Kerbal Space Program - Feedback #13215

Improving the usefulness of remotly operated spacecraft

11/10/2016 03:19 PM - lunchin10seconds

Status:	New			
Severity:	Low			
Assignee:				
Category:	Gameplay			
Target version:				
Version:	1.2.1	**Language:**	English (US)	
Platform:	Linux, OSX, Windows	**Mod Related:**	No	
Expansion:				

Description

Hello,

With the launch of Loud and Clear remotely operated craft, those with probes but no Kerbals, are of less use than they ever have been. To explain â in order for a player to have control of a probe the must be within signal range of KSC, either directly or via a relay. The problem is that these relays are unlocked quite late in the tech tree, at precision engineering, the same level as the 3 manned probe. This gives a low powered relay, which is just about powerful enough to reach Duna with a level 2 tracking station if Kerbin is close by. As soon as Kerbin moves a way you have a dead probe so in practice you need at least a level 3 tracking station and the RA15, another level up. To jet to Jool you need almost the last tech level and automation. Even then I suspect that you will only get periodic transmission windows as Kerbin moves away from the probe (I confess I have not tested this fully yet) so will need to set up some kind of solar orbiting array of relays to guarantee always having control of the probe.

The thing is why bother? Kerbals can go anywhere in the solar system without any of this infrastructure, and without suffering the reduction in science you get from transmitting, and with the introduction of the Experiment Storage Unit I suspect you would not even have to bring them home just the data. Though I could not go through writing all those letters.
So here are some suggestions to make using probes more useful and interesting.

1. Remote sampling, this would need one or two new parts

    a soil scoop to scrape the surface and return a sample back to the craft
    a sample drill, basically a much smaller version of the current mining drills which would also return a sample. Players could then use these suffering the reduction in science you get from transmitting, or with the introduction of the Experiment Storage Unit use that to return these samples to Kerbin without loosing science.

2. Remote sample testing, this would need one more new part

    A small remote lab, not to be confused with the current materials bay or manned mobile processing lab.
    To start with this would have one experiment, the sniff-a-tron which smells the sample. Later experiments could include;

        the Thermalclave, no itâs not a camping stove even though it looks like one, to heat samples. Hot samples could then be observed directly or sniffed.
        the ultraviolet tester â not to be confused with a sun lamp â to see if samples react to ultraviolet light. Again the sample could be heated first.

    These would be unlockable as part of the science tree and could be added to the remote lab in the same way as parts are added to the service bays for example. Iâm sure Squad could come up with other experiment ideas, but the point is that the value of the transmitted data would get closer to that magic 100% the more that was done to the samples.

3. One or two new bodies which are hazardous for Kerbals to visit. As mentioned Kerbals can go anywhere at present so how about a moon which has a really thin ice crust over a liquid ocean? Light probes could land but heavier manned craft would break through the crust and sink. Or a moon similar to Io where you can land but where the sulphur in the atmosphere clogs rocket engines preventing take-off unless an engineer clears them first (which would also give engineers something more to do).

Any thoughts?

History

#1 - 11/10/2016 11:24 PM - AlffromKerbal

I fear that such feedback gets "deleted". I did one about introducing more action by specific happenings and following missions. I cannot find my post anymore (even by search option).

That's why i started [#13123](#13123)

I think we are here because we love KSP and want to help improvement. Communication way back in some way would be nice.