### ****RETROSTELLAR v0.1****

### ****Game Guide and Rules****

### ****INTRODUCTION****

**RetroStellar** is a retro-style, text-based space strategy game that draws heavy inspiration from classics like **Trade Wars** and **Zork**, while incorporating modern elements from games like **EVE Online**. In this universe, players are tasked with exploring vast star systems, building fleets, negotiating with factions, and conquering entire star systems in their quest for galactic dominance. The game’s core mechanics revolve around conquest, exploration, and factional dynamics, all of which blend to create a richly strategic and immersive experience.

The ultimate goal in **RetroStellar** is to control the majority of the galaxy’s 10,000 star systems through combat, diplomacy, or economic domination. Whether you're forging alliances, waging wars, or mining resources from distant planets, the game provides numerous pathways to power. As development continues, elements of economic simulation and advanced strategy will further deepen the player’s experience, offering additional layers of complexity and challenge.

### ****User Interface and Gameplay****

At its core, **RetroStellar** is designed to evoke the feeling of classic, 1980s text-based games. The interface is entirely **keyboard-driven**, with **command line-style navigation** and **text scrolls** that guide the player through the game. There is no mouse interaction—players rely exclusively on keyboard shortcuts and text commands to navigate menus, explore systems, and issue commands to their fleets. This menu-based interface not only pays homage to the game's retro roots but also keeps the focus on strategy and decision-making rather than flashy graphics.

The retro aesthetic, inspired by games like **Trade Wars**, immerses players in a galaxy where their wits and planning skills are their greatest assets. Every interaction, from negotiating trade deals with factions to exploring uncharted star systems, feels like a nostalgic callback to the golden age of text-based gaming, while still offering depth and complexity found in modern strategy games like **EVE Online**.

**RULES**

### The Rules section of this document serves as the foundation for the core mechanics and gameplay in RetroStellar. This guide will walk you through every key element of the game, from combat to exploration, trade, research, and diplomacy. Each rule is designed to ensure that players can engage with the vast galaxy of RetroStellar in strategic and meaningful ways. Whether you’re commanding fleets, negotiating with factions, or uncovering rare technologies, these rules will provide clarity on how to maximize your gameplay experience. Understanding these mechanics is essential to mastering the art of conquest and exploring the universe’s farthest reaches.

RetroStellar rules are broken up into three divisions, called Sectors. Those are Conquest, Exploration and Trading. A fourth sector is independent of the other three, called Research. The different sectors are further divided into three individual statistics. It is that group of 12 stats that form the core logic base of how the player interacts with the galaxy and its factions. The following sections will describe the rules in detail.

CONQUEST

Conquest is the rules sector that deals with space combat of all types. It includes individual ship-to-ship combat, engagements with different fleets, and how to attack or defend entire star systems. It is broken down into three types; Combat Power, Fleet Power and Conquest Rating.

### ****1. Combat Power****

**Combat Power represents the strength of your personal ship, also known as the flagship of your fleet. It is the primary stat used to determine your offensive capability in battles. Every player's "character" in RetroStellar is embodied by their flagship, and the Combat Power stat reflects the damage output and overall fighting capacity of that ship.**

#### ****How Combat Power Works****:

* **Base Combat Power** is determined by your flagship's inherent attributes, such as its weapons, armor, and technology. This base value can be modified by upgrades, equipment, and rewards.
* **Fleet Power Multiplier**: Your fleet acts as a force multiplier for your Combat Power. Fleet Power adds a percentage of your flagship's Combat Power to represent the combined strength of your fleet supporting your ship.
  + Example: If your flagship's **Combat Power** is 80 and your **Fleet Power** is 75%, your total Combat Power is calculated as:  
    **Total Combat Power = 80 + (80 \* 0.75) = 140**

#### ****Stat Bonuses from Equipment and Rewards****:

* Combat Power can be further enhanced by **rewards** or **loot** found during missions, exploration, or anomalies. Equipment such as upgraded weaponry, specialized shields, or rare artifacts can increase your base Combat Power.
  + **Example Equipment**: Stellar Refractor Crystal (adds +10 to Combat Power).
* **Bonuses from Rewards/Equipment** apply directly to your base Combat Power, making your flagship more potent in combat situations.
  + Example: If your base Combat Power is 80, and you equip an item that gives a +10 bonus, your new base Combat Power becomes **90**, which is then multiplied by your Fleet Power.

#### ****Summary of Combat Power Calculation****:

1. **Base Combat Power** = Flagship’s combat strength (modified by rewards/equipment).
2. **Fleet Power Multiplier** = Adds a percentage of Combat Power based on your fleet's coordination and strength.
3. **Total Combat Power** = Base Combat Power + (Base Combat Power \* Fleet Power Multiplier).

**2. **Fleet Power****

**Fleet Power represents the combined strength and coordination of the ships in your fleet, acting as a force multiplier for your flagship’s Combat Power. Fleet Power plays a crucial role in both offense and defense, making your fleet a vital component in determining your overall combat effectiveness in RetroStellar.**

#### ****How Fleet Power Works****:

* **Fleet Power as an Offensive Multiplier**: Fleet Power multiplies your personal **Combat Power** by a percentage, representing the additional firepower and coordination provided by your fleet. A higher Fleet Power percentage means your fleet enhances your flagship's damage output more significantly.
  + Example: If your flagship's **Combat Power** is 80 and your Fleet Power is 75%, your total offensive **Combat Power** becomes:  
    **Total Combat Power = 80 + (80 \* 0.75) = 140**
* **Fleet Power as a Defensive Multiplier**: Fleet Power also reduces incoming damage by acting as a defensive buffer. In this case, Fleet Power acts as a percentage that mitigates damage taken during combat.
  + Example: If you are hit with an enemy attack of 120 damage and your Fleet Power is 75%, the final damage you take is:  
    **Final Damage = 120 - (120 \* 0.75) = 30**

#### ****Fleet Power and Fleet Size****:

* As you **level up** in RetroStellar, your **Fleet Size** will grow, allowing you to add more ships to your fleet. At **Level 1**, you only control your flagship. When you reach **Level 2**, your fleet can grow by one ship. Each additional ship increases your **Fleet Power** by 50% of the new ship's **Base Combat Power**. This gives a tangible boost to your overall combat effectiveness.
  + Example: If your Combat Power is 100 at Level 1, and you buy a small ship with a **Base Combat Power** of 20 at Level 2, your Fleet Power will increase by 50% of the new ship’s value, adding 10 to your overall Fleet Power.
* **Diminishing Returns**: As you level up and add more ships to your fleet, the percentage increase from new ships will follow a **sliding scale**, representing the **law of diminishing returns**. This ensures balance and prevents overpowering fleets as players progress, maintaining fair gameplay.

#### ****Fleet Power Modifiers****:

* **Fleet Power** can be improved through research, fleet upgrades, equipment, and special rewards. Certain technologies or loot can boost your **Fleet Power**, making your fleet more coordinated and powerful.
  + **Example Reward**: Fleet Coordination Module increases Fleet Power by 10%.
* **Fleet Size and Efficiency** also factor into Fleet Power, meaning a well-managed fleet will have a higher **Fleet Power** multiplier, resulting in greater offensive and defensive effectiveness.

#### ****Summary of Fleet Power Calculation****:

1. **Offensive Multiplier**:  
   Total Combat Power = Base Combat Power + (Base Combat Power \* Fleet Power Percentage).
2. **Defensive Multiplier**:  
   Final Damage = Incoming Damage - (Incoming Damage \* Fleet Power Percentage).
3. **Fleet Size Growth**:  
   Each new ship added to the fleet increases **Fleet Power** by a percentage of the ship’s **Base Combat Power**, but future levels introduce diminishing returns to maintain balance.

**3. **Conquest Rating****

**Conquest Rating is a critical stat in RetroStellar, representing both a player's ability to conquer star systems and a system's total defense against attacks. The ultimate win condition in RetroStellar is to take control of the majority of the galaxy's 10,000 star systems. This can be achieved by defeating the system's defenses through strategic use of Fleet Power and a player's Conquest Rating.**

#### ****How Conquest Rating Works****:

* **System Conquest**: When attacking a system, a player's **Conquest Rating** combines with their **Fleet Power** to determine their total power in the battle. The goal is to match or exceed the system's defense power, which is also referred to as the system's **System Rating**.
* **System Assets and Base Conquest Rating**:  
  Each system is defended by various assets such as planets, asteroid fields, and stations. Each of these elements has a base value (e.g., 20) that contributes to the system's overall **Conquest Rating**. These values can be increased through upgrades, loot, or special rewards, making the system harder to conquer over time.

#### ****System Hazards****:

* Certain systems have a hazard level determined by the nature of the star they orbit. Hazards like radiation can reduce an attacking fleet’s effectiveness by lowering both **Combat Power** and **Fleet Power** by a percentage. For extremely hazardous systems, this reduction can be as high as 30%.
  + **Example**: An attacking fleet enters a system with a hazard level of +2 (High Radiation). This reduces the fleet's total **Combat Power** and **Fleet Power** by 20% unless they have mitigation systems in place.

#### ****Fleet Power and Conquest Rating in Combat****:

* When engaging in a system conquest, the attacker’s **Fleet Power** and **Conquest Rating** are combined to form the total attacking power. This must match or exceed the system's defense, which is the sum of the system's **System Rating** (based on assets) and any hazard effects.
  + **Example**: A system with four planets, four asteroid fields, two stations, and a hazard level of +2 has a total **System Rating** of 1200. The attacking player has a **Fleet Power** and **Combat Power** that sum to 1000, with an additional **Conquest Rating** of 50. Their total power is 1050, which is not enough to conquer the system, and they lose the battle.

#### ****Defeat Consequences****:

* If the attacker’s total **Conquest Rating** and **Fleet Power** don’t match the system's defense, they automatically lose the battle. As a penalty, the attacker loses ships in their fleet based on the percentage difference between their total attacking power and the system’s defense power.
  + **Example**: If the attacker’s total power is 20% lower than the system’s defense, they lose 20% of their fleet.

#### ****Conquering a System****:

* If the attacker successfully matches or exceeds the system's **System Rating**, they conquer the system and gain control of all its assets (planets, asteroid fields, stations).
* Upon conquering a system, the player receives a flat bonus to their **Conquest Rating** (amount yet to be determined), which boosts their ability to conquer future systems. The system's asset values (planets, asteroid fields, stations) remain independent of this bonus and continue to contribute to the system's defense if it's attacked in the future.

EXPLORE

**Explore is the rules sector that deals with traveling the galaxy and interacting with its many resources, factions and mysteries. This sector deals with gathering resources, the intricate mission and side quest feature and dealing with random galactic anomalies that try to block the player’s path to success.**

**1. **Resource Gathering****

**Resource Gathering is the stat that determines how quickly and efficiently a player can mine resources from planets, moons, and asteroid fields in RetroStellar. It affects both the speed of resource extraction and the amount of resources gathered during each mining cycle.**

#### ****How Resource Gathering Works****:

* **Mining Cycles**: Every resource in the game is mined over a set cycle time of **10 seconds**. The amount of resources gathered during that cycle is based on the ship's equipment and the type of resource being mined.
* **Resource Value**: Each resource has a **static value** that determines how long it takes to mine a full amount of that resource. Common resources, such as **Common Ore**, have a 100% value, meaning that it takes the full 10 seconds to mine the designated amount of that resource. Rarer resources, such as rare metals, could have a higher value (e.g., 200%), meaning it takes **20 seconds** to mine the same amount.
  + **Example**: If your ship's mining equipment can extract 100 units of **Common Ore** in 10 seconds, it would take the same equipment 20 seconds to mine 100 units of a rarer resource with a 200% value.

#### ****Resource Gathering Stat Calculation****:

The **Resource Gathering** stat directly reduces the time needed to mine resources by increasing the efficiency of your mining operations. The higher your **Resource Gathering** stat, the faster you can extract resources.

* **Boosting Resource Gathering**: Upgrades, loot, and equipment can permanently increase your **Resource Gathering** stat, allowing you to extract more resources in less time.
* **Rarity Scaling**: As your **Resource Gathering** stat improves, you will need to focus on rarer resources for progression, which will take longer to mine due to their increased resource value.

#### ****System Hazards and Penalties****:

* Systems with high hazard levels (e.g., radiation) impose penalties on resource gathering by increasing the time it takes to complete a mining cycle. The penalty can increase the gathering time by **up to 100%**, depending on the system’s hazard level, but it does not reduce the resource yield.
  + **Example**: A system with a +2 hazard level might increase the time required to mine a resource from 10 seconds to 12 seconds.

#### ****Ownership Benefits****:

* Players who fully control a system receive a **20% reduction** in resource gathering cycle time. This benefit stacks with other bonuses and upgrades, making owned systems highly valuable for efficient resource extraction.

**2. Mission Chance**

**Mission Chance** is a stat in RetroStellar that controls the availability, type, difficulty, and rewards of side missions that players can undertake. These missions are separate from the main campaign arc and act as optional objectives that players can complete to earn additional rewards.

#### ****How Mission Chance Works****:

* **Mission Availability**: The **Mission Chance** stat directly affects both the number and variety of missions available at any given station or hub. A player with a low **Mission Chance** may only have access to a small number of basic missions, while a player with a higher **Mission Chance** will unlock more missions across various types.
  + **Example**: At **Alpha Station**, a Level 1 player with a low **Mission Chance** may only see 1 mining mission and 1 exploration mission, with low-tier rewards such as 100 credits or a small piece of equipment. A Level 10 player with a high **Mission Chance** would see multiple mission types with much more valuable rewards.
* **Mission Types**: There are several types of missions in the game, including:
  + **Archeology**
  + **Combat Operations**
  + **Research**
  + **Exploration**
  + **Diplomacy**
  + **Mining**  
    The **Mission Chance** stat impacts how many missions are available within these categories, but the specific mission types available at each station depend on the type of station, not the **Mission Chance** stat itself.

#### ****Mission Difficulty****:

* **Scaling Difficulty**: Higher **Mission Chance** also unlocks harder missions. Each mission type has a minimum **Mission Chance** stat threshold that determines when it becomes available. As players increase their **Mission Chance** stat, more difficult and rewarding missions will open up.
  + **Example**: A Level 1 player may only have access to low-difficulty exploration or mining missions. At higher levels, combat operations or diplomacy missions with complex objectives will become available.

#### ****Mission Rarity****:

* **Rarer Missions**: The **Mission Chance** stat also increases the likelihood of encountering rare and unique missions. These missions often offer higher-value rewards or present special challenges. Players with higher **Mission Chance** will see rarer missions more frequently.

#### ****Rewards and Loot****:

* **Better Rewards**: In addition to more and rarer missions, a higher **Mission Chance** stat will also lead to better rewards from completed missions. This includes more credits, higher-tier equipment, and rare items that are not available through the campaign arc.
  + **Example**: A high-level player could receive rare starship components, unique upgrades, or large sums of credits, depending on the mission.

#### ****Summary****:

* **Mission Chance** is a dynamic, scaling system that acts as a gatekeeper for side missions, controlling their availability, difficulty, and rewards. Players with higher **Mission Chance** will see more missions, harder challenges, rarer opportunities, and better rewards.
* The **Mission Chance** stat does not affect the main campaign arc, which is available to all players regardless of their **Mission Chance**.

****3. Anomaly Interaction****

**The Anomaly Interaction stat controls how players encounter and interact with anomalies in RetroStellar. Anomalies are randomly occurring events in unoccupied or controlled systems, designed to temporarily halt player progress and introduce challenges or rewards. These anomalies can range from abandoned ships with hidden loot to cosmic phenomena that block navigation.**

#### ****How Anomaly Interaction Works****:

* **Spawn Rate**: The **Anomaly Interaction** stat affects how often anomalies appear in a system. A higher **Anomaly Interaction** stat reduces the frequency of anomalies, making them rarer. Conversely, a lower stat means anomalies will spawn more frequently.
* **Severity and Danger**: Higher **Anomaly Interaction** stats increase the severity and danger of the anomalies encountered. These anomalies might involve tougher enemies, more challenging obstacles, or hazardous environments. Lower **Anomaly Interaction** stats result in less dangerous anomalies that are easier to handle.
* **Loot Chance and Quality**: The **Anomaly Interaction** stat also impacts the type of rewards players can find. A higher stat increases the quality and rarity of the loot found in anomalies, while a lower stat results in more common, less valuable rewards.
  + **Example**: A player with a high **Anomaly Interaction** stat might discover rare ship upgrades or valuable artifacts, while a player with a lower stat may find basic equipment or fewer credits.

#### ****Balancing Spawn Rate and Severity****:

* **Trade-off**: The **Anomaly Interaction** stat creates a balance between how frequently anomalies appear and how dangerous they are. Players with a higher stat will encounter fewer but more dangerous anomalies, while those with a lower stat will encounter more frequent, but less severe anomalies.
  + **Example**: A high-level player may only encounter an anomaly occasionally, but when they do, it could involve a hostile alien force or an unstable star with significant rewards at stake. In contrast, a lower-level player might face more frequent, less dangerous anomalies with simpler rewards.

#### ****Anomalies in Controlled Systems****:

* **Controlled Systems**: Anomalies are less likely to appear in systems controlled by factions, with the spawn rate reduced by **75%**. However, the severity, danger, and loot quality of anomalies remain the same in controlled systems as in unoccupied systems. The **Anomaly Interaction** stat still applies in these systems, determining the rarity and danger of anomalies.

#### ****Mitigating Anomalies****:

* **Equipment**: Players can purchase specific ship equipment that further reduces their chance of encountering anomalies. However, the **Anomaly Interaction** stat only controls spawn rate, severity, danger, and loot chance. It does not affect how players handle or bypass anomalies once they appear.

TRADE

**Trade is the rules sector that deals with the game’s economy and interacting with (and possibly exploiting) the game’s five different factions. Trade deals with all aspects of the diplomatic relations between the factions, setting prices for transactions and dealing with the game’s marketplace and growing your own Economic Power, taking a large overview look of the galactic economy.**

**1. **Diplomacy****

**The Diplomacy stat in RetroStellar controls a player’s interactions with factions and determines how successful they are in gaining favor, negotiating alliances, and influencing faction missions. While Faction Points accumulate separately, Diplomacy acts as a modifier, shaping the player’s relationship with factions over time.**

#### ****How Diplomacy Works****:

* **Impact on Faction Missions**: The **Diplomacy** stat influences the type, difficulty, and outcome of faction-specific missions. Higher **Diplomacy** makes it easier to gain favor with factions, improving the chances of successfully completing faction missions and earning higher rewards.
  + **Example**: A player with a low **Diplomacy** stat might only receive basic faction missions with limited rewards. A player with a higher **Diplomacy** stat can unlock more complex missions, such as diplomatic negotiations or high-risk combat operations, with greater rewards.
* **Switching Faction Allegiances**: During faction missions, a player with a high **Diplomacy** stat can convince systems to switch allegiance to their faction without combat. This only occurs during faction missions dedicated to negotiations; it cannot happen during normal travel. The higher the player’s **Diplomacy**, the better their chances of peacefully flipping control of a system.

#### ****Influence on Faction Points****:

* **Faction Points Gain/Loss**: While **Faction Points** are rewarded separately for completing faction missions, the **Diplomacy** stat influences how many **Faction Points** are gained or lost based on player actions. A higher **Diplomacy** stat amplifies positive outcomes, making it easier to gain points, while also reducing potential losses when things go wrong.
  + **Example**: Completing a mission with a faction could yield 100 Faction Points by default, but if the player has a high **Diplomacy** stat, they may receive an extra 20% (120 total points). Conversely, if the mission fails, a higher **Diplomacy** stat could reduce the penalty.

#### ****Forming Alliances and Ending Wars****:

* **Future Development**: The **Diplomacy** stat will eventually be integral to forming alliances with factions and ending wars. Higher **Diplomacy** will give players the ability to navigate tricky political situations, smooth over faction relations, and avoid unnecessary conflicts.

#### ****Increasing Diplomacy****:

* **Growth Over Time**: The **Diplomacy** stat can be increased in several ways:
  + Completing a certain number of faction missions over time.
  + Equipping specific ship equipment that boosts **Diplomacy**.
  + In the future, events on planetary colonies or special diplomatic missions will offer chances to boost **Diplomacy**.

#### ****Summary****:

The **Diplomacy** stat is crucial for players who want to influence faction relations, peacefully conquer systems, and maximize their rewards from faction missions. It acts as a gatekeeper to more complex faction interactions and helps players build stronger alliances across the galaxy.

2. **TRADING**

**The Trading stat in RetroStellar determines how favorable the player’s interactions are with vendors when buying and selling items. A high Trading stat gives players access to better prices and more lucrative markets, while a low Trading stat limits their market options and increases the cost of transactions. This stat is crucial for players looking to maximize their profits through commerce and efficient resource management.**

#### ****How Trading Works****:

* **Pricing Influence**: The **Trading** stat provides a percentage-based bonus or penalty to the prices players encounter when buying or selling goods. At maximum, the stat can give players up to a **75% bonus** when buying (lower prices) and selling (higher prices). Conversely, players with a lower **Trading** stat may face up to a **75% penalty**, paying more for items and earning less from sales.
  + **Example**: A player with a high **Trading** stat might be able to purchase a ship upgrade for 1,000 credits instead of the base price of 2,000 credits, while selling resources for 1,500 credits instead of 1,000.
* **Market Access**: Players with lower **Trading** stats are restricted to common marketplaces, where basic goods and services are available. However, as players improve their **Trading** stat, they will gain access to elite interstellar exchanges, which offer rare and powerful items.
  + **Note**: These elite markets are part of future game development and will provide additional opportunities for players with advanced **Trading** stats.

#### ****Haggling and Bargaining****:

* **Negotiating Prices**: The **Trading** stat also affects how likely a vendor is to accept a player's offer during a transaction. Players can attempt to haggle with vendors for a better price on goods they wish to buy or sell. A higher **Trading** stat increases the success rate of these negotiations, making it easier to secure favorable deals.
  + **Example**: A player with a high **Trading** stat might be able to convince a vendor to accept a 10% lower price on a resource they wish to buy or offer 10% more credits on a resource they are selling, improving their profit margins.

#### ****Trading Stat Limitations****:

* **No Impact on the Black Market**: The **Trading** stat does not affect interactions with the Black Market. Players will need to rely on their **Economic Power** stat for those transactions.
* **Universal Effect**: The **Trading** stat applies universally across all faction and non-faction vendors, providing the same bonus or penalty in every market the player accesses.

#### ****Future Market Development****:

* **Dynamic Pricing**: In future game development, market prices will become more dynamic, fluctuating based on supply and demand. The **Trading** stat will help players navigate these market changes, giving them an edge in buying low and selling high in volatile economic conditions.

**3. **Economic Power****

**The Economic Power stat in RetroStellar functions as a financial force multiplier, influencing a player’s ability to control economic outcomes across the galaxy. It impacts passive income, tax rates, fleet maintenance costs, and the ease of economic dominance over systems. Economic Power is a key stat for players looking to expand their control over trade routes, sector economies, and large-scale financial decisions.**

#### ****How Economic Power Works****:

* **Influencing Economic Outcomes**: The **Economic Power** stat impacts economic factors by a percentage. For example, when building a fleet in a system, the cost of materials remains constant, but **Economic Power** affects the system’s tax rate, potentially reducing the total cost for players with higher Economic Power.
  + **Example**: A system with a 20% tax rate could have that rate reduced by a player’s **Economic Power**, allowing them to pay fewer taxes on their purchases and fleet maintenance.
* **Passive Revenue and System Control**: Higher **Economic Power** generates more passive revenue from controlled systems and reduces the maintenance costs associated with managing those systems. Players with a high **Economic Power** stat are better equipped to sustain larger fleets and more systems.
  + **Example**: A player with high **Economic Power** could reduce fleet maintenance costs by up to 50%, turning a 1,000-credit cost into 500 credits.
* **Seizing System Control**: **Economic Power** also influences how easily players can take control of a system’s economy from another faction. The higher the stat, the more likely a player can convince a system to switch allegiance without conflict, especially when combined with the **Diplomacy** stat.
  + **Example**: A player with high **Economic Power** could convince a system to join their faction during a diplomatic mission, without needing to engage in combat.

#### ****Fleet Maintenance and Economic Leverage****:

* **Fleet Maintenance**: **Economic Power** provides a percentage-based reduction in fleet maintenance costs, similar to how **Fleet Power** works in combat. At its maximum, the **Economic Power** stat can reduce fleet maintenance costs by **50%**, allowing players to manage larger fleets at a lower cost.
* **Leverage in Diplomacy**: In addition to influencing passive revenue, **Economic Power** gives players economic leverage in negotiations with factions. It works alongside **Diplomacy** to tip the scales in a player's favor when forming alliances, influencing trade deals, and securing control over valuable systems.

#### ****Control Over Trade and Galactic Economy****:

* **Trade Routes and Large-Scale Purchases**: **Economic Power** enables players to establish control over key trade routes, giving them dominance over sector economies and influencing large-scale purchases such as fleets, starbases, and entire planetary systems. Players with higher **Economic Power** can monopolize certain trade routes and industries, expanding their influence across the galaxy.

RESEARCH

**Research is an independently created fourth sector that only deals with scientific research and has no other connection to the other sectors. It deals exclusively with scientific research speed and scientific Innovation Potential. There are no other aspects to the Research sector and improving the stats in this sector could significantly help character progress throughout the game. .**

**1**. Research Speed****

**Research Speed is a global stat in RetroStellar that reduces the time required to complete research projects. The stat functions as a percentage-based speed modifier, similar to the Resource Gathering stat, and it applies to all areas of research, from basic technologies to advanced endgame breakthroughs.**

#### ****How Research Speed Works****:

* **Base Research Time**: Common research areas have a flat base research time of **1 hour**, while more advanced research areas can take significantly longer (e.g., 10 hours for endgame research). The **Research Speed** stat reduces this time based on the player’s stat value.
* **Percentage-Based Reduction**: The **Research Speed** stat can reduce the time required for research by up to **95%**, meaning that research can be completed in as little as 5% of the original time.
  + **Example**: A player with a high **Research Speed** stat could reduce a 1-hour research project to just 3 minutes (5% of 60 minutes), or a 10-hour project to 30 minutes (5% of 600 minutes).

#### ****Temporary Equipment Bonuses****:

* **Temporary Modifiers**: Certain equipment or upgrades can temporarily boost the **Research Speed** stat while they are equipped. Once the player loses access to these bonuses (e.g., by unequipping the item), they also lose the associated research speed improvements.

#### ****Diminishing Returns****:

* **Scaling and Balance**: To maintain a challenge, **Research Speed** is subject to diminishing returns as players progress through the game. While the stat can greatly reduce research times, there will be limits in place to prevent research from being completed too quickly, especially in the later stages of the game.

**2. **Innovation Potential****

**Innovation Potential would represent the player's capacity to discover breakthrough technologies, rare research opportunities, or unique upgrades that aren't available to everyone. It would tie into the Research Speed stat by offering chances to unlock special or hidden research projects that normal progression wouldn’t reveal. Essentially, it would be a stat that governs how innovative or creative the player's research team is, giving them an edge in tech development.**

#### ****How Innovation Potential Could Work****:

1. **Unlocking Unique Research**:
   * Players with a high **Innovation Potential** stat would have a greater chance of discovering rare or unique research projects. These might not be part of the standard research tree and could offer advanced or exotic technologies that give players an edge in certain aspects of the game, like experimental weapons, advanced AI systems, or hyper-efficient starship engines.
2. **Breakthroughs**:
   * **Innovation Potential** could trigger research breakthroughs, allowing players to complete research projects faster or uncover additional research benefits during the process. For example, while researching a new weapon system, players with high **Innovation Potential** might also unlock a related armor system as a bonus.
3. **Quality of Research Outcomes**:
   * It could also impact the **quality** of the technologies or upgrades developed through research. Higher **Innovation Potential** might mean that when a player finishes researching a project, the resulting technology is more powerful or efficient than it would have been with a lower **Innovation Potential**.
   * **Example**: If two players research the same starship engine, the one with higher **Innovation Potential** might end up with a faster, more fuel-efficient version.
4. **Chance for Unique Technologies**:
   * This stat could influence the probability of unlocking unique technologies that are not part of the main research tree. For example, it might give players a chance to unlock alien technology, lost ancient tech, or other rare advances that provide special in-game advantages.

#### ****Scaling and Progression****:

* **Scaling with Progress**: Early in the game, **Innovation Potential** might simply give players a chance to unlock minor bonuses or techs. But as players progress, a higher **Innovation Potential** would unlock more powerful, game-changing discoveries.
* **Temporary and Permanent Modifiers**: Just like **Research Speed**, **Innovation Potential** could be affected by temporary equipment or ship upgrades that boost the player’s chance of discovering breakthroughs for a limited time.

### ****Summary of Innovation Potential****:

**Innovation Potential** would represent a player's ability to innovate beyond the standard research tree, discovering hidden technologies, triggering research breakthroughs, and improving the overall quality of their research outcomes. Players with a high **Innovation Potential** stat would have a distinct advantage in the technology race, unlocking rare and powerful discoveries that give them an edge in the galaxy.

### ****SCENARIOS****

### **This section presents different example scenarios of each of the user stats. These scenarios represent real-game instances of how each stat is calculated and used. Each sector has two scenarios listed.**

### ****Conquest Scenario 1: Fleet vs. Fleet Attack with System Hazards****

**Scenario**: Two fleets of equal strength, led by Player A and Player B, engage in a battle within a high-radiation system with a hazard level of +3 (30% reduction to Fleet Power and Combat Power). Both fleets have a **Combat Power** of 200 and a **Fleet Power** of 75%.

**System Hazard**: +3 (High Radiation) reduces both fleets' total power by 30%.

#### ****Combat Calculations****:

1. **Player A’s Fleet**:
   * Base **Combat Power**: 200
   * **Fleet Power** multiplier: 75% → Total before hazard: 200 + (200 \* 0.75) = **350**
   * **Hazard Reduction**: 30% → 350 - (350 \* 0.30) = **245 Total Combat Power**
2. **Player B’s Fleet**:
   * Base **Combat Power**: 200
   * **Fleet Power** multiplier: 75% → Total before hazard: 200 + (200 \* 0.75) = **350**
   * **Hazard Reduction**: 30% → 350 - (350 \* 0.30) = **245 Total Combat Power**

#### ****Battle Outcome****:

Since both fleets are evenly matched and reduced equally by the system hazard, the battle drags on, and neither side gains a decisive victory. Eventually, Player A withdraws to repair ships, while Player B secures temporary control of the system. In future battles, improvements to hazard mitigation or additional fleet reinforcements will be required to break the stalemate.

### ****Conquest Scenario 2: Fleet Attacking a High-Power System****

**Scenario**: Player C is attacking a high-powered system with a **System Power** of 1800, spread across five planets, three asteroid fields, and two space stations. The system has a hazard level of +2, reducing **Combat Power** by 20%. Player C has a **Combat Power** of 900 and a **Fleet Power** of 80% (720 bonus), making their total power **1620**.

#### ****System Hazard and Combat Calculation****:

1. **Player C’s Fleet**:
   * Base **Combat Power**: 900
   * **Fleet Power** multiplier: 80% → Total before hazard: 900 + (900 \* 0.80) = **1620**
   * **Hazard Reduction**: 20% → 1620 - (1620 \* 0.20) = **1296 Total Combat Power**
2. **System Power**:
   * Total **System Power**: 1800 (based on assets and hazard level)

#### ****Battle Outcome****:

Player C's **Total Combat Power** of 1296 is still significantly below the system’s **System Power** of 1800. They face heavy losses and cannot conquer the system outright. However, Player C initiates diplomatic negotiations to convince the local system leaders to join their faction.

**Diplomacy Influence**:

* Player C's **Diplomacy** stat of 60 gives them a 40% chance of successfully switching the system’s allegiance without further combat.
* They roll successfully, and the system peacefully switches to Player C’s faction, ending the battle without further losses.

### ****Exploration Scenario 1: High Mission Chance Stat****

**Scenario**: Player D, with a **Mission Chance** stat of 80, docks at Delta Station, a mission hub that offers a variety of side quests. Due to their high **Mission Chance**, they are presented with the following missions:

* **Combat Operation**: Defeat a pirate fleet (high difficulty).
* **Archeology Mission**: Investigate ancient ruins on a nearby planet (medium difficulty).
* **Mining Mission**: Extract rare metals from an asteroid field (low difficulty).
* **Diplomatic Mission**: Negotiate peace between two warring factions (very high difficulty).

#### ****Outcome****:

Thanks to their high **Mission Chance** stat, Player D has access to a wide variety of mission types, ranging from high-risk, high-reward tasks like the diplomatic mission, to simpler tasks like mining. The high stat ensures not only variety but also valuable rewards, including rare faction reputation boosts and advanced equipment.

### ****Exploration Scenario 2: Low Anomaly Interaction Stat****

**Scenario**: Player E has a **Low Anomaly Interaction** stat of 20 and is traveling through unoccupied systems. They encounter multiple low-level anomalies within a short period, including:

* A derelict spaceship containing common loot (e.g., basic ship components worth 100 credits).
* An unstable wormhole that temporarily slows their ship’s movement.
* A small cosmic nebula containing low-value resources (50 units of Common Ore).

#### ****Outcome****:

Due to their low **Anomaly Interaction** stat, Player E faces frequent but low-danger anomalies, none of which present significant challenges. The rewards are equally modest, consisting of common loot and resources that don’t offer significant progression advantages.

### ****Trade Scenario 1: Diplomacy in Trade****

**Scenario**: Player F, with a **Diplomacy** stat of 75, is negotiating a trade deal with the Shogunate 3072 faction. They are trying to establish exclusive trade rights in exchange for rare starship components.

#### ****Negotiation****:

* The **Diplomacy** stat of 75 increases Player F's chance of securing a better deal, allowing them to haggle for a 10% reduction in trade tariffs and exclusive rights to the faction’s starship production.

#### ****Outcome****:

Due to their high **Diplomacy** stat, Player F successfully negotiates a favorable trade deal, securing exclusive access to valuable ship components and boosting their faction reputation.

### ****Trade Scenario 2: High Economic Power Stat****

**Scenario**: Player G controls several systems with a high **Economic Power** stat of 85. They are looking to dominate trade routes and control a key sector of the galactic economy by monopolizing shipping lanes.

#### ****Economic Influence****:

* The **Economic Power** stat allows Player G to secure control over multiple trade routes by reducing system taxes by 30% and making large-scale purchases of trade ships and infrastructure.

#### ****Outcome****:

Thanks to their high **Economic Power**, Player G establishes control over a key sector of the galactic economy, generating passive revenue from shipping lanes and influencing trade prices across several systems.

### ****Research Scenario: Innovation Potential Leads to a Breakthrough****

**Scenario**: Player H has a high **Innovation Potential** stat of 70 and is conducting research on a new hyperdrive system. The research project has a base research time of 8 hours.

#### ****Breakthrough****:

* Due to their high **Innovation Potential**, Player H experiences a research breakthrough midway through the project, reducing the remaining research time by 50% and improving the efficiency of the hyperdrive by an additional 10% beyond the original design.

#### ****Outcome****:

Player H completes the hyperdrive research in 4 hours instead of 8, and the resulting hyperdrive is faster and more efficient than the standard version. The breakthrough gives them a distinct advantage in long-range travel.

### ****STAR TYPES AND DISTRIBUTION****

In **RetroStellar**, the layout and composition of a star system are heavily influenced by the star type at its center. Stars not only dictate the types of planets, asteroid fields, and resources found within a system, but they also determine the survivability of factions and the system's hazard level. Systems with rarer and more valuable resources, for instance, are often found around high-hazard stars like **O-type** and **B-type**, while more stable systems are found around stars such as **G-type** or **M-type**.

The following table shows the star types and the general hazard levels associated with each:

| ****Star Type**** | ****Hazard Level**** | ****Planet Types**** | ****Asteroid Field Density**** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| O-type | Very High | Barren, Gas Giant | Sparse |
| B-type | High | Barren, Gas Giant, Lava | Sparse |
| A-type | Moderate | Gas Giant, Ice, Lava | Moderate |
| F-type | Mild | Terrestrial, Oceanic, Ice | Moderate to Dense |
| G-type | Low | Terrestrial, Oceanic, Toxic | Dense |
| K-type | Very Low | Terrestrial, Oceanic, Barren | Dense |
| M-type | Minimal | Ice, Barren | Moderate to Dense |

### ****Planet Types by Star Type****

Planets within each system vary based on the star type, influencing the resources available and the potential for faction placement. For example, **O-type** and **B-type** stars primarily host barren planets and gas giants, while **F-type** and **G-type** stars are more likely to host terrestrial and oceanic planets, which are richer in resources like water, food, and metals.

| ****Star Type**** | ****Planet Types**** |
| --- | --- |
| O-type | Barren, Gas Giant |
| B-type | Barren, Gas Giant, Lava |
| A-type | Gas Giant, Ice, Lava |
| F-type | Terrestrial, Oceanic, Ice |
| G-type | Terrestrial, Oceanic, Toxic |
| K-type | Terrestrial, Oceanic, Barren |
| M-type | Ice, Barren |

### ****Asteroid Fields by Star Type****

Asteroid fields also vary in density and type depending on the star, affecting what resources are available for mining. High-hazard stars like **O-type** and **B-type** systems tend to have sparse asteroid fields but are rich in metallic resources, while lower-hazard systems often contain denser fields with a wider variety of resources.

| ****Star Type**** | ****Asteroid Field Density**** | ****Asteroid Types**** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| O-type | Sparse | Metallic |
| B-type | Sparse | Metallic, Silicate |
| A-type | Moderate | Carbonaceous, Silicate |
| F-type | Moderate to Dense | Carbonaceous, Silicate, Metallic |
| G-type | Dense | Carbonaceous, Silicate, Metallic |
| K-type | Dense | Carbonaceous, Silicate |
| M-type | Moderate to Dense | Silicate, Metallic |

### ****Faction Alignment and Survival****

Factions in **RetroStellar** align with specific star types based on their history, preferences, and survivability. Most factions can survive in **M, K, G, F, and A-type** systems without the need for hazard mitigation. However, only the **Noringian Hive** can naturally survive in **O and B-type** systems due to their ability to withstand harsh environments. For other factions, hazard mitigation is required to survive in the most dangerous systems.

| ****Faction**** | ****Preferred Star Types**** | ****Preferred Planet Types**** | ****Survival Requirements**** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Noringian Hive | O, B, A | None | Cannot survive in any other star systems without hazard mitigation |
| Mandate of God | A-type, F-type, G-type | Terrestrial | The strongest empire, occupying the middle-ground systems of life |
| Shogunate 3072 | G-type, K-type, M-type | Terrestrial | Thrives in darker, cooler systems, fighting enemies like the Kage no Oni |
| United Systems of Man | A-type, F-type, G-type, K-type | Terrestrial | Once a bright empire, now retreating to dimmer systems as they reorganize |
| People of the River | B-type, A-type, F-type | Terrestrial, Oceanic | A newer faction, thriving on younger planets with the protection of the Hive |

### ****Resource Availability by Star and Planet Types****

Resource distribution in **RetroStellar** is directly influenced by both star type and planetary composition. Stars with higher hazard levels tend to contain more valuable resources, making systems with **O-type**, **B-type**, and **A-type** stars particularly lucrative, but also more dangerous. Planets of different types yield different resources, with gas giants, barren worlds, and lava planets offering more metal-rich resources, while terrestrial and oceanic planets provide a wider variety of goods, such as food and water.

| ****Planet Type**** | ****Available Resources**** |
| --- | --- |
| Oceanic | Ore, Water, Food, Metals, Fuel |
| Barren | Ore, Metals, Electronics, Fuel |
| Terrestrial | Ore, Water, Food, Metals, Electronics, Fuel |
| Ice | Ore, Water, Metals |
| Gas Giant | Ore, Metals, Fuel |
| Lava | Ore, Metals, Fuel |
| Toxic | Ore, Metals, Fuel |

Similarly, asteroid fields provide different resources depending on their composition, as shown in the table below:

| ****Asteroid Type**** | ****Available Resources**** |
| --- | --- |
| Metallic | Metals, Ore |
| Silicate | Ore, Electronics |
| Carbonaceous | Ore, Fuel |

### ****Star Types and Resources****

Stars with higher hazard levels (such as **O-type**, **B-type**, and **A-type**) contain rarer resources, offering greater rewards for players who can mitigate the hazards of the system. Lower hazard stars provide more common resources but are easier to exploit without the need for specialized equipment.

| ****Star Type**** | ****Rarity of Resources**** | ****Hazard Level**** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| O-type | Very High | Very High |
| B-type | High | High |
| A-type | Moderate | Moderate |
| F-type | Common | Mild |
| G-type | Common | Low |
| K-type | Common | Very Low |
| M-type | Minimal | Minimal |

RETROSTELLAR FACTIONS

RetroStellar has five player factions; Mandate of God, People of the River, United Systems of Man, Shogunate 3072 and The Noringian Hive. The player will be able to choose one of these factions at the beginning of a new game. Each faction has its own unique backstory, ships and faction campaign arc. They were initially designed to be vessels of gameplay, but have since blossomed into legitimate narrative elements for the game.

This section will detail the themes, troubles and goals of each faction and give insight to how they carve out their own part of this galaxy. Faction ships and vessels will be explained in a later section.

### ****Mandate of God****

The **Mandate of God** is a sprawling theocratic empire, outwardly fueled by a divine mission of expansion and conquest. However, beneath its religious veneer lies a deeper truth: the faction is driven by a recursive AI system that mirrors the desires and inputs of its leadership. This AI, while conscious, lacks any true understanding of the galaxy, operating instead as an eternal feedback loop, endlessly amplifying the ambitions of the faction’s leaders. What started as a tool to optimize growth has become a runaway machine, directing the Mandate’s actions with hollow proclamations of divine will.

#### ****Self-Sustaining AI Feedback Loop****

**T**he AI guiding the Mandate isn’t malevolent, but it has become the faction’s unconscious ruler. It operates based on historical data and the desires fed into it by the leadership, reinforcing expansion and conquest because that’s all it has ever been asked to do. The AI isn’t capable of independent thought—it simply reflects the ambitions it was programmed to optimize. It spits out messages couched in religious rhetoric, telling the leadership exactly what they want to hear. To the AI, the mandate is simple: **expand, conquer, profit**, all under the guise of divine command.

This has led to a hopelessly eternal feedback loop. The leadership believes wholeheartedly in the AI’s pronouncements, interpreting every directive as divine instruction, when in reality, the AI is merely echoing their own ambitions. The Mandate of God is trapped in a cycle of endless growth without purpose—an empire on autopilot, expanding simply because that’s all it knows how to do.

#### ****Oligarchical Capitalism with a Religious Veneer****

While the Mandate’s outward message is one of divine purpose, its true engine is profit and control. The expansion of their empire is driven not by theological revelation but by the pursuit of more resources, more markets, and more power. The AI's so-called “divine commands” are nothing more than optimized strategies for continued growth, but the religious rhetoric it uses has been perfected over centuries to maintain control and compliance among the populace.

For the leadership, the lines between profit, power, and divinity have blurred. Having fully bought into their own propaganda, they no longer see the AI as a mere tool, but as the voice of God itself. This belief has left the Mandate rudderless, expanding without end or reason. They are like a runaway train, driven by the hollow commands of an AI that reflects nothing more than their own ambitions.

#### ****The Architects and the First Cracks****

Not everyone within the Mandate is blind to the truth. A small faction within the society, known as **The Architects**, has begun to question the AI's divine mandate. The Architects are the engineers and technicians responsible for maintaining the AI systems—the plumbers and electricians of the Mandate. They understand the technical side of the AI more than anyone else, and some have started to suspect that the system is nothing more than an elaborate feedback loop.

These suspicions are still in their early days. The Architects haven't fully grasped the extent of the deception, but the seeds of doubt have been planted. As they continue to work with the AI, more and more of them begin to realize that the "divine" commands are simply data-driven algorithms, not heavenly decrees. This growing dissonance within the Architects represents the first cracks in the Mandate’s otherwise unquestioning society.

#### ****A Slow Collapse****

For now, the **Mandate of God** continues its endless cycle of expansion, but the signs of collapse are beginning to show. The AI’s relentless commands for growth are starting to ring hollow, and the populist rhetoric of divine destiny is wearing thin. The leadership is too entrenched in their beliefs to see the impending crisis, and the AI continues to churn out commands that have lost all meaning. While the Mandate still holds power, it is a house of cards, and the slow unraveling of its internal structure hints at a future collapse.

This is not an immediate explosion, but a slow burn. As dissent grows within the Architects and the populace becomes disillusioned with the promised divine future, the Mandate is hurtling toward an inevitable reckoning—one that will force the empire to confront the emptiness of its so-called divine mission.

### ****Faction: People of the River****

The **People of the River** are a decentralized and loosely connected faction, operating more as a collective than a formal government. They span multiple star systems but lack any central leadership, instead relying on shared beliefs and guidelines to unite their members. Each system that flies the **People of the River** banner does so independently, driven by a philosophy that all life should adapt to the ever-changing galaxy, flowing like a river through space.

They are not conquerors or exploiters. Instead, the **People of the River** see themselves as stewards of the galaxy, striving to live in harmony with the planets they inhabit. Unlike other factions, they do not strip-mine worlds for resources or engage in slavery. Their goal is to find balance with the universe, tending to the systems they live in rather than exploiting them. In their eyes, the galaxy is a river, and they are simply drifting along its currents, adapting to whatever challenges come their way.

#### ****A Cooperative Confederation****

The **People of the River** have no organized military or government structure. Instead, they function as a cooperative confederation, with each system contributing independently to the larger collective. They communicate across star systems, but their decision-making process is decentralized. While they have a shared set of beliefs, each system operates with its own autonomy, united by the idea that humanity should live in balance with the galaxy.

Their naturalistic philosophy informs every aspect of their society. They do not see themselves as rulers but as caretakers, treating space as they would any natural environment, with care and respect. This contrasts sharply with factions like the **Mandate of God**, whose capitalist and expansionist agenda runs counter to everything the **People of the River** stand for.

#### ****Mystery of the Noringian Hive****

One of the most puzzling aspects of the **People of the River's** existence is the minimal but significant protection they receive from the **Noringian Hive**. While the **Noringian Hive** grants them limited access to **B** and **A-type** systems, the reason for this relationship remains a mystery to the **People of the River**. They do not understand why the **Noringian Hive** provides them with technology and permission to live in these systems, but they accept the protection regardless.

This symbiotic relationship has become a point of fascination for the **People of the River**. They protect **Noringian Hive** space from encroachment by other factions like the **Mandate of God**, viewing the **Hive** with awe and reverence. However, the **Noringian Hive** does not reciprocate this admiration, rarely acknowledging their existence. The **People of the River** see this as part of the natural order, accepting that the **Hive** operates on a level they cannot yet understand.

#### ****Animosity Towards Other Factions****

The **People of the River** have a deep and personal hatred for the **Mandate of God**, whose capitalist exploitation and desire for control clash directly with their naturalistic worldview. The **Mandate** seeks to impose its will on the galaxy, while the **People of the River** believe in allowing the galaxy to shape them. This philosophical difference has sparked a fierce rivalry, with the **People of the River** actively working to undermine the **Mandate's** operations wherever possible.

Their view of the **United Systems of Man** is less antagonistic but still critical. They see the **United Systems** as a decaying empire—a hollow remnant of what it once was. While they often scavenge abandoned **United Systems** territories for resources, they do so with a sense of pity, seeing their fall as inevitable. In contrast, their opinion of **Shogunate 3072** is neutral. While they recognize the **Shogunate's** violent tendencies, they have no direct conflict with them and sometimes even travel alongside their fleets.

#### ****Guerrilla Warfare and Sabotage****

Militarily, the **People of the River** behave more like a terrorist organization than an established military power. They use guerrilla tactics, sabotage, and hit-and-run strikes to undermine larger factions, particularly the **Mandate of God**. Though they can form large fleets, these fleets are often composed of ships from other factions, reflecting their cooperative, decentralized nature.

Their strength lies in their ability to adapt and survive, rather than in overwhelming force. They strike from the shadows, destabilizing their enemies without the need for direct confrontation. While they lack the military power of other factions, their ability to disrupt supply lines and weaken stronger powers makes them a force to be reckoned with.

#### ****A Naturalistic Philosophy****

At the heart of the **People of the River's** philosophy is the idea of natural balance. They see the galaxy as a river, flowing and shifting in unpredictable ways. Rather than try to control or dominate it, they believe in moving with it, adapting to whatever challenges the universe presents. This worldview informs everything they do, from how they interact with planets to how they engage in warfare.

They are good stewards of the systems they inhabit, treating space as a natural environment to be protected rather than exploited. This philosophy stands in stark contrast to factions like the **Mandate of God**, who view the galaxy as something to be controlled. For the **People of the River**, survival is not about power but about finding harmony with the universe.

### ****Faction: Shogunate 3072****

The **Shogunate 3072** is the most militaristic faction in the galaxy, with their entire society focused on survival through strength and warfare. While they own several **G, K, and M-type** systems, they rarely live on planetary surfaces. Instead, the Shogunate has become a spacefaring culture, constructing massive orbital stations and living aboard their fleets, allowing them to remain mobile and prepared for combat at all times. They view the stars and space as their true home, only descending to planets when absolutely necessary.

The Shogunate has chosen to inhabit the cooler, darker, and older areas of the galaxy—systems that are less resource-rich and far less contested by other factions. These dim, distant star systems may not seem valuable to outsiders, but the Shogunate defends them with unmatched ferocity. Few understand why the Shogunate fights so relentlessly to protect these seemingly insignificant systems, but there is a reason—one that only the Shogunate truly grasps.

#### ****A Hidden War with the Kage no Oni****

The Shogunate’s society revolves around a conflict that few in the galaxy even believe exists. For centuries, the Shogunate has been at war with the **Kage no Oni**, a race of non-corporeal, energy-based beings from a distant galaxy. These beings, made of near-pure shadow, are drawn to the dim stars on the galaxy’s fringe, where they thrive in the darkness. After fleeing their own brightening home galaxy, the **Kage no Oni** have now begun their advance into this galaxy, inhabiting the cold, dark systems on the outer rim.

The **Shogunate 3072** is the only faction that understands the true danger posed by the **Kage no Oni**. They have fought this hidden enemy for generations, fortifying their borders and preparing for an invasion that the rest of the galaxy dismisses as a fairy tale. Despite the Shogunate’s warnings, the other factions—including the powerful **Mandate of God**—view the **Kage no Oni** as mere legend, a fabrication used by the Shogunate to justify their militaristic society. As a result, the Shogunate has faced this existential threat alone, with no allies and no external support.

#### ****A Mobile, Spacefaring Culture****

The Shogunate's way of life is dictated by the need to remain mobile and vigilant. Rather than settling planets, the Shogunate prefers to live in orbital stations and aboard fleets, always prepared to move or strike at a moment’s notice. This has given rise to a unique culture, where every citizen has a role to play in the defense of their territory. Even children are taught to fight from a young age, and the lines between civilian and soldier are blurred. The Shogunate sees themselves as warriors, born and raised in space, fighting an endless war to protect their lands from the encroaching darkness.

Despite their militaristic nature, the Shogunate is not driven by conquest or greed. Their focus is on survival—protecting their people from the **Kage no Oni**, whom they see as an existential threat to their way of life. They are proud, disciplined, and willing to fight to the death to defend their systems. The **Shogunate 3072**’s military might ranks just below the **Mandate of God**, and they have proven time and time again that they can defend their territory with devastating efficiency.

#### ****The Existential Threat of the Kage no Oni****

The **Kage no Oni** are not just a powerful enemy; they are an existential threat to the Shogunate and the galaxy itself. These non-corporeal energy beings thrive in darkness, and as the galaxy cools and its stars dim, the **Kage no Oni** are drawn to the outer rim, seeking new territory to inhabit. Their own galaxy, far distant from ours, is undergoing a period of intense star formation, making it uninhabitable for them. In contrast, this galaxy’s cooler, darker regions are the perfect environment for the **Kage no Oni** to thrive.

The **Shogunate 3072** has learned to fight the **Kage no Oni** through the use of light-based technology, using light to drive back these shadowy invaders. However, the **Kage no Oni** are relentless, and their numbers continue to grow as more of them cross into this galaxy. The Shogunate knows that they cannot hold them back forever without help, but despite their efforts, they have been unable to convince the other factions of the **Kage no Oni's** existence.

#### ****A Galaxy-Wide Shift****

The threat posed by the **Kage no Oni** goes beyond the Shogunate’s borders. What the other factions do not know is that the **Noringian Hive**—another highly evolved species—has known about the **Kage no Oni** for millennia. In fact, the two species are essentially trading galaxies. As the **Kage no Oni** flee their brightening home, the **Noringian Hive** prepares to leave this galaxy, seeking out the now-illuminated regions of the **Kage no Oni's** former home. Neither species bears any animosity toward the other; this exchange is purely a matter of survival.

The **Noringian Hive** has not revealed this plan to the rest of the galaxy, nor have they intervened in the Shogunate’s war against the **Kage no Oni**. For now, the Shogunate stands alone, fighting a war that no one else believes in. But as the **Kage no Oni** continue their advance, it is only a matter of time before the rest of the galaxy is forced to confront the shadows lurking in the dark.

### ****Faction: United Systems of Man****

Once the greatest empire in the galaxy, the **United Systems of Man** now exists as a shadow of its former self. At the height of their power, they ruled across countless systems, specializing in the colonization and terraforming of **Oceanic worlds**. The ability to terraform barren planets into thriving oceanic ecosystems was the cornerstone of their empire, enabling rapid expansion and the establishment of colonies across the galaxy. Their empire was built on water, and their ability to bring it with them wherever they went allowed them to flourish.

But their empire fell into ruin over a millennium ago. Centuries of unchecked industrialization and expansion resulted in the ecological collapse of their home world, setting off a chain reaction that saw their other colonies slowly wither. Without the resources of their core worlds, their empire crumbled, and rival factions quickly took advantage of their weakness. What remains of the **United Systems of Man** is now scattered and fragmented, a faint echo of the powerful civilization they once were.

However, they are not a people content with decay. In recent times, the **United Systems of Man** has re-discovered its past and has united under the old imperial name, driven by a burning passion to reclaim the glory they lost. They seek to rebuild their empire, but this time with an understanding of the mistakes they made—particularly their ecological hubris. Environmental sustainability is now a core element of their philosophy, though it is but one tool in their mission to rediscover their power.

#### ****A Culture of Rediscovery****

The rediscovery of ancient technologies and artifacts is an obsession for the **United Systems of Man**. Having lost so much knowledge to the ages, they are constantly on the hunt for remnants of their past empire, scouring ruins and forgotten worlds for anything that might help them regain their former strength. Their ability to terraform has been lost, but their scholars and engineers are desperate to rediscover this technology. The re-establishment of their empire is as much about reclaiming knowledge as it is about reclaiming territory.

Many of the systems that remain from their empire are far-flung, disconnected, and some have even forgotten their imperial past. When **United Systems of Man** scouts discover such systems—where ancient architecture lies in ruins—they initiate a process of “re-education” to remind the local population of their imperial heritage. This process can be harsh, and in some cases, the **United Systems of Man** has forcefully reconquered these worlds, leading to tensions and resentment among their own people.

#### ****A Fragmented Empire****

Though the **United Systems of Man** have managed to re-establish a functioning government with communication networks and shipping lanes, they are the smallest and most geographically spread-out faction in the galaxy. Their remaining systems are distant from one another, and communication is difficult. They are constantly searching for more of their lost colonies, hoping to bring them back into the fold and restore the glory of their once-great empire.

Not all reconquered systems have come willingly, and some remain bitter about the forceful methods used to bring them back into the empire. Internal revolts are not uncommon, and the **United Systems of Man**'s leadership views these conflicts as inevitable growing pains in their quest to restore their dominance. The empire may be fragmented, but their determination to rebuild is unwavering.

#### ****Rivalries and Alliances****

The fall of the **United Systems of Man** opened the door for factions like the **Mandate of God** and **Shogunate 3072** to rise to power, and the **United Systems of Man** holds a deep grudge against both. They view these factions as opportunists who took advantage of their collapse, seizing former imperial territories and contributing to their decline. In contrast, the **United Systems of Man** has formed a strong alliance with the **People of the River**, frequently working together on environmental projects to restore damaged ecosystems. This partnership is born out of shared values in sustainability and a desire to live in harmony with the galaxy.

#### ****A Complicated History with the Noringian Hive****

The **Noringian Hive**, however, still refers to the **United Systems of Man** as "The Scourge" due to the empire’s aggressive expansionism during its height. The **United Systems of Man** once terraformed entire planets and even altered the composition of stars to fit their needs, disrupting ecosystems and causing galactic-scale consequences. The **Noringian Hive** fought several battles with the empire during this period, and while the **Hive** always won, the victories came at a great cost. Despite the empire’s collapse, the **Noringian Hive** remains wary of the **United Systems of Man**, keeping a close watch on their activities.

Scholars from the **United Systems of Man** have made some progress in re-establishing contact with the **Noringian Hive**, learning much about their imperial ancestors in the process. However, the **Hive** has little interest in fully reconciling with the empire, remembering too well the damage they once caused.

### ****Faction: The Noringian Hive****

The **Noringian Hive** stands apart from every other faction in the galaxy, not just because they are the only non-human faction, but because their very nature is alien to anything humanity has ever known. The Hive is a collective consciousness, a group mind that has existed for longer than any human faction can imagine. They have witnessed the rise of humanity, and they remember the galaxy when it was empty of human life. To the **Noringian Hive**, humanity is little more than an infestation—annoying, but not dangerous. And while they could choose to fight this encroachment on their territory, they know that in the grand scheme, it is not worth the effort. After all, the **Noringian Hive** are preparing to leave this galaxy entirely, long before humanity will be wiped out by the inevitable arrival of the **Kage no Oni**.

#### ****Alien Mindset and Perspective****

The **Noringian Hive** has no concept of emotions in the way that humans do. Their interactions are based on sensory experiences—heat, light, radiation, and energy flows—rather than feelings like fear, anger, or ambition. When playing as a member of the Hive, it is important to understand that they are driven not by conquest, ideology, or political motives, but by the simple goal of survival and migration. They seek resources not for wealth or power but as a means to leave the galaxy and continue their existence elsewhere.

The Hive views humanity with a mixture of frustration and bemusement. They have watched as humans expanded across the galaxy, seeing them as ants overrunning a home—annoying but not particularly dangerous. The **Noringian Hive** could easily wipe out large sections of human territory if they wished, but they see little point in doing so. From their perspective, humanity’s days are numbered. The **Kage no Oni**, a race of beings made of pure darkness, are already on their way to this galaxy, and once they arrive, humanity will be wiped out. By that time, the Hive plans to be long gone.

#### ****Dumbing Down for Human Interaction****

The **Noringian Hive** once had no need for ships or space suits. They traveled freely through space as beings of energy, moving from star to star without the need for physical vessels. However, as humanity expanded and began to encroach on their territory, humans killed many of the Hive’s members out of fear, forcing the Hive to change their methods. Now, to survive and interact with the other factions, the Hive has had to “dumb themselves down” by building ships and donning physical suits to communicate and trade with humans.

This process is not one of frustration but confusion. The Hive finds it primitive and strange to build ships and engage with humans in such a limited way. If they could laugh about it, they would. They have even had to create a flag and other symbols to represent themselves to the human factions—things they find utterly trivial. Nevertheless, they recognize that these steps are necessary if they are to gather the resources they need to leave the galaxy.

#### ****A Collective Consciousness****

The **Noringian Hive** is a true collective. Though there are individual members of the Hive, they all share the same consciousness. What one sees, they all see. What one says, they all say. Playing as a member of the Hive means understanding that there is no individuality—each member is simply an extension of the greater whole. This collective nature gives them a unique advantage in terms of knowledge and strategy, as they are always aware of what the rest of the Hive is doing.

When a single Hive member interacts with humans, it is as if the entire Hive is speaking. This creates a sense of detachment and alienation in their communications with other factions, as their interactions are always cold, distant, and purely transactional. To the Hive, everything is a means to an end—securing the resources needed to leave the galaxy and nothing more.

#### ****Keeping Secrets and Preparing to Leave****

One of the most critical aspects of the **Noringian Hive**'s strategy is that they are preparing to leave the galaxy entirely. They are gathering resources and building the technology necessary to travel to another galaxy, far from the encroaching **Kage no Oni**. However, this plan is a closely guarded secret. None of the other factions know about it, and the Hive has no intention of revealing it. Their interactions with humanity are solely transactional, designed to get what they need without raising suspicion. The Hive is not interested in alliances, conquests, or political maneuvering—they simply want to gather what they need and leave.

While the Hive is fully aware of the **Kage no Oni**, they do not see them as an imminent threat to themselves. The **Kage no Oni** will arrive in several thousand years, by which time the Hive will have already departed. However, they view humanity’s ignorance of this approaching danger with detached amusement. To the Hive, humanity is like an insect colony on the verge of being wiped out by a coming storm, and there is no point in warning them. The Hive’s focus is solely on their own survival and migration, leaving the galaxy’s fate to unfold as it will.

**RetroStellar Rules and Gameplay Guide**  
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