

Alpha Clone Exploration Guide

by Sitah Kai

Exploration

Hacking

Archaeology

1. Before we start

Exploration in EVE Online is fun! You will examine cosmic signatures, travel through wormhole to the unknown parts of space and hack data and relic sites. This is **risky but very profiting**. You might find many guides on exploration in the internet, but as long as you're an Alpha Clone, you will find that many of the presented ideas are exclusive for Omega clones. This guide addresses this issue and will help you to get all the best from exploration. You will find information on your desired skill development, ship selection and fitting, scan and hacking performance. And the most important thing – **how to survive in a wormhole space**.

All you read now is based on my personal experience. I usually take an one hour exploration session starting in high sec, scanning for a wormhole, then doing 2-3 data/relic sites and **coming back with about 20M ISK**. Or my ship is destroyed during the session, which happens from time to time. Usually the **time spent in a wormhole gives a lot of adrenaline**, as you are not safe at all there.

2. Skills

First let's take a look at the necessary skills, that help you with exploration. They are related to scanning, hacking and spaceship command. The information includes maximum level of the skill available for Alpha Clone.

Scanning:

Astrometrics – the most important skill in scanning. Improves scan strength, lowers scan deviation, and reduces time scan. Train it first to the maximum level (3 for Alpha Clone).

Astrometric Rangefinding - improves scan strength. Max level is 2.

Astrometric Acquisition - reduces scan time. Max level is 2.

Hacking:

Archaeology – skill necessary for effective interaction with relic sites. Improves your virus coherence (more on that later in the guide). Max level is 3.

Hacking – skill necessary for effective interaction with data sites. Improves your virus coherence. Max level is 3.

Space ship command:

(faction) Frigate – preferably you will be using frigates for exploration. Especially the ones, that give bonuses to scan strength (7.5% increase to scan strength of probes per level). Max level is 4.

The main difference between Alpha and Omega exploration skills is the **lack of Cloaking skill**, which means Alpha will not be able to cloak in a wormhole space and therefore could be scanned and hunted by everybody. This determines a lot the playstyle. You will be a prey in a light vessel, which everyone would like to kill. So you must proceed your wormhole exploration with a lot of caution.

3. Ships and fits

Each faction has a frigate dedicated to exploration. These are:

Magnate for Amarr

Heron for Caldari



Imicus for Gallente

Probe for Minmatar

All the ships give the same bonuses

- 7.5% bonus to Core and Combat Scanner Probe strength per level
- 5% reduction in Salvager duration per level
- 5+ bonus to Relic and Data Analyzer virus strength (flat bonus)

They are very cheap. Usually less than 400K ISK. So they are dispensable and you don't worry much when you lose one. And you will lose many. Their shields and armor are paper thin, so you are no match for anyone who will want to attack you. Keep that in mind. These are not combat vessels. I was never attacked in this frigate in a high sec and in wormhole space I run like hell when someone approaches.

Alpha Clones have also access to one (just one!) battlecruiser, which is Gnosis. It has also very good scanning bonuses and is capable of doing wormhole C1 type combat sites. But this is out of the scope of this guide. Though you might consider using this vessel for your later exploration.

Fitting exploration frigate is quite different than fitting a PVP vessel or a mission runner. Take a look what you will need:

High slot:

- **Core Probe Launcher I** and fit it with **Core Scanner Probe I** (take 8 of this as the basic load and you might consider taking another 8 spare in your cargo). This is your necessary module for scanning.

Mid slots:

- **5MN MicroWarpDrive** – this speed booster is essential for the wormhole exploration. Usually in a data or relic site the containers you may hack are located in the 20-50 km distances. Using an MWD reduces your time spent in this site. The time spent in the site is the most dangerous part of the exploration, so you really want to keep it as short as possible.
- **Data Analyzer** – essential to access the containers in a Data Site. You are limited only to the Level I version. It is quite good, you should be able to hack almost everything in HiSec, and more than a half of the cans in Wormhole.
- **Relic Analyzer** – just like data analyzer, but allows you to hack Relic Sites

Low slots:

- **Nanofiber Internal Structure** – to reduce the time necessary to align and small speed boost.
- **Warp Core Stabilizer** – not necessary in the high-sec but strongly recommended in wormhole space. If you decide to take WCS, don't take 1, take 2 of them. This will make you immune to Warp Scrambler and you will have a chance to warp off when someone decloaks next to you and attacks.

Rigs:

- **Gravity Capacitor Upgrade I** – increases probe scan strength. This is not necessary, but is very cheap and helps a bit. There are also other rigs dedicated to scanning and hacking, but frankly speaking the bonuses they provide are worthless.

As you see there are no turret or combat launchers recommendations. Nor the shield or armor ones. You may take them, just in case. But frankly speaking I was never involved in a fight, where I had any chance to win. When I was caught in a wormhole space, usually I had to face much stronger enemy with a PVP fit.

There are also Level 2 probe launchers and probes. And their Sisters of Eve counterparts. But they are extremely expensive. Assuming that you will die from time to time, they are not worth it.

The ship and the fitting costs vary from 700K ISK (the cheapest version) to 1M ISK (with rigs).

4. Scanning

There are many locations in the space in your current solar system. Many of them are known and they are accessible (warpable). This includes stations, stargates, cosmic anomalies (combat sites and ore sites) etc. There are also cosmic signatures, which can be described this way: your sensors detect that there is something out there, but you don't know what exactly it is and where to find it. At this moment you start your exploration journey.

First of all – there are many capsuleers in crowded systems which scan and search for signatures like you. This means that the most valuable ones were already found. You want to start your exploration in a quiet system, with no or low competition. Check your map or Dotlan (evemaps.dotlan.net) and search for a nearby system with a low number of jumps. You have a bigger chance to find some valuable signatures there. You will see the number of signatures in your probe scanner view. The more the better for you.

When you are in the system of your choice you can start scanning. Launch your probes from your probe scanner and use your map to determine the location and range of your scan. It is quite intuitive, so I will not go into detail with it. At the beginning it will take you some time to locate signatures, but you find this quite easy to learn. After some time you will be able to locate most of the signatures within 3-4 scans.

You are scanning to determine their type, name and location of the signature. This information will be revealed as you progress in increasing the strength of your scan from 0 to 100%.

- at 40% you will determine the type of the signature
- at 70% you will determine the exact name of the signature
- at 100% you will know the exact location which makes the signature warpable

It is advisable to **bookmark the signatures when they are finally located** (if you move to another system and then come back to this one or even if you dock and undock – all your search results are gone and you will have to scan everything again). To bookmark something simply right-click the name of the signature and choose the option "bookmark". You will find your bookmarks in your personal assets in the locations tab.

There are different types of signatures which you will find. This includes:

- Combat Sites – you may bookmark them and then come back with stronger vessels, usually with a PVE fit.
- Gas Sites – which contain gas clouds that can be harvested (you will need to have gas harvesting skills for that)
- Data Sites - with hackable containers
- Relic Sites - with hackable containers
- Wormholes - temporary links to other systems which may lead to high/low/null-sec or into unknown space (also described as wormhole space)

Don't forget to collect your probes when you finish scanning. In the next part of this guide we will go in detail through Data Sites, Relic Sites and Wormholes.

5. Hacking

In each Data or Relic Site there are some hackable containers (usually 5). Their names vary (communication towers, mainframes, databanks etc...). If you see many objects in the site and you don't know which are the hackables, look at the small symbol in the overview representing the type of an object. The hackable containers are represented in different way. you can select the Simply move close to the container and target it. Once it is locked you can access it with you data/relic analyzer and the mini-hacking game begins.

You will a pattern representing the security system of the container you have to hack. You start from one point and have access only to neighboring nodes. You must reveal them one by one in order to **find the System Core and hack it**.

When you reveal a node you reveal its content which might be:

- Empty node – it will show a number from 1 to 5 which represents a distance to the system core or an utility.
- Utilities – provide you nice hacking tools like increase of your virus coherence, decrease the coherence of the hostile subsystem, etc... they are well described
- Hostile subsystems – once revealed they block every neighboring node and you need to hack the subsystem in order to gain the access to these nodes. This includes: firewalls, antivirus, restoration nodes (which increase the coherence of other hostile subsystems) and suppression nodes (which lowers your virus strength).
- Random nodes – they might contain utility or hostile subsystem
- System core – your target. It's green, yellow or red depending on the difficulty.

While hacking hostile nodes and system core there are some numbers you must follow. **Virus strength (attack) and virus coherence (defense)**. You have your own virus strength and coherence and each node has its own, represented by the numbers on it. The hacking algorithm is simple. When you hack a hostile node or system core, the number of your virus strength is deducted from the node's coherence. If it drops to zero then the node is destroyed. If not, the node fights back and its virus strength is deducted from your coherence. If it drops to zero, you fail the hack. If not, you may choose to continue the hack.

There are many strategies for this hacking minigame but the best way to learn it is practice **Before going to wormhole space I strongly recommend having some hacking minigame practice in high-sec**. I will just make some suggestions here:

1. The system core is usually somewhere at the edge of the node pattern.
2. If there are six links from a particular node, usually it is an empty node.
3. Assuming that you can reveal a hostile node, that will block neighboring nodes, try making "reaching moves" which will lock in this case small number of other nodes.
4. If you reveal a random node and the number on the neighboring node was not 1, than this node contains a hostile subsystem. Do not reveal it.
5. If you reveal a random node and the number on the neighboring node was 1, then this node still can contain a hostile subsystem. Preferably you should reveal it when there are no more moves available.
6. Restoration and suppression nodes needs to be hacked as soon as possible. If you discover one of them, focus on hacking this node first.

6. Wormhole survival

Wormholes are dangerous. **There is no local chat** in there¹, so you never know who is in the system. You may use your directional scan to find others, but you will find only the ones which are in the range of the scan and they are not cloaked. A cloaked vessel in the wormhole space is totally anonymous. You learn about its presence when you are attacked. And you will be attacked because as an Alpha Clone you don't have the access to the cloaking modules. And more over you are in a light, defenseless ship. So why are bothering with the wormhole anyway? Because it pays off! **Data and Relic Sites in Wormhole give at least 10 times more valuable loot than the ones in High Sec.** Some of them are guarded by Sleepers, which are very difficult to defeat before you enter at least a battlecruiser. But some of them are not. They will be the ones you are looking for.

When you scanned the wormhole and warped to the location, there is one very important thing you must do before entering it. You must read the description of the wormhole. Simply **R-click on the Wormhole and choose "Show info"**. You are looking for some specific information.

The "K 162" Wormhole (WH) is an exit from other system. And this is everything you will learn before entering the WH. Any other WH will give you more precious information:

First: This wormhole seems to lead into...

This wormhole might lead to:

- high security parts of space
- low security parts of space
- null security parts of space – this might be your option as well as the WH
- unknown parts of space – WH with some unguarded sites, you are looking for these
- dangerous unknown parts of space – only guarded sites, don't go there
- deadly unknown parts of space – only guarded sites, don't go there

Second: This wormhole...

- has not yet begun its natural cycle of decay and should last at least another day – this wormhole will last longer than 24 hours
- is beginning to decay, and probably won't last another day – this wormhole will last longer than 4 hours
- is reaching the end of its natural lifetime – this wormhole will last less than 4 hours, be cautious with these one, if it collapses, you will be forced to find another way home
- is on the verge of dissipating into the ether – simply do not enter

Third: This wormhole has...

- not yet had its stability... - only few ships passed through this wormhole

¹ Well there is local chat, but it works in different way than the local chats in known space. It shows only these capsuleers which use it. Before you say anything in the local chat, you are not listed. And I have never seen anyone using this chat in WH. Everyone tries to be not noticed.

- had its stability reduced... - some ships passed through this wormhole, it is still quite stable
- had its stability critically disrupted... - this wormhole is close to collapse if more ships go through it, you might be forced to find another way back home

After learning about the wormhole you might decide to enter. Remember here, **you should always bookmark the wormhole exit just after you entered.** This is the first thing you do after entering the wormhole (Ctrl-B).

Now run your directional scan (D-scan) at longest range and 360 degree. If you see:

- other ships
- many structures built by players
- scan probes

turn back and leave the wormhole.

If you see other ships than they can see you. If you stop detecting them on your d-scan it doesn't mean they left. Assume they got cloaked and are now scanning for you. After few minutes they will decloak next to you with warm greetings. Without flowers.

If you see many structures build by players, than this wormhole is inhabited by one corp. There is a great chance than there is somebody out there right now. He is also hurrying to greet you warmly. Don't expect flowers.

If you see scan probes than there is somebody actively scanning the wormhole. He will be also happy to meet you. No flowers as well.

Usually it takes few tries before you find a quiet and almost peaceful wormhole. And remember that even here you are not safe. Especially **you are not safe in every warpable location**, including your wormhole exit. You should leave it promptly. Usually in this situation I choose any direction and turn on my MWD. **While travelling 3.000 km/s you are quite safe (though not 100%).**

And now the exploration really begins. Remember, your enemies are cloaked, you are not. They have strong vessels you have a light one. Think of it like you're an gazelle on a savanna full of lions and hyens. The hunt begins and you are the prey. Keep your eyes wide open. **Your D-scan is your eyes. Keep it always on and scan every few seconds.**

Now launch your probes and scan the signatures (if there are no signatures, leave the WH). Remember to use your d-scan from time to time while probe scanning. You are looking only for **data and relic sites with pirate faction in their name.** These are the only ones that are not guarded. Beware of the "Unsecured..." and "Forgotten..." data and relic sites. Though they have pirate faction name, they are guarded. And they are guarded by very strong enemies. Don't even try to warp there to 100 km. You are still in range of their sentries and will be fried with their first strike.

When you find your desired site prepare to **make a safe spot while warping to that location.** Simply Ctrl-B before you warp, then during the warp click submit.

Now begins the most crucial and most dangerous moment. **You are mostly exposed to an enemy attack during your hack.** First of all you are in a warpable location. And second, you will be disturbed with the hacking mini game. In order to increase your survivability chances, follow this procedure:

1. Just before warping – check your d-scan again
2. On warp in – check your overview if there are no ships revealed nearby
3. D-scan
4. Move to first container. If you use MWD turn it on while approaching and off while closing to the container.
5. D-scan
6. Target the container.
7. While next to container align your ship to the safe spot and stop the ship. You should be now aligned to the safe spot and within the range of the relic/data analyzer.
8. D-scan
9. Start your hack.
10. D-scan every few seconds during hacking.
11. Repeat with every container in the location.
12. After hacking all the containers – leave the wormhole with your loot or go back to safe spot and continue to scan for another data and relic sites.
13. Make more safe spots during warping.
14. D-scan

Remember to have your personal bookmarks always on. If anyone decloaks next to you, you have only few seconds to warp to your safe spot. Pre-aligning saves some precious time.

If the Wormhole exit collapses before you leave, don't panic. Go to one of your safe spots and scan for another wormhole entrance/exit. There is always at least one. If you find one that leads to high sec you are almost safe with your valuable loot.

And that's it. I hope you will enjoy this specific Alpha Clone Wormhole experience just as much as I do. Later you might choose to change the roles and become hunter not the prey in the WH.

Fly safe!

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