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## [EVE Online](#)

### *One world, many galaxies to conquer*

EvE online was the first and only title from the Icelandic developers at CCP Games and ever since launch, they worked to further improve it. Set thousands of years into the future, the races of EvE struggle constantly for power within a seemingly endless persistent universe. Regardless of one's goals, the greatest asset is the starship, designed to accommodate each need, skill or ambition bearing in many ways the likeness of a space simulator. May 6, 2003, saw the launch of EvE Online Genesis, the first in a line of many. Each major patch was basically an expansion pack available to download for free, just like the game itself. Castor soon followed, Exodus and then Cold War, up to the last year's December update called Red Moon Rising. The following chapter is Kali, expected to be released soon. Each of these marked a different twist in EvE's history, a tale that goes like this.

**Story**The space age brought much prosperity to the race of earthlings, yet it soon became apparent that the universe is not large enough for human ambition. Corporations started to fight among themselves for supremacy in a war that lasted many years. A curious scientific breakthrough settled the dispute, as the discovery of a stable natural wormhole brought new perspectives in sight. Corporations extended their influence in recently unreachable areas of space and the future seemed bright. Many colonists went through the wormhole to start anew and found their riches in the world beyond. It was like a beautiful dream, yet as every dream it came to an end. One day the wormhole collapsed into itself leaving the colonists stranded, cut off from the much needed supply lines. It was a dark time to be alive, and the old roots were forgotten. Thousands of years passed and the human race evolved differently across the galaxy. The Amarr were first to rise in the new space age. These over religious humans met up with the primitive and chaotic human Minmatar. Eventually, the democratic republics united by the Gallente Federation entered the scene, followed soon after by the warlike and overly effective Caldari tyrants. The Jovian Empire is the latest addition in the struggle for domination. One race at the root of it all, evolving into five different civilizations, like thorns from the same stem.

**Gameplay**Virtually all interaction with the game world relies on radial menus. Options rise outward and one can sometime reach impressive menu depths of three or more layers. It may seem odd at first, but the game is so catchy, that players soon forget this minor nuisance and adapt to the new game style. I wouldn't say playing EvE is easy to learn. One can achieve mastery of certain localized aspects fairly easy, yet as a whole, the amount of information pouring into our skulls is tremendous. In fact, should you chose to follow the directions presented in the tutorial by Aura, your board computer, it won't take you more than two hours to scarcely familiarize yourself with the many options of the GUI. Unlike other tutorials, I actually felt I need to go through this and even enjoyed myself in the process. One can pick up EvE tips as he goes along, but the tutorial provides a good knowledge base everyone should be aware of. Lasting more than two hours, it's by far the longest I ever played. There are limitless possibilities early on, considering the skill tree has over 300 skills at the moment, and each supports training for five levels. Roughly one year ago the developers felt like players reached a certain status in both wealth and experience, that new more powerful ships were needed. So, among other less pretentious crafts, they introduced the Titan ships; state of the art, all powerful and virtually impossible to build without an alliance of corporations backing you up. Let's do some math. With the appropriate learning skills, based upon starting level character stats, one can learn the necessary skills to pilot a Titan in 418 days. You would need an additional 40 days to learn the skill itself up to level 4, since the rest were just pre requisites and a fair 200 or more days spent on additional skill

improvement for equipment outfitting the ship. Big numbers? In truth you just need about half the time with the right learning skills, since later in the game implants are available, notable stat boosters. Still, it's an impressive effort, even if you're just checking skill progression half an hour each day. Titans are the largest, most fearsome space vessels ever constructed and were introduced to the EvE universe with the Red Moon Rising update in last December. Like carriers, they host massive internal bays designed to launch and maintain smaller fighter ships. They can wreak massive destruction with their extra large turrets yet none of their strengths are as awe inspiring as the never seen before superweapon. Such destructive force can lay waste to entire fleets at once. In addition to their immense firepower, they serve as Rapid Fleet Deployment platforms and are said to open jump portals for other ships to travel through. It's pretty much the same technology that enables star gates. Aiming towards the creation of the ultimate battle star is just one way to play EvE's end-game content. I have to admit it's the best feature Eve came up with: incredible gameplay ability. You start up by playing one game and end up with something totally different. Along the road you'll be doing missions for the Concorde, fight space pirates, mine for rare and precious resources, trade across different solar systems and maybe even go into research and hope the blueprints for that super ship will fall into your lap. Not to mention corporations can provide a convergent effort and build their own Cruisers, battleships, everything. They're all enjoyable just the same and in 0.0 security systems there's nothing holding you back from becoming a bloody pirate either. While delving deeper into EvE Online's universe, I made a startling discovery regarding my own life. I am actually missing the stars, the mystery behind their twinkle, the way they shine and hide beyond the clouds. Smog will do that to the sky, stealing away their beauty forever. It seems computer games have no problem capturing the essence of things in a nutshell. The EvE universe is moreover consistent since all characters play on the same server, a unique evolving world that hosts an average of 15000 players. Bear in mind that about one tenth is made up by trial accounts that provide new colonists with a glimpse at their perspective future. **Concept** EvE Online is perhaps the only space simulator to hold out in the MMORPG world so I'd have to say it pretty much lacks competition in this regard. There are bigger and better fantasy MMORPGs out there, and even some nice Sci Fi alternatives, yet for number crunching and incredulous skill tree development EvE is the best. It's like one day the guys from CCP woke up and said: "Let's leave Iceland for good. We'll make up our own world". It doesn't sound like a big deal yet it is. Eve has the only player based economy I've ever encountered in a game. There simply are no NPC shopkeepers to sell you goods manufactured by the developers. Each and every item is player made, ranging from skill books, to frozen food and Iteron mining ships. Player run corporations decide whether or not it's safe to travel through their respective area of space. The skill system also grants you with skill points while you are offline. The world goes on and on even without you. This makes EvE incredibly massive and unique, a world where real life social skills and economical aptitudes are actually good for something. These are maybe the main reasons why EvE's player base has always been more mature. After all, since your character is still learning skills while you're out working from 9 to 17, accomplishments are largely determined by careful planning and less by luck and time invested in the game. It sounds and is casual, a good alternative for the working gamers out there. **Video** Given the game's initial release dates back in mid 2003, the graphical engine is tougher than originally anticipated. In addition, Eve saw a total texture makeover a couple of months ago so the overall feeling is still great. I didn't find the visuals annoying, on the contrary, EvE presents the viewer with immersive spatial landscapes, look-alikes with the mental images we always create while reading a good Science Fiction novel. Being in part a space flight simulator, the game doesn't require major amounts of graphic card power, instead makes due with what it has. Most backgrounds are sprites, while closer objects are 3D Models. Ship design is decent, yet on some occasions I wonder if it couldn't have turned out better. It's not the textures that bother me, but the rather lack of inventiveness. Although there are a lot of

different looking models, some are just too blunt. When you gaze upon a transport ship, you can tell by its size it was designed just for that, but the great bulk of fighter ships aren't that relevant in their use. At least stealth espionage ships are smaller and tend to look pointy so you can tell them apart. That is, if you see them through the cloaking device. **Sound**It only takes you one hour of playing EvE to hear most of what the game has to offer. Immersive yet quite repetitive in nature, you'll learn to enjoy the sound of your warp drive and Aura's voice announcing departure from the current solar system. Missiles go boom, lasers sound similarly to one another yet the most important factor is music. Players actually have a jukebox at their disposal, where one can manually select tracks from the 50 song playlist, spreading over more than four hours. Space ambient fans will really enjoy it, as it ranges from dark and mysterious passages to brooding industrial soundscapes hailing the rise of the machine. **Multiplayer**Although we're talking about a MMORPG, player interaction is limited early to mid game. This happens largely due to the fact that teamwork is rarely required. Sure you can both buy and sell to other players, but these transactions are never face to face, but mediated by certain space station NPC representatives. Missions never require you to form a party and go hunting together and free PvP does not mean you'll soon enough kill your neighboring space vessel, since the Concorde law enforcement will shred your ship into little pieces. There's nothing to prevent players from mining together, or camping a stargate with the gang in order to get an easy kill. The problem is, on the quest for fame and glory characters will often enough be sent to remote areas of space, be it in missions or simply finding the right solar system to sell your goods. This time EvE's humongous universe size works against itself. Later on, the only way to gain power is by joining strong player-run corporations, so eventually teamwork and the multiplayer factor does show their potential. Regardless, end game combat has that thrilling massive factor, as battles between corporations at war tend to get quite brutal where strategy, skill and numbers each play a role in the outcome. **Conclusion**The best feature EvE has to offer is the total control players have over the evolving game universe. On a grand scale, players are able to supply themselves with everything required to survive in the harsh reaches of the galaxy. Being a resourceful corporation leader, it will need you to put in every ounce of social aptitude you possess, along with good financial planning and foresight. Greatest skill advancements are gained by setting a smart course of action. As ever, the law of the strong weeds out the weak in space combat, where tactics and team coordination will often enough save your life. CCP Games took advantage of the shortage on the space simulator market for MMO titles, having a target audience that bears no competition even after three years. The EvE Online experience is unique by design, if not by the nature of the players themselves. We can only look further into the future for the upcoming Kali addon. Great developments including factional warfare promise more entertaining events in the ever growing virtual world of EvE.