

ODDUR ÖRN HALLDÓRSSON

How did you first get involved with CCP?

I started working with CCP as a contractor for an Icelandic production company (Truenorth) back in 2006, organising all sorts of parties like CCP's tenth birthday, a couple of release parties, the *Angels & Demons* party – internal gatherings, basically. I also helped with Fanfest 2007 and 2008 as a contractor, so I've been around CCP for a while.

When the financial crisis hit Iceland there were no more banking events, they stopped throwing big gala dinners and the events management industry just crashed. Truenorth had to let go of a few people and I was hired at CCP almost immediately. I had all that Fanfest experience, so it was natural to continue on with that at CCP.

Did you have any interest in EVE before you started at CCP?

I'm a gamer and have been for many years. I played a lot of *World Of Warcraft*, but I didn't start actually playing EVE until I started working here. Since then I've done Planetary Interaction and I'm taking on level four missions, so yeah I have a very active interest in playing EVE. I have two accounts and I'm working my way up.

Considering all the events you've worked on, is there anything special about EVE players compared with some of the other communities you've worked with?

They're mostly male [laughs]. It's often what we call a pylsu party. One of my first goals was to increase female presence, so that remains. Of course, EVE players are different, they are a special breed of... I don't want to call it nerd, but they have distinct humour. They are darker. They don't like pop music and pink unicorns. Everything has to be dark and heavy. I have Rammstein and Prodigy and stuff like that in my mind when I'm thinking about them.

Is organising Fanfest a year-long job?

Not really. It's not a full year of hard work. I have lots of other responsibilities like the annual CCP Kickoff, the Christmas party, three major CCP parties a year – and many of the events in Europe, like GDC Europe, GamesCon in Cologne and Game Horizons conference in Newcastle. Sorting all those out is a year-long job.

CCP Hellmar also loves to give my talents away

to worthy causes like the first IGI conference (Icelandic Gaming Industry) held the other day and Iceland's National Assembly back in 2009.

Is it tricky to come up with new ideas for each new Fanfest?

No, but it's difficult to implement all the good ideas that are brought forward. My inbox is full of ideas from CCP staff and EVE players. We get a lot of good feedback. Sometimes there's just too much of it or ideas are too big and I can't implement it all.

Music has always been a hit at Fanfest, but what element of the last one are you most pleased about?

Hilmar's main presentation. We had over 800 attendees that paid for a ticket, but once Hilmar went on stage there weren't enough seats in the room. We had to add 300 seats at the last minute and there were a thousand people sitting and a massive amount of people standing at the back. We were like, where had all these people come from? It was a huge turnout and a great presentation, all the tech worked perfectly. I sat amongst the crowd and felt the vibe and the power of the sound system and I was really proud. All these people crying out, cheering and applauding – it was very cool.

What would you say to someone who was on the fence about coming to Fanfest 2011?

This is the last time Fanfest will be at this venue (Laugardalshöll) so we're going to say goodbye to it. If all goes to plan, it's going to be the most massive party Fanfest will ever have. The venue afterwards doesn't have the capacity for 10,000 people, so it will be the biggest EVE party ever and if you haven't come to Iceland, you need to do it before you die [laughs]. Or die in Iceland.

Although Fanfest is always getting bigger, dev attendance seems to get lower, which is a shame.

We could increase our presence at Fanfest, but last year (2009) not as many people could take time off to attend, sadly. October and November is traditionally a very busy time, with a winter expansion in release stage and the next expansion being planned. But because we are inviting players to our home, to where EVE was created, we should

play better hosts. We should have as many devs as possible put on their shirts and share a drink with the players and talk to them. That is what Fanfest is supposed to be all about.

Of course, there is always a lot of that going on, but I would like more. Like it was at the first Fanfest, when devs were serving at the bar all evening. That's the kind of vibe we want, that's what I'm going to try to achieve.

You obviously get a kick out of it, but do you get stressed during the event?

Of course I get stressed, but I try to get my stress out of the way a couple of days before an event hits. I don't panic or anything like that, but I really quieten down and get a bit introverted. But it's a one-day thing and then it's over.

This has always been the case with me and my work, since 2000 when I started working in commercial events. It's a very stressful environment, often working 23 hours a day. I once was on a set as the Assistant Director. It was September and we had 150 extras, all of them naked, that we had to manage and coordinate for a special advert where they all had to do the same movement, lying naked on the black beach during a thunderstorm. Coming from that background, Fanfest is a walk in the park stress-wise.

When you get into work on the Monday after Fanfest, what will you be doing?

I will have a slight hangover and probably come in around 10am. But it will be a full-on work day, especially with so much wrapping up to do and the whole aftermath of cleaning up.

So you won't be basking in the glory and doing nothing for three months?

No, nothing like that. It's full-on. For a full month afterwards it's just Fanfest clean-up. It's the budget and all the invoices I have to deal with, the post mortems about what went wrong and what we can do better. On the Monday I most definitely will be at the venue making sure all the posters go down, the banners are packed...

...mopping up floor pizza?

I don't do that myself. I'll just point my finger and someone else will do it, but it won't be an easy day.

AS EVERYONE KNOWS,
CCP STANDS FOR
CROWD CONTROL
PRODUCTIONS. MEET
THE MAN WHO DOES
EXACTLY THAT

CCP STARTDATE:
MARCH 3, 2009
POSITION: EVENT ORGANIZER
/PROJECT MANAGER
AKA: CCP TYR

AND WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING..?

After a tough day booking acts,
what games do you play to
de-stress... aside from EVE
of course?

Recently *Civilization V* has taken up
some of my free time, but I do not like
the regular game crashing. Aside from
that, I would love to have the time to
play *Mass Effect 2* and *Dragon Age 2*.
Maybe after Fanfest.

Can you recommend a good,
cheap place to eat in Reykjavík,
for those looking to avoid too
much pizza during Fanfest?

We will roll out a short 'Survival
Guide' about Iceland on the new
revamped Fanfest site with places to
eat and drink at, but one of my most
favourite places to eat is Vegamot. It
has great food, a large selection and
good prices. During the weekend it
also morphs into a club with some
good-looking Icelandic people.

Which expensive gadgets will you
buy with the bonus you'll be
getting for having organized
another successful Fanfest?

There are no bonuses like that at CCP.
My bonus will be seeing all the happy
hung over Fanfest attendees in the
Blue Lagoon on Sunday...