

The Datasphere

While it can go by many names on various planets and in various polities, the majority of people use the term Datasphere to mean the local system area network. In most places there is a wealth of publicly available information. News, Sports, and Weather feeds are common in every system. The equivalent of today's web searches are also possible, with legal codes, corporate and non-profit "web sites" all present.

Users of the datasphere can also conduct a variety of transactions over top of it. While common uses of this are to place orders and bids for goods and services, cargo/passenger contracts and government services are also available. In some polities, famously Zhang-Li, bounty boards are also publicly available for hunters to look for new contracts.

Savvy users of the datasphere can configure agents that search and match trigger conditions. These virtual intelligences(VI) are highly configurable and can alert someone to the new availability of a contract, inform them when a given person have arrived in a location, or any of a variety of other tasks. The pricing for VIs and datasphere access itself varies depending on the polity the user is in. Ranging from free for Union residents to 100 credits a day for Myriadum visitors.

It is important to note one key thing. Virtual intelligences are not sentient as Artificial Intelligences are. Als can modify their own code, while VIs cannot. This is the chief difference between the two classifications.

One of the issues with the datasphere is the lack of real-time FTL communication with other systems. The solution that is commonly used for this are avisos, or courier ships. Avisos will jump into a system within a reasonable distance for STL communications, and then transmit whatever data it collected from it's previous system. Once transmitted, they wait in-system for a period of time to receive messages and data destined to other systems, and then they depart for their next hop. A high population system will have dozens of avisos arriving per day to keep their local population up to date on the goings on in other systems.

While independent systems and the Zhang-Li polity privatize this service, the Union, Myriadum, and Horizon all operate their own networks inside their polities with additional connections to other border systems outside their space.