The "I have a great idea" page

When it comes to Ratting, there are a few things that people often bring up as a revolutionary idea to improve on how we do things. Some of them are repeated with enough frequency that we actually have a page for them - and why they're not as good an idea as you might think.

> ⓘ Although this is a semi-humorous page, it also holds some seriousness to it. The discussions we end up having about the same topic over and over again begins to wear thin after a while, so please also take to heart the reasons as to why we're not making a particular change.

This, along with other variations separating the general mischief or other cases from the view of the client is one of the more popular suggestions new rats make after a while. Although there is merit to the theory of lessening "noise level" for the client, there are a number of practical and sociological reasons we have not done this:

Such a system would require the client to understand more of the concept of IRC.

IRC is perfectly suited to what we are doing, but it is for many an archaic system, and the concept of channels and moving between them is not readily apparent to them. The system we have in place now places them in the rescue channel, and pretty much serves up all the information we need from them in one neat package. The only thing the client is left needing to understand is when they are being addressed by name. This is, for the most part, quite simple.

Moving clients and rats into separate channels costs time. Time is O2. O2 is life.

Quite often, even if the client isn't on Emergency O2 when they reach us, they can be very close to it. The more time we spend doing anything but getting the client into low power mode, and sending rats on their way to meet the client, the higher the chance is that we get a Code Red case. And although we deal with those quite well, they are the shortest route to problematic rescues and client loss.

Even if we automate placing the client and dispatcher into new channels automatically on arrival (or when the rats have been assigned), it's a complication to an otherwise simple system that may (And probably will) prove more detrimental than it is effective.

Separating the clients and the rest of the mischief from the rescue workflow is dull!

Although #FuelRats on a busy night is a challenge to keep up with for dispatchers, and clients MAY at times find themselves in a room where 3+ other clients are being dispatched, the experience they take away from it is generally more 'Wow! These guys are such pros!' than it is 'Boy, this place is a mess'. #FuelRats is also our training ground for new rats, allowing them to see how we operate. Separating out the rescues into channels that contain only the dispatcher, the client, and the active rats leaves a complete disconnect between the mischief at large and what we are actually here to do. Ratting is very much a spectator sport, and removing that is likely to see us lose rats *very* quickly.
No... No we probably shouldn't. Discord is a fine program for general gaming comms and hanging out, but The Fuel Rats are not a traditional gaming community. The rats exist for a very specific purpose, and have very specific requirements for secure communications because of it. IRC allows our moderators to control the flow of chat in ways discord by design is at odds with. Keeping our chats exclusively in IRC allows us to manage who sees and is logging our chat, as well. With IRC, it's as easy as occasionally purging out unidentified lurkers to ensure only those who should be here are here. Sure we could turn off chat history in Discord to help with that kind of concern, but that just inconveniences those who are present for legitimate means.

Downtime control, and unexpected outages.

The TechRats pride themselves in maintaining a smooth sailing ship that experiences as little downtime as possible. In the past 2 years, our IRC server has experienced virtually no physical downtime. Even when our other services go down or the IRC servers split, rescues themselves have been able to continue largely unhindered. A large part of that is having the ability to control our maintenance windows.

That sounds like conservatism!

Nope. It's just using a hammer to beat in a nail, rather than a fancy 600 dollar nailgun. And the nailgun might be prone to failures we can't control, and we can't mess around with its settings, and..

In short, Discord is great for a ready-to-run chat server for your friends and your guild. Much of what we've accomplished today is possible only because we have complete control of the servers and software that runs our systems. Discord does not offer that. We also have far better moderation tools and security features at hand to prevent griefing and spammers.

But using Discord would enable us to do rescues by voice!

Why on earth would we want to? Imagine a voice channel filled with rats and clients, and a dispatcher trying to make sense of that? That would be a horror show without equal. No, IRC provides us with a textual medium with asynchronous chat capabilities. We'll take looking back two lines in scrollback over "Could you repeat that?!" any day.
No. Even though it is possible to do this (With a LOT of finagling, including having to make Rats give us access to their API key, which we won't ask for), being in-game is not a determining factor for whether you want to go on a rescue or not. Nor would it be possible to implement on the XBox side.

The one way we have for semi-automated jump calls is RatTracker, which is currently in development (SLOW development at that). We will not:

- Make the dispatch board have fields where you can enter where you are and your jump range
- Let the bot track where you are through the API
- Otherwise automate who gets sent on rescues based on their position.

Being sent on a rescue requires you as a rat to positively confirm that you want to go by calling jumps.

This section does not deal with Fleet Carriers which are expected to be released with Squadrons (soon^{TM}). Up until now, there has been minimal information released regarding FleetCarriers. When more information is available, the use (or not) of Fleet Carriers will be determined.

So Canonn Research Group was awarded a megaship, The Gnosis, as a reward for a Community Goal. They will be using the ship as a mobile base for research and study, but there are limitations. The ship can only be moved once per week, can only jump 2,500Ly per week and has no shipyard so you can't leave ships there to travel if you wanted to.

Beyond those limitations what would we use it for? A mobile base for fueling operations more than likely. And where would we locate it? In one of our rescue hot spots like NLTT 48288, towards Quince, towards the Pleaides or near certain Community Goals.

As an example, particularly for the 1st three locations, without a megaship a CMDR runs out of fuel, contacts us, gets rescued, gets debriefed (and educated) and hopefully we never see them again in our channels looking to be rescued. Now put a giant base in their path, what happens? They get low on fuel, don't know any better, luck into finding the megaship and refueling, never learning about fuel scoops, KGBFOAM, route filtering or plotting. Then we move the station in the future to some other hot spot, and those CMDRs who are used to it being a certain location run out of fuel, and it's ironically our fault that they needed to call us. It's a PR nightmare waiting to happen, with little benefit that anyone has been able to provide other than "we deserve it for everything we've done", which isn't exactly a very Rat-like attitude to have anyway.

It's also believed that future megaships will not have ship docking capabilities, so their only use would be as advertising that we own a megaship and for use in manipulating the BGS.

Megaships can jump once per week to a maximum distance of roughly 450Ly. Therefore moving a megaship from one end to the other is in itself a 2-week process.

No.

But...

Still no. The Fuel Rats do ever so often get targeted by random gankers, or even sometimes by more concerted efforts to either kill rats or the clients. For those that target us through fake cases, monitoring our channels or similar, we have countermeasures that we can employ to deny them access to that information. Compared to the number of real cases, fake cases makes up for an infinitesimal percentage that honestly isn't worth changing our SOP for.

When Rats are playing in open and not on a case, they're as valid a target for PvP as anyone. While on a rescue, many PvP factions actually let you go on your merry way, but this is not something you should count on either. You might get lucky, you might not. But rat ships are cheap to rebuy, and most of our rescues are a short distance away, leaving very little actual consequence to successfully targeting a rat. (If you are strapped for money, ask around in RatChat, you'll find plenty of advice and help on getting a bigger buffer to feel safe with a few rebuys.)

Adding escort wings to rescue missions negatively impacts our response speed, adds unneeded complexity, and is actually *more* likely to cause fake cases, because PvP hungry players can then dial-a-fight with a combat ready wing.

Your best recourse when targeted by a "cat" is to shrug, report it to dispatch, and then move on. Nothing deflates them like being ignored for all their efforts.

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