

NPC crews for your spaceships are on the horizon in Star Citizen

Crewmates you don't have to feed will open up the game in new ways for solo players

By Shane Moyer

Star Citizen is a gigantic game. Even leaving aside the vast quantity of space to merely fly around in, the game already creates opportunities for those who prefer the quietness of solo space travel. Even though not all the systems are in place yet to allow solo players full freedom, (it is STILL early Alpha...), you can almost see where Cloud Imperium Games and veteran creator Chris Roberts is hoping to land the solo experience.



<All dressed up and ready to work.>

A boost in Firepower Working in the 'Verse Missions and Pirates

We have already seen the scope and size of some of the ships in the Star Citizen universe. From the almost comically large Bengal, which will need an entire organization to fly and maintain, to the single seater racers like the Nox or still in concept Tumbril Ranger motorcycle. But what about the ships that are supposed to have 2-to-5 crew members in order to be efficient? Ships such as the Reliant Mako's Reporter, or many of the heavy fighters such as the Scorpius or the Gladiator? Larger trading ships such as the Constellation classes, or the expedition enhanced Freelancer DUR?

Luckily, Cloud Imperium is still planning on letting players hire NPC crew members to staff the other functions of your ship that maybe don't require a player's eyes at all times.

<Embed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKhBrT6fh7w> />

With a ship fully run by AI co-pilots, gunners, engineers, and the rest doing whatever other duties a crew is needed for... solo players will be able to focus on the more important task of not crashing into anything. It will also add a lot more fire power to the ships that solo players are flying currently. It's rare to have a turret gunner in your ship these days unless you're playing with friends. Having an npc crew will allow every turret, every gun, and every missile to be fired at enemies and show the true firepower and potential of the mid-sized ships in Star Citizen.



<Having the choice to fill these seats would be a nice change.>

Not just combat will benefit from a full NPC crew, lonely traders will finally have some protection from pirates as they buy and sell their wares through the 'Verse. Having defensive turrets at the ready will make some pirates hesitate and think twice before rushing into disable your ship. The thought of multiple Constellation class traders flying in formation, all turrets bristling and waiting to respond to a threat draws to mind the bomber formations of World War II.

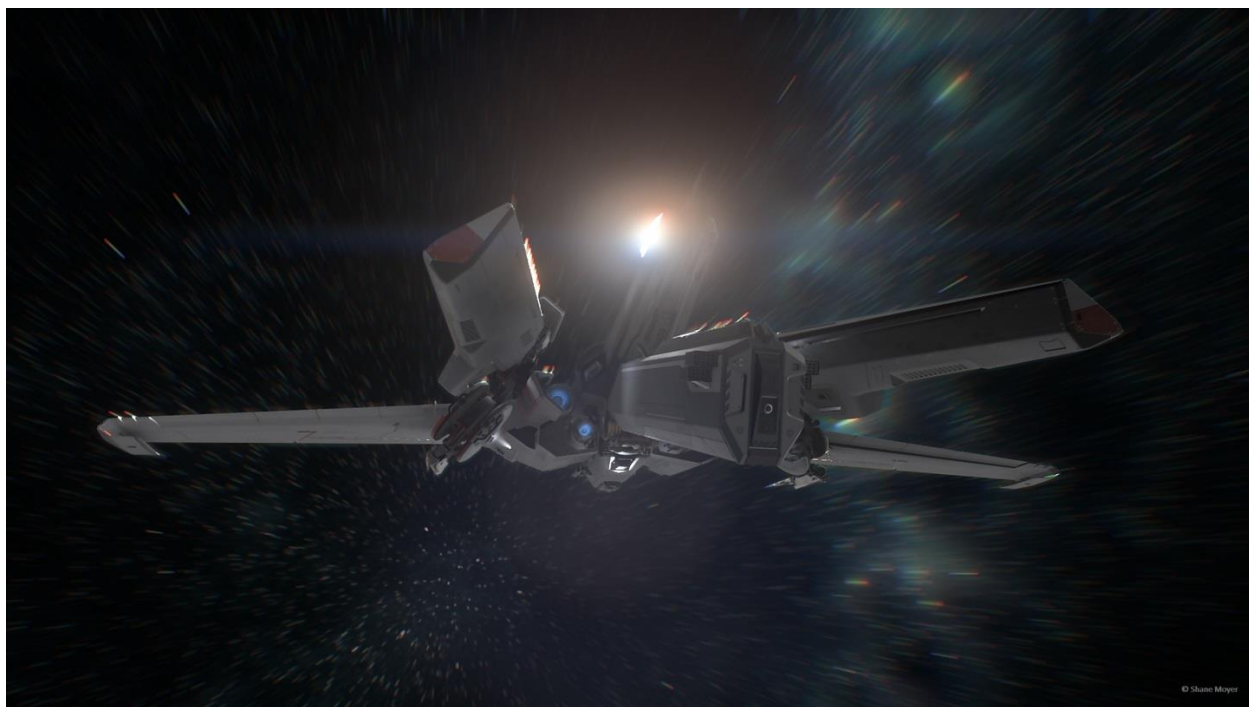


<The Mako Reporter could use help while reporting on conflicts.>

Since the consequences for murder and pirating still hasn't been fully fleshed out in the pre-Alpha version of Star Citizen, a final beneficial aspect of having an AI crew will be simple protection when your ship is landed on a planet's surface. Currently, after you exit your ship to explore a cave or hunt down a bounty, your ship sits idly on the surface... exposed like a glistening chicken leg at a doggy daycare. In theory, you could even bring a tank or Anti-Air jeep, unload it from your ship, ask your npc crew to man the turrets, and now you have a serious threat on the ground that random murderers or bounty hunters might actively avoid.

As the game continues to slowly make its way towards releasing a new system, new outposts, new enemies, and persistent entity streaming (something so complicated that could be its own article), NPC crew is still seemingly far away. Indeed, as of the middle of 2022, there is still no set date for a fully functional AI squad.

Star Citizen has been slowly building the blocks of an epic space game, and hopefully we won't have to wait too much longer (though it will probably be years,) to travel through the stars with a full NPC staffed crew.



<Until then, solo players still have stuff to do.>