VS Traveller – Space Sim

VS Traveller

VS Traveller or vsTraveller is a self-proposed non-commercial Mod for Vega Strike or possibly Privateer:WCU based on the same Engine. While Vega Strike above has the most complete feature settings including the possibility for subcraft, it has a few drawbacks. Devellopment is slow (with about a Million „o") and there are bugs that bug me.

On a perfectly vanilla Windows Vista PC 4GB RAM, low spec on-board grapics, USB-Gamepad, USB-Keyboard and USB-Mouse, a Headset and VoiceAttack Software running in the back, the game becomes unplayable when approaching the first planet (Atlantis) due to polycount I guess.

Turning down the graphics setting to quite low, results in a playable state, but the bugging starts when approaching the Planet (press N to select Planet as Target), approach planet, press ALT+0 (Alt+Zero) to request docking clearance, wait until Docking clear appears in the HUD and Press D to dock. Nothing happenes when pressing D. VoiceAttack results in the same. The SW recognises the command (Open menu) for example is set to press ESC and it works from ingame. But well… I used to spend so much time modding VS that I hope it can be sorted out one of these days.

Whats an absolute plus for VS is it's multiplayer capabilities.

Meanwhile… we also take a closer look at other engines…

Alternative Game Engines

Under the working name Traveller Pioneer the game could also be a non-commercial Mod for Pioneer Space Sim It is an

alternative to VS Traveller above with the exact identical gameplay in mind.We are going to test both engines on an older surplus Office PC with lower VGA-Specs to evaluate performance differences of the engine.

Pioneer seems to have a very active Community, it's also customizable, features an Open Source Game Engine and is a sandbox single player game. It offers top notch graphic add-ons and loads of scripts that expand gameplay. Furthermore it has working planet to space transition and on planet locations implemented.

It does not have Subcraft if I recall correctly, but I could live with that for a while. Pioneer is based on pure Newtonian Physiscs. while very challenging and fun you are required to actually learn flying the ships, especially landing them. Belive me, going from a Multi-Mach re-entry speed to zero (drift, yaw, pitch, roll wise), on a tiny landing pad is not easy. On the other hand you can dive deep down onto planets. Great fun.

Next could be Oolite, an open world space opera. Multi platform, highly customizeable, low impact on hardware resources. However it generates its universe only procedurally. That wouldn't work with vsTraveller.

The goal is to use Models created for Traveller Illustrated and a Traveller Starmap / Game Universe. This will include probably only the Foreven Sector, ideally one of the more explored sectors like the Spinward Marches or the Reavers Deep Sector. That also depends on what Mark Miller's position to this would be (I haven't asked yet because I'm only in the planning stages).

I'm afraid this will remain a closed project for licensing reasons. I will have to inquire and get permission first to deploy such a data set using all the copyrighted material from the game. And to be honest at this time VS Traveller is just a

name and a thought experiment. I will show ingame screenshots and footage if that becomes feasible. But do not expect to see anythin happen very soon on this page.

vsTraveller Ressources

The planned Storyline follows the events of the 5th Frontier War. At least that's what I'd like to experience once again, because I came to Traveller when it was already over and my fellow gamers recited wartime stories from the 5th Frontier War. But there are questions…

- Is it possible to advance (offset) game time by one week per jump?
- Can we use travellermap.com as a mapping redource in game?
- How to sync player with in game event time line?
- How to sync players of different installations (light interactivity via web forum)?
- How to distribute game assets between installations/players?
- Howto implement RPG elements (crew as ship component / upgrade, chars as special cargo)? That's actually a good idea ☺

In the meantime I discovered that my beloved Privateer Parallel Universe (PPU) has disappeared from the Internet. It was so cleanly develloped and features were so established that I planned to use it as a base for my other mod „Nations of Orion". But thanks to one loney dev the sources were saved and brought up to the most recent Vega Strike dev state. The new name is Privateer WCU and basically everything I wanted for my games. Thanks ermo for your work on it.

So I set up a debian based — Linux Mint Debian Edition (LMDE) to be exact — development system just for it. After sorting out a few dependencies VS compiled fine and I plan the make the required changes to run Priv:WCU shortly. Already I

changed the VS Splash screen of my Windows machine to a few Traveller images I converted for this purpose. A nice touch, but nothing to show off yet.

So I will let you know whichvway I will be heading. A current Privateer Wing Commander Universe (WCU) as a dev base would be nice.

Implementing RPG elements into VS

Working with the units.csv file of Vega Strike

First the technical limitations need to be addressed. VS is a single player first person space sim by trade. It learned multiplayer on it's way, even mmo. But the roots are basically single player trade and fight. vsTraveller will be a first person space sim too. It will probably stay a single player game, as Traveller jumps take to long for in game coverage. Thus each jump advances the clock by about 168 hours (+/- what the rules say). No real time mmo is possible this way, but a community would still be. Players could pass conteacts and missions and exchange news, messages, goods and equipment through starport services. Every time a ship arrives in system any updates relevant for that ship and timeframe will be downloaded and made available. It's virtual play by mail inside a pc game. Group play might be possible in supporting roles with temporary assets. On player sets the mission and other can join representing ships in system at that time. Not their own ships, but such that would have normally been controlled by the AI.

RPG implementation will probably be a simple Classic Traveller Character Profile plus description, comparable to the regenerated characters shipped with classic Adventure Modules or Double Adventures. Example scanned from the Classic Traveller Module Beltstrike as per Fair Use Policy:

Name		UPP	
Eneri Shulamikar		7699A6	
Service ex-Merchant	5 terms	297-1109	Rank Captain
Birthdate 045-1071	Birthworld Mora/Mora 0704 AA99AC7-F		
Skills Pilot-3, Bribery-2, Mechanical-1, Navigation-1, Gunnery-2.			
Possessions Free Trader		Money Cr50,000	

Comments Merchant experience with Oberlindes Lines in Regina and Aramis subsectors. Served as Navigator/First Officer aboard 60,000-ton converted fleet intruder *Emissary* (ex-*Sparkling Distress*) in Vargr space.

Name		UPP	
Zilla Pegunang		5B3842	
Service ex-Other	5 terms	248-1109	Rank
Birthdate 125-1071	Birthworld Tarsus/District 268 0308 B584620-A		
Skills Steetwise-2, Bribery-1, Forgery-1, Gambling-2.			
Possessions Body Pistol		Money Cr110,000	

Comments A swindler and a gambler, Pegunang has wandered in and out of the Imperium for most of her life, and has turned her hand to everything from reasonably honest trade and speculation to smuggling, con games, and forgery.

Name		UPP	
Dr. Arpad Nushur		796675	
Service ex-Navy	3 terms	024-1110	Rank Lieutenant Commander
Birthdate 163-1080	Birthworld Jewell/Jewell 0306 A777999-C		
Skills Medic-3, Admin-1, Ship's Boat-1, SMG-1, Computer-1.			
Possessions SMG		Money Cr70,000	

Comments Senior Medical Officer of colonial cruiser BC-9525 *Agidda*. Served in the Querion and Vilis subsectors, and at the Battle of Thanber.

Name		UPP	
Tsutomu Woronow		A786B5	
Service ex-Navy	4 terms	106-1109	Rank Lieutenant
Birthdate 322-1075	Birthworld New Rome/Glisten 0308 B837866-B		
Skills Engineering-2, Electronic-2, Jack of all Trades-1, Mechanical-2.			
Possessions		Money Cr16,000	
		one Low Passage	

Comments Served as engineer aboard colonial cruiser BC-9525 *Agidda* at the Battle of Thanber.

Name		UPP	
Joan Eshunnak		793674	
Service ex-Scout	4 terms	196-1108	Rank
Birthdate 269-1074	Birthworld Porozlo/Rhylanor 0305 A867A74-A		
Skills Gunnery-3, Pilot-1, Rifle-2, Engineering-1, Medical-1 Vacc Suit-1.			
Possessions Rifle		Money Cr100,000	

Comments Service with Scout Squadron 53. Captured at Battle of Thanber; exchanged. Later served at Lanth and Rhylanor as boat gunner attached to Marine landing force.

Name		UPP	
Johann "Lucky Yo" Jorgensson		7866A4	
Service ex-Belter	5 terms		Rank
Birthdate 111-1072	Birthworld Bowman/District 268 0302 D000300-9		
Skills Vacc Suit-2, Prospecting-2, Zero-G Environ-1, Gambling-1, Ship's Boat-1, Mech-1, JOT-1, Computer-1, Fwd Obsvr-1.			
Possessions one Middle Passage		Money Cr1,000	

Comments See the short adventure *Beltstrike!* for background on Jorgensson.

Name		UPP	
Zhuandao Weiss		97A683	
Service ex-Merchant	2 terms	362-1109	Rank Fourth Officer
Birthdate 180-1083	Birthworld Junidy/Aramis 0802 B434ABD-9		
Skills Steward-2, Gunnery-2, Rifle-1.			
Possessions Rifle		Money Cr20,000	

Comments Shipped with independent free traders through most of his career. During the war years, operated in the Glisten and Pax Rulin subsectors.

Name		UPP	
Enli Eriskany		C7A483	
Service ex-Marine	3 terms	014-1110	Rank Captain
Birthdate 312-1080	Birthworld Chamois/Trin's Veil 0709 B544642-5		
Skills Cutlass-3, Revolver-1, Vacc Suit-1, Brawling-2, SMG-1.			
Possessions Cutlass		Money Cr22,000	
Member Travellers' Aid Society			

Comments Served with 1931st Marine Regiment at Lanth and Rhylanor. Awarded Medal for Conspicuous Gallantry for rescuing a squad trapped in a downed assault shuttle during campaign around Lanth.

Name		UPP	
Lee Huseyin		A86859	
Service ex-Marine	5 terms	206-1109	Rank Force Commander
Birthdate 302-1071	Birthworld Lunion/Lunion 0504 A995984-D		
Skills Cutlass-1, Revolver-2, Tactics-2, Vacc Suit-1, Rifle-2, Grav Vehicle-1, Brawling-1, Electronics-1.			
Possessions Cutlass		Money Cr27,000	
Member Travellers' Aid Society			

Comments Imperial Marine annual pension of Cr4,000. Served with the 8327th Imperial Marine Regiment at Thanber and Garda-Vilis.

As visible in that scan Characters are composed of a name, UPP, career info, birthdate, homeworld, main skills, main possessions, cash and a short description. Thats possibly as far as it gets. Maybe we use MegaTraveller character generation rules as per this web-script. Or maybe we use T5 Quick Character generation as proposed by Robert Eaglestone:

Quick Character Generation

1. [optional] Determine homeworld and starting skill(s).
2. Roll the UPP.
3. Pick a career and the number of terms.
4. Select [age — 10] skills from that career.
5. Apply aging effects.
6. [optional] Muster out.

Crew

The crew are virtual characters not directly controlled but influenced by the player, they form a modifying skill set that can influence ship capabilities, at times where the character or autopilot is in control of the ship. The crew is available as a special type of unique ship upgrade. Pilot and Engineer Crew upgrades boost performance, Navigator and Sensor Crew upgrades affekt traveltime, efficiency and combat visibility,

Medical, Steward and Broker Crew Upgrades affect economic factors, etc.

Crew can be generic (random names) and unique (reoccurring npc names) and can change ship by selling and being bought. Maybe there will be a chance to change „buy and sell" into something like „hire and fire" in this context.

Crew Assets (example)

Name	Function	Stat influenced	Modifier	Cost	Duration
Joe Generic	Pilot	Speed	+30%	3000,-Cr	30 days
Jane Doe	Navigator	Range	+20%	2500,-Cr	30 days
John Doe	Tech	Repair Cost	-30%	2800,-CR	30 days
Count Numbers	Medic	Passenger availability	+15%	3000,-CR	30 days
Dave Dark	Engineer	Agility	+30%	2700,-Cr	30 days

Adding Upgrades to Vega Strike

Characters

A character is one major person controlled by a player as his in game representation. It is basically a oackage of information carried aboard the ship. It will be represented by a special type of unique cargo. Character can change ships through trade or missions.

Character Assets (example)

Name: Tsutomu Woronow	UPP: A786B5
Service: ex-Navy, 4 terms, 106-1109	Rank: Lieutenant
Birthdate: 322-1075	Birthworld New Rome/Glisten 0308 B837866-B
Skills	Engineering-2, Electronic-2, JoT-1, Mechanical-1
Possessions: none	Money: 16,000 Cr [one Low Passage]
Comments	
Served as Engineer aboard colonial cruiser BC-9525 Agidda at the Battle of Thanber.	

Adding Cargo to Vega Strike

3D Cockpits

cockpit_blend

Convert (Classic) Traveller Characters to vsTraveller

Well I'll keep you updated for the latest in devellopment.

This is a Traveller Illustrated sub-project.