as *TheMittani.com* and *EVE24* have gained prominence within the community.
105 See documents 38387, 148700
106 In this topic: CAOD, 1087189
107 CAOD, 1118307 and CAOD, 1305373
newspapers wish to cover wars and battles by observing them in the battlefield. This is difficult, because player-controlled space\textsuperscript{108} is very unsafe, virtually entirely claimed by some alliance or other. More often than not these alliances follow a policy of NBSI or \textit{not blue? shoot it}, which means that stray journalists are usually killed on sight.\textsuperscript{109} Multiple attempts to grant journalists protection exist in the source material, but they are virtually always met with derision and cynicism. The only protected journalists are ISD-IC volunteers whom it is forbidden by CCP to kill.

5.2.2 Topic 68: Communism

To understand this topic, several key facts must be understood about the corporations and alliances of EVE. These groups are, of course, channels of co-operation and ways to exist mutually in EVE. They are also methods of protection, and ways of play via warfare. They are also technological constructs: Corporations and alliances enable shared messaging, easier friend-or-foe identification in combat, shared resources and even shared ownership of space. They are also prone to scamming their members, or falling victims to scams by their members. As noted elsewhere in this study, many wars have been won simply by infiltrating an alliance and then robbing all their

\textsuperscript{108}As opposed to safe, CCP-enforced space.

\textsuperscript{109}Blue in this case refers to the color of one’s name in the EVE game client. Allies’ names are written in blue, enemies in red. The vast majority of EVE alliances employ NBSI, although some do use NRDS, or \textit{not red? don’t shoot}, which grants neutral strangers some degree of protection.
communal property and disbanding the entire alliance, leaving its social and technical framework in shambles.

Administration and governance, both social and technical, of these entities is therefore of utmost importance to their very survival. This is why, in general, the topic family of corporation / alliance administration exists. As corporation membership is routinely in the hundreds and sometimes thousands (or even over ten thousand, in extreme cases) and alliances of corporations may boast tens of thousands of members, mode of government is not a trivial task.

A sort of a default model of governance in online games, and also in EVE, is a despotic democracy or oligarchy – a leader or a cadre of leaders is more or less a total ruler of the community. However, as it is rare for membership of the group to be mandatory, it is quite easy for members to simply leave if the leadership steps over a line in their governance. The deeper the commitment socially and materially, the more difficult it is to leave. Bullying or abuse of power in online communities is not uncommon.

In EVE, the term corporation means exactly that – the founder of the corporation is CEO and sole owner. They may distribute shares among other members, or assign them roles in the corporation. If a person holds more than 50% of the shares, they can do as they please. If not, votes are held. This method of dividing power obviously makes EVE a working platform for the oligarchies found in many online games. It also allows for other, more complex and ambitious methods of governance.

This topic is about EVE’s rich history in social experimentation:
Sometimes pragmatic, sometimes idealistic, leaders and communities
in EVE have tried many utopian systems of government. One of the first (and most well-known) alliances, Taggart Transdimensional, was extremely libertarian. A more widely adopted system of government is communism in its different forms.

In documents contained in this topic, people discuss the merits and drawbacks of socialist policy ranging from full communism with a 100% tax rate to a stalinist dictatorship to welfare state socialism combined with a basic income:

"I think if you are a serious about [holding space] then the only way to run a corp is through communism. Sharing your profits and sharing your losses."

and

"If you cannot trust your members that they work for the best interest of the corp and their goal, you have no place amongst the top corps. If you always suspect that your corp members only want to leech good stuff, then you can’t be really amongst the best corps."

An important issue of understanding the allure of communism in EVE is understanding how large-scale warfare works. EVE is known for its huge battles where hundreds or thousands of players, each with their own ships, battle each other, or the huge amounts of ships destroyed and thus property lost during these battles. Unlike conflicts in the physical world, people in EVE don’t need to stick around, and neither do they die. It is of vital importance for the alliances to ensure that

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110 Groen, 32.
111 CAOD, 712306.
their fleets attract enough alliance members flying just the right kind of ships. Maintaining morale is extremely important when your soldiers can just walk away at any given time. It is much easier justifying giving your time to fight virtual space wars when you don’t need to worry about making enough virtual space money to buy said ship and its replacement when it is eventually destroyed. Alliances thus tend to fund activities they feel are important, such as fleet combat. This can take many forms from subsidizing or giving away ships to a form of basic income to all their members. Communist systems in EVE can thus be seen as legitimators of the polity in a universe where citizenship is opt-in. This is emphasized in this “recipe” for corporation success:

"So for the optimal corp or alliance setup you will have to use a large spoon of Communism, Feudalism, and Democracy each. Add a pinch of Fanaticism in there.

Fanaticism - The corp must have a common goal that everyone ascribe to. This will band them together and give them something to work for.
Communism - All kids must learn to share. If they don’t share the sand none will have fun. Let members give a part and keep a part. Let them give according to their specialty and capability. Either assign activity points or quotas to be filled.
Feudalism - Members swear fealty to the King (CEO) and in turn the CEO swears fealty to the alliance (Emperor). The return is protection and support to the members.
Democracy - Members must have a voice on important corp matters. Important issues such as war deCS or selling/buying high value assets (& etc) should have a vote.”

Figure 6: Topic communism occurrence over time, years and quarters. The y-axis denotes the w of the topic.

Figure 6 shows the topic occurrence over time in the dataset. The topic does become relevant at least yearly with the exception of 2009, with the peak being the end of 2003 – but with a more consistent peak in the latter half of 2006 and again rising significance in 2010-2011. The decline of the topic in late 2008 through 2010 can possibly be explained with two factors. As explained earlier, communism can be seen as a way to legitimize the regimes of EVE. The time prior to 2009 can be seen as the first age of EVE\textsuperscript{113} – a time when the general polity structure formed, alliances and coalitions found form and the systems of trade and industry developed. As these institutions established

\textsuperscript{112} CAOD, 421349

\textsuperscript{113} Groen, 6.
themselves, their conflicts grew, and with that, their need for manpower. Nearly always the low availability of pilots was a greater hinderance than lack of material resources. Figuring out ways to attract pilots and legitimize the alliance as an institution of power are thus vital to an alliance’s strength. After 2008, the first Great War of EVE ended, however, and it is not inconceivable to think that after years of resource-intensive warfare alliances had mostly either found a system of government, or it became less of an issue because there was less pressure on the citizenry to participate in time-consuming wars.

This topic is the second most prevalent of the topic group governance, behind polity structure. This is in part because the topic in a way combines the polity development common in the source material and corporate / alliance optimization in the metagaming sense. This is clearly visible in the documents – some are content in utilizing communism as to be more efficient and formidable as group, with full communism being the ultimate method of pooling resources. It is interesting that in these cases the fact that the self is supplanted by the corporation or alliance as a symbol of association and accomplishment is almost unquestioned.

5.2.3 Topic 53: Polity structure
Top words: allianc point mani chang big play differ idea problem number someth reason major power actual everyon lot work agre time

This is by no means the only way alliances attract players – notably Goonswarm had a strong culture both in the alliance and in relation to other powers in EVE.
This topic probably epitomizes what I speak about in this thesis when I speak about the polity structure and post-gaming in EVE. This topic deals with large structural issues in the EVE polity. The issues in this topic range from the consolidation of smaller corporations and alliances into large entities consisting of thousands of players, discussions on how these entities die or if it is even possible to a frequent policy proposal for a functioning alliance system in place of an anarchy curtailed by the game developers’ rules. The topic words reflect this – while they may not be particularly enlightening in their own right, they support the argument of the topic being about large scale political systems, with words such as *alliance, major, power, idea, problem, big.*

A key concept in this topic is reflected by the word *play.* There is an important divide on how the EVE community sees the increasing consolidation of neutral space into the hands of large alliances. In some documents heated arguments are held regarding whether it will even be possible to unseat the major powers because of the power they have accumulated.\(^\text{115}\) This reveals a divide in the community. Some prefer a space where they can play and feel significant, to make a fortune, and carve a name for themselves. This is as quintessential a fantasy as can be – one games commonly pander to. In a complaint, one person said the the large alliances and tactics they employ in warfare *"makes a single person feel utterly useless."*\(^\text{116}\) This sense of powerlessness is to be expected in a situation where tens or even

\(^{115}\) CAOD, 389952. Ironically some documents were from 2006, just before the first two great wars of EVE and subsequent upheavals in the alliance structures.

\(^{116}\) Ibid.
hundreds of thousands of people are competing for the same things that make up the fantasy.

This sentiment is not uncommon in the messages. It suggests a fear of the loss of agency among these posters – the bigger the player-made organizations are, the less a single person matters. A relative of this argument is the criticism of diplomacy and non-aggression pacts (NAPs) in particular. If EVE is a game, the thinking goes, then NAPs diminish the content available by making fighting others more difficult as power is consolidated and the number of targets is less.

Some people see this conflict differently. They see organizations in EVE more like their physical-world counterparts, and embrace the fact that it changes the game. The speech has a slightly more cynical tone:

"So lets look at why people blob, why the big guys together and how you can address it. This game works pretty much like reality. You don't see countries going around and beating the **** out of each other for ****s and giggles. Wars expend money and political capital. It only makes sense to band together in order to achieve collective goals." 117

This statement is of course an exaggeration – as wars are the main content for many players, large alliances included, they do in fact "beat the **** out of each other for ****s and giggles”. Still, they usually try to win, often by any means necessary, including hacking,

117 CAOD, 1398545. To Blob means banding up in large groups either combat or politics.
spies, defections and theft, not just by superior military numbers and honorable\textsuperscript{118} fleet to fleet combat.

![Graph of topic occurrence over time](image)

**Figure 7:** Topic *polity structure* occurrence over time, years and quarters. The y-axis denotes the $w$ of the topic.

This topic is the largest of the governance topic group, with a weight of 3.9. The topic is clearly above the topic group average at nearly any given time, and maintains popularity through the study period.

### 5.3 The big picture

In the previous sections I have examined the political discourse of EVE online, looking at meta-topics depicting the *act* of being a citizen

\textsuperscript{118} E-honor alaviite
of EVE as well as topics discussing the governance of EVE. In this final sub-chapter, I will gather these different discourses and take a step back to look at the big picture these paint of EVE’s discursive landscape.

The three discursive modes three groups are used to relate to Pétúrssón’s thesis on the increasing complexity of the EVE civilization. Relative proportions of metagaming and postgaming modes should be pronounced, and preferably grow their proportion from the beginning of EVE – and thus the period covered by the source material. Additionally, special interest may be put on the role of postgaming – as it is in certain respects divorced from the gameplay of EVE, the ways its proportion moves with respect to external stimuli, such as wars, is relevant.

Figure 8: Discursive modes over time, years and quarters. The y axis shows the combined $w$ of the topics they contain.
Figure 8 shows the discursive modes arranged over time. Metagaming is by far the most popular mode – but for two exceptions, it is consistently at the top. Gaming is the least popular, but there are a few instances when its intensity spikes. Postgaming does increasingly well in 2005-2006 but its significance drops after that, only to recover towards the end of the observation period, along with others.

Perhaps the most interesting time period for this analysis is looking at the time when the second great war occurred. The previously examined topic, second great war, that is absent from this picture, spikes almost exclusively in 2009. The war itself had in some forms started in earnest in early 2007. Comparing the timeline of that war to the development of these discursive modes, it is clear that both meta- and postgaming go into steep decline with gaming starting a steep rise just as the war is intensifying. Metagaming recovers, but postgaming doesn’t. This would seem to indicate that a defining event in EVE does impact its discursive world rather dramatically. Speech not directly related to playing the game gives way first to gaming. The recovery of metagaming is not surprising, as it is the primary mode of speech in the source material, as well as an important feature of fighting wars in EVE. In fact, after the first spike of activity, the significance of gaming drops with metagaming getting an ever bigger role in the conversation.
Figure 9: Linear trends of the w of discursive modes over time by year and quarter.

Figure 9 shows the linear trendlines of different discursive modes over time. Looking at them, the dominance of metagaming is again pronounced. While postgaming is more significant than gaming for most of the time, the lines cross in the latter half of 2009. In general, gaming is the only mode of speech which has an ascending trendline, with meta- and postgaming being both on a downward trend – even though metagaming still keeps its lead, and the trendline of postgaming being nearly flat ($R^2 = 0.00895$). There are a number of possible explanations to this. The change in postgaming is, on average, so slight, that the most probable cause is simply the decline of CAOD and thus its position as the premier site of the EVE polity is lost.\textsuperscript{119}

6. Conclusions

This study had two main objectives: The first was to examine the institutional and discoursive landscape of EVE Online, and follow the potential birth of civil society around it. The second objective was to test and develop the feasibility of use of Latent Dirichlet Allocation with very large datasets in the study of social science history.

This was achieved by approaching the first objective from two points of view – an institutional analysis of the EVE polity, and analysing the discourse on EVE politics. In the latter part, LDA topic modeling was used as a method of quantitative textual analysis on a corpus consisting of discussions in the Corporation, Alliance and Organizations Discussion (CAOD) subforum of EVE. There is a close relation between the methods used in the analysis, and the second research question. If the analysis yields results, the second objective can be considered reached.

The first part of the analysis, a look at social institutions formed by the players in EVE institution was done using a combination of source materials ranging from the discussions analyzed more in depth in the later chapters, to official CCP material regarding their product and a series of journalistic articles examining the workings of EVE. In this analysis, institutions in EVE can be divided into those run primarily by CCP and those run by its customers: EVE players or citizens. CCP in EVE, as opposed to for instance Second Life (which Boelstorff, discussed in the introduction, studied), does not seem to even try to take themselves out of the equation when it comes to governance in
EVE. EVE does have CCP-created institutions and policies that at least on paper hand out the responsibility and power of governance to players, which might function as methods of promoting governmentality, such as the CSM or policies of not interfering with inter-alliance disputes, even when they veer onto possibly illegal territory. Still, they do assert their power without pretense – patches change the natural laws of EVE sometimes gradually and sometimes dramatically.

6.1 The discursive landscape of EVE

The discursive landscape of EVE was examined using LDA topic modeling (of which more later). The resulting topics were then validated using both internal validation methods – that is, testing for the coherence and viability of the top words in a topic, categorizing the topics and comparing the categories and contents to the qualitative analysis of the raw source material that the topic is made of. In external validation, political events from Groen’s History of the Great Empires of EVE was used where possible as well as True Stories from the First Decade and several media outlets covering EVE.

The topics left after this process contained 25 topics, or 25% of the total number of topics in the model. The topics generated by the algorithm generally passed the test of coherence in the top words of the topics.

The amount of topics that should be created remains inconclusive after this study, even though models were built both with 100 and 200 topics. The general trend in LDA at the moment is that the bigger the corpus the larger amount of topics it can support. While that is true, and corpuses of the size used in this study could possibly support perhaps even larger amounts of topics, the question ultimately
remains rooted in the objective of the study as well as work economics. Adding topics increases the amount of validation work exponentially as the coherence of the top words tends to degenerate and the amount of validation required increases. A larger amount of topics of course also allows for a higher degree of granularity within the topics' contents, which may allow certain key topics to emerge without being lost in the noise. When studying large-scale developments in discourse, or discursive landscapes as they are called in this study, a compromise must be reached. If there are less topics than ideal, the accuracy of the analysis suffers, but the risk is the same if there are too many, when the need for validation increases exponentially. The method utilized here, where multiple models are built and compared after preliminary analysis, is likely to stay as the most practical option for the time being, as currently interpreting the model is exclusively a human task. Advances in natural language processing and self-taught neural networks would be needed to proceed computationally with this question. That future is probably not utopian, though, as crude artificial intelligences can already discern certain levels of meaning in text and images.

The topics were grouped in two ways: First, in relation to the ways they relate to being in EVE. In this way the meta-topics of war, economy, Goonswarm and governance were formed. The first three represent different ways of actively existing in EVE, while the last one, as its name implies, is speech of governance of EVE. Topics were also assigned a membership in one of three categories, labeled gaming, metagaming and postgaming. These groups represent the different ways the discussion relates to the societal complexity of the EVE polity, with metagaming and especially postgaming being of larger interest. Postgaming deals with governance of EVE that is not
easily translateable to the objectives of the game, which can be seen as a measure of the "level of polity complexity" as per Óskarsson.

The proportion of postgaming turned out to be higher than gaming, but markedly less than metagaming. It is notable, that postgaming is rather well represented even from the foundational years of EVE. At least using this marker it is not possible to determine that the EVE polity is developing towards more complexity in a linear manner, even though the high prevalence of postgaming comined with metagaming do not speak against that either. It must be noted that this way of analyzing said complexity does not take into account a qualitative increase in the complexity of politics in EVE – just the proportion of the discussion. If this question were to be answered thoroughly, additional research into the sites of EVE politics outside of CAOD would have to be done. The increasing prevalence of such sites most likely explains the drop in all the categories – a conclusion supported by James 315.

Looking at the discursive landscape, it seems clear that EVE is not "just" a game. Both metagaming and postgaming include a degree of sophistication in the governance and inter-alliance relation. EVE can be seen as a polity with relatively complex governmental and non-governmental institutions – such as the media and CSM. This being said, it must be remembered that the vast majority of people in EVE do not participate in forum discussions, and for a great many people EVE does not exist outside of the game client – while for some it is their full-time job. To take Óskarssons argument a step further, EVE is indeed a complex policy, it just is not equally distributed.
6.2 Topic modeling in contemporary history

An interesting aspect of the methodical findings in this study is that many of the topics examined span long periods of time, which indicates that at least in large enough datasets, topic modeling of this type is a suitable tool for temporal analysis. This is interesting because many studies – with notable exceptions, such as Mining the Dispatch – use topic modeling as snapshots, preferring to model pre-determined chunks of time individually and then combining the analysis. As Schmidt reminds us, words have a bad habit of changing their meaning over time. This does place restriction on topic modeling in the study of non-contemporary history where the timespans are long enough to allow for significant change in the meanings of words.

Schmidt’s utilitarian criticism is not the only critical angle to approach digital humanities with. As boyd and Crawford wrote, big data and the algorithms used to analyze it bring on new challenges to privacy. With sufficiently advanced algorithms and enough data on people, it will become harder and harder to get lost in crowd of the Internet. MALLET's development is in part funded by the NSA and DARPA, so in that vein all participation in its development – such as this study – may advance also their goals, in however tiniest of ways, of algorithmically making sense of the entirety of our digital lives. Of course, the this end goal is still not in sight, but scholars developing for instance topic modeling are not bystanders.

The main contribution of this work in the field of digital humanities and more specifically, LDA topic modeling, is formalizing the temporal stabilization variable, weight $w$. Current scholarship most commonly uses LDA as snapshots, ignoring the temporal axis, and when it is used, simple raw frequency data is often used. By
normalizing the frequency of documents over time, it becomes possible to paint a more accurate discursive landscape. The variable is usable in other studies using LDA with MALLET hyperparameter optimization.

In the beginning of this study I said I would examine how people are coexisting in virtual worlds, and what kind of institutions they build (and what are built for them) to govern themselves and others. For those looking to virtual worlds for utopian systems the search will have to go on – the institutions in the EVE polity seem remarkably similar to those in the world around it, even though its citizens spend a lot of time talking about their governance. Perhaps the only difference is the constant change in natural laws brought to being by CCP, although with the tacit consent of the citizenry.

This raises the question of whether it is possible to even “win” in EVE (with all the problematic connotations of the concept, explored earlier) – if the ruler constantly changes the rules that no one group can prevail, does that make all the citizens just Sisyphean characters, having their space-empires fall to ash when they have achieved supremacy?

If one discounts the science fiction and the epic scale, is that so different from our daily lives outside of EVE?
Bibliography

Primary sources


**Literature**


**Non-scholarly articles**


Appendix 1: Source code

# spider for scraping old eve online forums (oldforums.eveonline.com) by
Jussi Nuortimo
# not a true spider as it just scrapes a list of urls. collects poster's alliance,
post
# and the timestamp

import scrapy
import re
from evecrawler.items import EveItem

filename = ""
url_raw = ""

class EveOldforumsSpider(scrapy.Spider):
    name = "evespider"
    allowed_domains = ["oldforums.eveonline.com"]
    start_urls = [address.strip() for address in open('topics_complete_new.txt').readlines()]
    # start_urls = [address.strip() for address in open('topics_test.txt').readlines()]
    # start_urls = ['http://oldforums.eveonline.com/?a=topic&threadID=1573664']

def parse(self, response):
    global filename
    filename = response.url.split("&")[1][9:]
    for sel in response.xpath('//div[@id="contentarea"]'):
        item = EveItem()
        body_raw = response.xpath('//div[@id="forumSignature"]').extract()
        item['body'] = []
        for num in body_raw:
            a = re.sub(r'<[^>]*>', '', num)
            item['body'].append(a)
        date_raw = sel.xpath('//div[@id="content"]').re(r'Posted - s*(.*)')
        item['timestamp'] = [n[:10] for n in date_raw]
        alliance_raw = sel.xpath('//b/text()').extract()
        item['alliance'] = []
        ForbiddenWords = re.compile(ur'Originally by:|Author|Topic')
        for num2 in alliance_raw:
            b = re.sub(ForbiddenWords, '', num2)
            item['alliance'].append(b)
        yield item

    # item['body'] = sel.xpath('//div[@id="forumSignature"]').extract()
    # body_raw = response.xpath('//div[@id="forumSignature"]').extract()
    # body = re.sub(r'<[^>]*>', '', body_raw)
    # for date_raw, alliance, body in zip(bodys, alliances, date_raws):

    # yield item
item = EveItem()
item['body'] = bodys
item['alliance'] = response.xpath('//b/text()').extract()
item['timestamp'] = [n[:10] for n in date_raw]
items.append(item)
return items

date_raw = sel.xpath('//div[@id="content"]').re(r'Posted - \s*(.*)')
item['timestamp'] = [n[:10] for n in date_raw]

for sel in response.xpath('//div[@id="contentarea"]'):
    print timestamp, alliance, body

with open(filename, 'wb') as f:
    f.write(response.body)

messages = hxs.select('//div[@id="content"]')
for messages in messages:
    items = []
    for date_raw, alliance, body in zip(bodys, alliances, date_raws):
        item = EveItem()
        item['body'] = bodys
        item['alliance'] = response.xpath('//b/text()').extract()
        item['timestamp'] = [n[:10] for n in date_raw]
        items.append(item)
    return items
Appendix 2: Stop words

a
able
about
above
according
accordingly
across
actually
after
afterwards
again
self
selves
sensible
sent
serious
seriously
seven
several
shall
she
should
since
six
so
some
somebody
somehow
someone
something
 sometime
sometimes
somewhat
somewhere
soon
sorry
specified
specify
specifying
still
sub
such
sup
sure
 t
take
taken
tell
tends
th
than
thank
thanks
thanx
that
thats
the
their
theirs
them
themselves
then
thence
there
thereafter
thereby
therefore
therein
theres
thereupon
these
they
think
third
this
thorough
thoroughly
those
though
three
through
throughout
thru
thus
to
together
too
took
toward
towards
tried
tries
truly
try
trying
twice
two
u
un
under
unfortunately
unless
unlikely
until
unto
up
upon
us
use
used
useful
### Appendix 3: Complete topic model

The first cell contains the topic ID, second the dirichlet variable and third the top 20 words in topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic ID</th>
<th>Dirichlet Variable</th>
<th>Top 20 Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.13554</td>
<td>alt lock troll main flame ban mod spam click delet moder ibtl question stop nyan account start anoth poster flamebait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03247</td>
<td>team win event bet tournament match won rule play prize xxx winner implant tourney bird time watch real final give</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
shami moon snigg badger hat heard control tin foil
dust orzoz joni tinfoil agmar logan ren vlinc jita visit planet
atlas bobbi dastommy allianc farham tiger caod
omist aggro fail dastommi back confirm wait man die moll rage xix
dasti
rise xela fountain ring outbreak norad allianc
outer cloud youwhat blade utbreak hun xzh rit faceless left proxay
toxin leav
ding bismaru usn vuk rawr karttoon lau ambit
shinma free caod cvn mitten moll phreez god gay heath love mittani
dark allianc dead huzzah stain shikari die empir
han soul lord evil light orc forsaken storm left death good paragon
north iron razor south allianc northern tri rzer
sparta deklein fla nap fatal pure fred friend branch nfc fade venal
jericho miso fraction shark alexandra jade love eri
star belani notferr joshua chariti jadrut admir propheci panti maud
propheci discordia
amp asp onlin ingameboard myev ace eveonlin
page php lock index search net spam today caod due btw frehley issu
map influenc updat chang file joshua system color
show media work sov nice verit version foritrust good contest colour
dotlan
report news stori write inform articl battl press
event interest releas bias isd good sourc interview guardian side
week involv
remov rule mod snip allianc moder lock spam caod
ticker delet show email mail navig ivan valorem filter click hutch
ship frigat battleship cruiser pilot pod frig fli kill
destroy lost warp shuttl lose insur fit interceptor loss rifter scorpion
isk pay money buy billion sell mil cost million offer
give month work time price scam paid day week send
mine miner ore ship price market sell product build industri profit haul trade system hauler buy suppli empir refin veldspar play monkey time stuff big drink drunk night nice fun bear start love dancer hit dream great cool special visit war declar corp empir allianc fight dec hour surrend end pay week target wardec alt involv retract start cost corpor iss outpost share station neutral build count sharehold trust tbb public built issn ipo system invest market butter charter investor angel maxsuicid cosmic militia cartel fusion mang ghost horza wargod wel run time faction true comic xxangelxx marko maxsuicideedit laythun burn eden shin stab wcs masta raven satan dhb kill wildcat fragm righteous pooki killa evil furi cloak rememb gank pew fun gang kill time axe allianc frege nice tri lot fight shoot love friend man aaa good smack miss pvp corp good skill time join pvper lot carebear fun noob start play learn run experi fli train tri allianc log ship tactic pilot trap lame kill local exploit time jump system warp save play combat minut gate back login die translat english german les dutch est und der ein ich des ook das languag ist pour tre een liu bob coalit war pet allianc alli space fight goon side win lose attack delv month region titan friend lot north allianc point mani chang big play differ idea problem number someth reason major power actual everyon lot work agre time
petit exploit ban cheat issu account time hack
problem rule gms tri remov action whine mechar lock accus reimburs respons

tilocblob blob edenburn âñá ocblob rutoocan óáëöi iëd yöö ñiâñéáî âñåâí ñiááí ñëáöyïi éiðâáëéï ñëó öæê ôéæ ôôîæö ôóô ôëëöû

sot fountain caod mad terribl allianc fail general flinx pretti troll snot dungar bitter evenstar bro confirm captain rabbing

content lock inappropri caod moder clear onlin regard team solodrakbansolodrakbanso lodra remov viper jpg imageshack lack spam poast aaron epic

privat allianc empir uni jita dec hauler wardec war target gank bydi sec hooch noob ugluuk week mission univers ivi

xetic atuk shinra foe corp war allianc supremaci cls nap attack stain curs xif foyl left start member flame fsa

fit cargo missil shield level tank rank drone damag ship armor booster medium launcher warp qti heavi combat laser item

tos nsa sloth techel mlm nemesi krom zzazzt join vanguard fli millennium allianc word die irish left ago surviv tom

aneu votf foyl xirtam zap zelota xirt lord imperium foundat angellus back curs shinra chowdown lallant hlw imp enslav lior

english languag russian american speak world countri french german call nation racist spell tnt live america offens race russia bad

pie cooki sirmoll cake blood grimpak sandwich god spoon botox voic ice raider big award dun snu mafia freek john

evol rkk war tps fade evolut cdi pirat nca crice corp norad bnc cod huff venal uncor nast flame empir
max maru moll delv dice waagaa lord finfleet boy thol sir kage joe dtee fail plan sick jin dafuzz raiiden
tri blob number whine gang cri fight bring beat triumvir win chees man nap skill time tactic fail chest join
corp member corpor join ceo work leav time start left run form mani activ month part found good week creat
kill fight time gank run good raven cele day back flame number ship lost tri solo enemi fleet smack talk
smash pure smashkil gemin roadkil stavro tet drone hwf peok allianc frege region tri space graalum ratel vale kill alli
video watch nice movi vid work frap good music great awesom youtub show made record song cool funni time file
black eat dog eye white hand food chicken bring nut thought tast cat pant good place egg round chees water
fight fun good smack respect side battl great time engag nice win number lot local bring fleet alway fought pilot
corp ceo share vote corpor role member offic access director give manag hangar creat wallet skill executor hanger titl chang
corp corpor top list black industri nova celesti big technolog good bsc horizon joker great zombi marin club count teddybear
iac bruce tyrrax aaa catch myna allianc sod fat thorrrk dhb drunk priori jim iss left fri blue alcohol guess
bob moll alt dbp true question band preacher delv brother dianabol dice blacklight sir twd sirmoll bnc answer imp rkk
pirat kill corp piraci anti ship space hunt pod gate sec camp attack system low corpor good shoot gank ransom
cls kao cartiff long woodlous north azn persh pershphani pos

viv
time fight back day war left end forc lost move
long leav attack month start made week alli decid mani
allianc aaa pet space russian atlas legion blue
solar red fleet moon sov sys cow goon stain pandem caod pretti
xanadu fountain stan sun xan rev jove siren corm
real nfa aerick fire chang kick revolut step list jovian meet
allianc coalit red mihi morsus feder list dawn
legion empir razor northern brother band alli unit dead cross ceti
harmless
corp alt member trust account steal spi stuff
charact leav asset kick access told back theft ceo stole someon anyth
type secur corpor status ship backdoor weapon
caldari blow final slot victim system laid parti involv bandit quantiti
mgrl unknown
tri fact point anyth actual noth someth talk anyon
care someon everyon time matter reason els feel believ question word
station space system region back dock move time
npc jump tri place live week empir camp hold mayb find day
goon delv allianc goonswarm kenni sov space fail
bob kenzoku disband mittani caod gooni troll lose terribl aaa lost
tower
stand blue reset allianc list insurg red shoot nap
darth neutral solo insrg everyon contact chang follow mail friend
care
derek nick german chu allianc fail caod tri troll
riverini arcan love john boy voltron giggl curso order avaric confirm
friend darko chuck famili norri anarchi cmd lucian
veron rest veto miss fate man die condol alway love memori rip
cva amarr minmatar provid roleplay caldari
gallent amarrian slave empir pie khan hardin ushra nrds ooc
terrorist sylph militia race
charact corpor allianc particip snip npc tick status prohibit unidentifi mod mitnal alt navig valorem lock saint ticker show caod

allianc region space claim control area empir system live territori corp fountain npc hold defend close home tri curs map
carrier cap kill capit dread ship lost fleet cyno support mothership jump nyx fit die titan pos pilot lose nice
spi channel intel allianc give wraith gonna move chat mail Seth command invit foff blast intellig ese plagu cpt wraithstorm
allianc tri fail hydra butter caod epic dog amp kll_id kick bitter kill_detail troll pretti emo failur coad tbh bad
system rat space rent sec isk moon pay low high tax mission complex farmer sov run plex macro month farm
jade tti venal nva constantin war jericho corpor biomass ragnar halseth taggart oberon peac love fraction dear evolut
ooc attack