

More on Ferries

Image

Here's a possible concept of what interplanetary ferries look like: a ring of engines surrounding a passenger cabin in the middle.

The engines consist of two main force projectors. One is active during the first half of the journey, accelerating the craft forward at a constant 1 g. Halfway through, it switches to the forward force projector, decelerating at a constant 1 g. There is a ring of smaller force projectors around the engine for lateral movement, and each engine has its own reactor to power the projector array.

Large force projectors like the ones used here cannot be used in atmosphere because reasons, but smaller force projectors like the ones used in paw gauntlets for powered armor are safe.

The bar to becoming a ferry pilot isn't quite as high as you might think. Tod compares himself to a trucker rather than a pilot when discussing his career with humans. Most tasks are automated, and the pilot is there to respond quickly to abnormal situations. Docking and undocking from space elevators may have to be done manually if the port in question doesn't have an auto docking system, and that's one of the few times the pilot directly controls the ship's movements.

Prospective pilots need only undergo a few days of simulator training followed by a longer period of on the job observation as a copilot.

Ferry pilots play a game called "spot the spacers" where you try to guess who among the passengers accustomed to microgravity and who isn't. Spacers can usually be heard complaining about having their paws on the ground even though they're not on a planet, while non spacers spend the brief window of weightlessness in the middle of the trip puking into barf bags.

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