

A Not-So-Brief History of Flipmode Industries

Dedicated to the memory of James “AlphaMeridian” Caple-Nisby

January 19, 1982 – March 28, 2011



Written by Andrew Martens

andrew at andrewmartens.com

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Introduction

Flipmode Industries [FLIPM] was an unofficial Ars corporation in the game *EVE Online*, founded by AlphaMeridian. It was dedicated to removing poorly-defended research POSes (Player Owned Starbases) in high-security empire space – an area where other players had a false sense of security. Our M.O. was to either destroy their POS (aka 'tower') and steal their labs for resale, or reinforce it and demand a ransom for the POS. Sometimes we would ransom it and destroy it anyways.

It was a decent way to make ISK, provided a fun social setting for us to shoot the breeze, and sometimes there were delicious pubbie tears ('pubbie' being a derogatory term for an incompetent player). Using a swarm of laser-armed Armageddon-class battleships, we typically went by the motto "Flipmode is chillmode". Our preferred targets were unarmed towers that wouldn't shoot back; allowing us to warp in, deploy drones, start firing, and go read a book or something until the POS was reinforced or destroyed.

It may appear to a casual outsider as though AlphaMeridian was a thug who managed a group of evil space pirates, but everything we did was completely within the rules of *EVE Online*. It was thanks to his leadership that for many of us, this was some of the best fun we ever had while playing *EVE*.

This history exists for three reasons: (1) so that those of us in Flipmode could remember all the good times we had with AlphaMeridian, (2) to explain Flipmode to those of you who never had a chance to be involved, and (3) as a record of our methods for those who want to do the same thing. After all, there's still lots of towers out there waiting to be removed...

How did it begin?

AlphaMeridian had created Flipmode Industries with the CEO 'Pastor Offering' on November 29, 2008, with his characters AlphaMeridian and Tojus Illuminati joining on December 19, 2008.

I had been helping Lars Erkonig out one day, clearing out some moons over in the Lonetrek region. He mentioned that he knew someone - AlphaMeridian - who had been shooting small towers to steal the labs. Lars and I tested this in his corp, Discrete Solutions Ltd. [DSCR], and we found that it could be a rather profitable idea. Of course, there was strength in numbers; after talking it over with AlphaMeridian, Lars joined him on January 9, 2009. I followed two days later with my character, Jaigua Estaccare. My apologies if there had been other members already flying with Flipmode at that time who I may have forgotten.

Lars Erkonig > hey jaigua, wanted to give you the heads up. I'm planning on folding DSCR into AlphaMeridian's corp for doing POS shooting.

Would you like to know more?

The corp initially grew slowly, as more Arsians heard about our fun and profit. The major explosion of growth happened when ARSED had to quickly abandon their home in Feythabolis during the Goon invasion of Delve in mid-2009. ARSED left a lot of assets behind and the corp needed a bit of a fundraising drive. Some ARSED members moved alts into Flipmode, and we set a goal of raising about 10 billion ISK for ARSED. About 4-5 weeks later, we had not only hit that goal, but surpassed it, having raised around 14 billion ISK to help ARSED get going again in their new home. Typical turnouts during that time were around 20-30 members.

After this time, alts slowly trickled away, but the corp still remained fairly active. POS takedowns varied from about 15-25 participating in September 2009 (out of a corp membership of 49), to about 10-18 people by June 2010.

"HOLY SHIT GOOD TIMER COME OUT AND HELP US GET 1.6B ISK."

AlphaMeridian – Flipmode forum
<http://arsclan.net/forum/showthread.php?t=31748>

There were times when it was inconvenient for us to destroy a POS after reinforcing it; usually this was due to a bad reinforcement timer, or because our targets decided to anchor a lot of guns after we had reinforced the tower. Rather than dealing with the hassle of shooting it, we would often try to ransom the tower; it was always great when they paid up when we had already decided that it wasn't worth the hassle to us. Later on, we often tried to ransom towers that we were in the process of destroying, simply because it was an additional opportunity for profit.

Tojus Illuminati > oh god am i actually suggesting actually honoring a ransom?
Tojus Illuminati > NEVER let this out on shape
Lars Erkonig > honor of convenience

One of our standard lines was, "Well if we didn't honour ransoms, people would complain about us on the forums. Take a few minutes to look for any complaints, I'll wait." That typically worked well, because who wants to publicly admit that they paid out a billion ISK ransom and then lost their POS anyways? But we weren't *always* jerks about it. Several times we did honour ransoms, and Lars – our resident POS fitting expert – was even willing to offer suggestions on how to be less of a target.

Maya Cloe > you wardec'd me a while ago =)
Lars Erkonig > what can I help you with?
Maya Cloe > i believe you gave me some advice
Maya Cloe > on how to defend my pos
Lars Erkonig > probably. I tried to give our war targets advice after we killed their tower so as not to become victims twice.
Maya Cloe > just wanted to say thx
Lars Erkonig > no problem.
Maya Cloe > because i survived a wardec today

Alas, someone finally called out Flipmode on the EVE boards, which made it rather difficult for us to continue operations under that name. It became rather obvious (a) why we were wardec'ing people, and (b) that we were asshats who didn't always honour ransoms. After the good name of Flipmode had been sullied, New Eden Rock Doctors [NEDOC] was born.

"We then spent another 50 minutes or so chatting. Seems like a nice chat. War was retracted, he popped up later to have another brief chat, then that was that. This morning logged on to find the pos gone. Meh... not a fan of people who say one thing and do something else. So warning... do not ever pay them ransom. Just cut your losses."

bwes yhu (some pubbie)
<http://www.eve-search.com/thread/1132786/page/1>

Occasionally, angry targets decided to counter-wardec us - or hired mercs - in order to disrupt our money-making operations. When this happened, we usually just took a break for a week or two while waiting out the wardec; as fun as the POS takedowns were, sometimes we all needed some time off. I think we used Happy Empire Pubbie Corp [HEP-C] as an alt corp once during a prolonged counter-dec. While on occasion the hired guns were quite good at what they did, most of the time they weren't exactly the best or brightest.

"Don't be a retard and die, we're all alts, if it goes on longer than a week we'll start to get frisky."

AlphaMeridian – Flipmode forum

<http://arsclan.net/forum/showpost.php?p=536118&postcount=2>

"Have we been counter dec'd by a pirate corp whose members can't enter high sec?"

kperrier (Dreadlord Bryne) - Flipmode forum

<http://arsclan.net/forum/showpost.php?p=554774&postcount=2>

All told, Flipmode took in about 60b between the start of the ARSED operations (mid-May 2009) and our final takedown in late June 2010. I couldn't find any definitive records from the first several months, but I would estimate that to be at least another 20b ISK; Flipmode was rather busy.

Augnais 7-1	Barmalie 9-1	Alsottobier 8-9	Parchanier 6-11	Brapellille 9-1	Brybier 1-15	Brybier 3-1	Bika 8-21	Bika 9-2
Kermit DFrog Nota Ero			Moon Sammy			Yulianna Praskovya		
12	17	15	18	15	12	13	14	13
6	0	0	4	0	4	5	2	4
455,714,531.77		15,341,388,544.17	1,681,763,728.91	742,776,140.98	947263580.2	695114123.92	1,465,412,469.56	1,096,013,965.77
25,317,473.99	0.00	1,022,759,236.28	76,443,805.86	49,518,409.40	59,203,973.76	38,617,451.33	91,588,279.35	64,471,409.75

"While I'm caught up on payouts, I just want to thank everyone for being a part of our hilarious empire antics. None of you are required to do this; this is completely optional, and yet I've had people dedicate some surprisingly high SP characters to the effort. I try to keep things as chillmode as I can, and on the occasion that I bust a nerve on ops, I really do apologize. It's for that reason that I rarely if ever FC 0.0 ops - I fundamentally believe that before everything else, Eve should not be about FCs sperging all the time; Eve should be about fun!

...

All of this being said, I do hope that flipmode is not the entirety of your eve existence. I certainly can't do the things that you guys get in Arsed or ExCo, and I try to make no pretensions that flipmode is in any way suitable to be your "main" eve corporation. If I'm doing my job right, then being in flipmode would be horribly boring as we'd do nothing but chillmode every monday and thursday (and the towers would have no stront!). Occasionally I fuck up (in the search for profit) and we have to shoot a tower that shoots back :V

To end, I'd just like to raise the proverbial glass and hope we have another successful year."

AlphaMeridian – Flipmode forum

<http://arsclan.net/forum/showthread.php?t=33850>

Targets

We had a lot of targets. I don't remember all the corp names, but going off of the old payout spreadsheet, it looks like we shot 50 towers in the last 10 months of Flipmode's existence. Add in the first 8 months, and we're probably looking at about 80+ POSes total. Sure, this isn't much compared to a real merc corp, but remember that we did this almost entirely AFK with under-skilled alts.

Region	System	P	M	Tower	Size	Corp	Alliance	Advanced Labs	Mobile Laboratory	Experiments	Advanced Assembly	54M Arrays	Defenses	#	Status	
Domain	Azitora	4	14	Amarr	Large	Elco Industries	None		1	7	0	1	0	Large Beam	2	Online
Domain	Ebo	6	1	Caldari	Large	Ts-Corp	none			6				None		
Domain	Ebo	7	3	Orbital Outposts	Large	Los Ventures	None			16			None			
Domain	Ebo	8	1	Amarr	Medium	Less Mich In Ruhe Und Nef Nid	None		1	1			1	Large Beam Laser Large Pulse laser	1 2	Online Online
Domain	Ebo	9	1	Amarr	Medium	Dominion Empire Mining and MFG	None			2			1	None		
Domain	Ebo	11	14	Shadow	Large	Camello Negro	None			3				None		
Domain	Ebo	11	21	Caldari	Large	Malevolent Overlords	The Kult (only members)			3				None		
Domain	Ebo	11	24	Gallente	Large	Lost Souls of BLSH				4	4			None		
Domain	Esteban	4	1	True Sansha	Large	Gaichig Technology			2					Small Pulse laser	1	Online
Domain	Esteban	7	8	Amarr	Medium	Small By Friendly Star Corp	None		1	1			1	Small Beam Laser Small Pulse Laser Warp Scram Web	4 4 1 1	Online Online Online Online
Domain	Rayl	6	2	Gallente	Small	Sluts with barges	None		1	1				Small Railguns Small railgun	7 1	online Anchored

How did we choose them? Initially we only targeted small towers with a few labs and no guns. Then we worked on small towers with a few guns, or medium towers with no guns. Eventually we moved on to being able to take out ECMstars and large, armed, faction towers. But when we did recon, we tried to do it well:

*With all of that being said, this sounds pretty simple, right? Wrong. Because the key here is I don't want you to put *every pos you find* on the spreadsheet, or the spreadsheet quickly becomes useless. So here are some of the guidelines I use to immediately disqualify a pos:*

1) Is the corporation in an alliance? IF yes, Is the pos online? If yes, it doesn't go on the spreadsheet.

Once upon a time I was open to the possibility of wardeccing alliances. Then we did so and they left the alliance and we were up shit creek. So no POS which are in an alliance unless the tower is offline (because then it's a 1 day shot)

2) Does the POS have a shitload of shield hardeners (lets say, a shitload is defined as more than 2 hardeners on each damage type, so 8 hardeners total) OR more than 3 hardeners to em/therm on a pos that has LESS than 1.5B total?

Self explanatory. We're not attacking resiststars unless it's REALLY REALLY WORTH IT. There's some play with this criteria based on the sheer size of a pos. If a small is resist-started and has like 2 AML then we'll blow it up because the sheer lack of raw HP means we can still chew through it. If it's a large though... (you see where I'm going here)

3) Does the pos have a shitload of ECM?

HURR

4) Does the pos have a shitload of medium sized, long ranged, turret based weaponry? (long ranged means Arty, Rails, Beams)

lets define shitload as in the range of 15-20? This is the loosest of the disqualification guidelines because every time I think we can't hit a pos you guys surprise me and we can.

If the pos your looking at has ANY OF THOSE 4 criteria then do not put it on the spreadsheet. But fear not, because there are a bunch of pos that don't meet any of them.

AlphaMeridian – Flipmode forum
<http://arsclan.net/forum/showthread.php?t=31201>



A typical target

Memorable Moments in Flipmode History

Most of our POS takedowns provided us with a fair amount of amusement, usually beginning with making fun of their poor defences. Typical examples included: “why did they think that cruise missile launchers were a good idea?”; good-for-us-bad-for-them strontium timers (24h was a great one, as was our favourite, 0h); targets sending us evemails days later when they finally logged on and realized that their POS was gone; targets who warped ships onto the grid, only to be almost instantaneously destroyed by our focused fire.

There are four other distinct events that I remember as being particularly amusing.

B4 Genetics

This one occurred in the very early days of Flipmode. It was a pretty typical deployment, and a nice juicy target in the region of Domain, in orbit above Jarshitsan planet VII, moon 10.

As it turned out, B4 Genetics was a research alt corp of a number of people in KenZoku. KenZoku was an alt/pet corp related to Band Of Brothers, a large alliance that was pretty much ARSED's arch-nemesis. Here we were, a rag-tag group of poorly-skilled alts – most of our characters only had enough skill to sit in an Armageddon and fire lasers while sitting stationary outside a tower – and we've poked the hornet's nest.

Initially we had dreams of freighter or titan blueprints, though those were quickly dashed. B4 Genetics did a good job of stacking their corp with combat pilots just before their tower came out of reinforced mode, and we had to abandon the idea. Still, we learned a lot about choosing targets, and various ways that a corp could try to drop in a defence force at the last minute. I'm sure that knowledge saved us several times down the road.

“True story: I was worried about sieging B4 Genetics' Dread Gurista Medium because it was the largest pos we had done to date.”

AlphaMeridian – Flipmode forum

<http://arsclan.net/forum/showpost.php?p=555647&postcount=4>

The Orca

It was another typical POS shot. Reinforced the tower, came back sometime later when the strontium timer had expired, and finished shooting it. In addition to the labs, there was also a Ship Maintenance Array anchored at the tower. Sometimes people left things inside, and if we destroyed it, there was a chance that something good might pop out. We locked the SMA, lasers rapidly removing its shields, armor, and structure. When it exploded, we checked out overviews and saw... an Orca?

AlphaMeridian > OH SHIT ORCAGET THE ORCA

AlphaMeridian > HAHAHHA

Lars Erkonig > we got an orca

Mzjufflak > FUCK YEAAAAAA

The Orca is a large industrial ship, worth about 500m ISK at the time, IIRC. This added significantly to our profit for this tower, but how were we going to fly it? All of our characters could barely sit in their battleships, let alone be capable of piloting a massive industrial ship back to the station. After a few frantic moments, we discovered that Lars had an industry alt who could fly over and get in the ship. It was a tense 20 minutes or so as he switched characters and flew halfway across empire in order to join us. When he finally arrived and hopped in the ship, we were thrilled to discover an extra bonus – two Mackinaws and a Hulk inside!

Teri Hago > 1x bs, 1x orca, 1x hulk, 2x mack, 1x brutix

Lars Erkonig > and a bantam

Teri Hago > 3x lab, 1x aml

*Jaigua Estaccare > 4*90 + 1x150 for the labs = 510 million... + geddon + hulk + 2x mack + brutix + orca*

Buxaroo

There were many times when our targets demanded to know why we had destroyed their tower. Sometimes we told them that it was just in the way, and that we were clearing space. Other times we pretended that we had been employed by someone to remove it. But who to blame as a scapegoat?

Lost Kitten > Contractor was Buxaroo. Alts are Bux Naked and Carfex.

Soloman Grandmas > And the contract was just to stop my production? I've never run accross this guy.

Lost Kitten > that's what we were asked to do.

Lost Kitten > I have no idea what his beef is with you.

Lost Kitten > We don't ask those types of questions typically.

That brings us back to the Band of Brothers and IT Alliance. Another Arsian playing *EVE* had a character, Buxaroo, in one of the BoB corps. There was a bit of a friendly rivalry going on, where he and other *EVE*-playing Arsians would troll each other in the SHAPE thread on the ArsTechnica forums. So what better person to blame for our misdeeds, than good ol' Buxaroo?

"Who is Buxaroo and why doesn't he tolerate failure?"

bwes yhu – some pubbie

"Buxaroo does indeed not tolerate failure, you have been warned."

Kane Rizzel – evil pirate extraordinaire, and fellow Bux-mocking Arsian

"Now, I am not sure if all of you people have been living under a Veldspar rock for the last 2 years, but you would have thought that everyone and their Ibis would have known by now that BoB and Goons have been at war with each other in one form or another for the longest. It's even been in the New York Times. And in every gaming mag in the world, and god forbid plastered all over EVE's various chat channels. And they should know that goons and their allies have taken Delve from BoB.

So.....why would I, an ex-BoB member and current RKK member (which was one of the corps in BoB), who I might add has a a distinct dislike for goons, hire a merc corp which is comprised mainly of goons, to take on random corps who have POS's scattered all over New Eden?

I have gotten over a dozen evemails from CEO's asking me why I paid Flipmode to war dec their little corps. Only one of them had the common sense to check who I belong to and who the people who war deced them used to belong too (most likely goon alts).

It's not Shakespeare. It's not some unbreakable code that the NSA has cooked up. It's not all that hard to figure out."

buxaroo – getting a bit fed up with Flipmode. Sorry bux!
<http://www.eve-search.com/thread/1132786/page/1>

OMG BPOs

Most of our income came from un-anchoring the labs at these highsec research towers that we were destroying. Some of it came from ransoms, or from random ships. Sometimes, however, our targets were foolish enough to place their blueprints inside the labs. While it was necessary to put blueprint copies inside a lab for invention attempts, blueprint originals (BPOs) should always be left safely inside a corporation hanger at a station in the same system as the lab.

Jaigua Estaccare > what are you actually doing in the POS, then?

Neuromancer Prime > research, but you can research bpo in the other stations here.

Neuromancer Prime > remotely

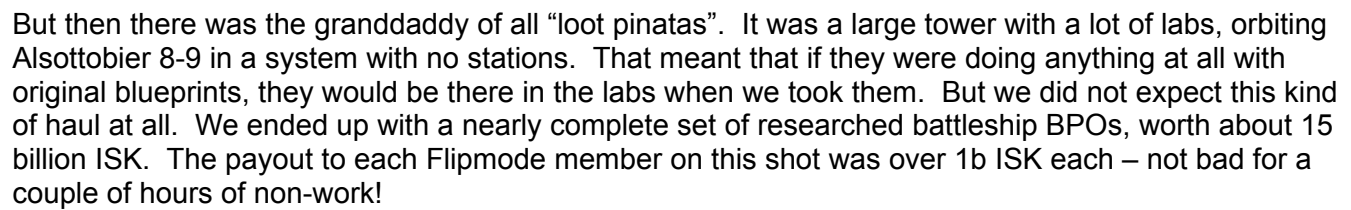
Jaigua Estaccare > oh, so you put them in station and it researches in the labs?

Jaigua Estaccare > that's pretty cool

Jaigua Estaccare – fishing to see if they were dumb enough to leave BPOs in the labs

Thankfully, some people weren't always that smart. There was the Christmas shoot at Faurent 9-4, where we picked up Thanatos and Obelisk BPOs, in addition to a stack of other less valuable blueprints – and a 600m ransom. These two below are pretty low value hauls in comparison.





Standard Flipmode Setup and Tactics

"Main scheduled shots are Mondays and Thursdays at 9pm eastern, 6pm pacific. This tends to lead to towers coming out of reinforced on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 3pm to 5pm eastern."

AlphaMeridian – "Welcome to Flipmode Industries!"
<http://arsclan.net/forum/showthread.php?t=30345>

"The Tao of Armageddon Fittings"

Instead of posting a bunch of fits which may or may not mesh with your individual skillset in progress, I'm instead going to post guidelines - or the Tao - of how your armageddons should be setup. Most of you will already know this from the past 3 months, but for any new flipmoders, this is how you should do it:

Highs:

7x Beams

What these beams are is dependent on your fitting skills. The ideal is 7x Tachyon Beam Laser IIs. Obviously this requires you to have T2 Large Laser skills. If you don't have that, then drop down to Top Named Tachs. If those are too expensive for your tastes, then drop down to Meta 2 or 3 Tachs. If you can't fit the tachs at all - at maximum, 2 RCU down low, then it's 100% ok to drop down a gun size to Mega Beams. The Meta 4 Mega beams are affordable (around 500k each).

Whatever you do, please don't rush down to Meta 0 here. The nature of what we do makes it such that if everyone races to the bottom, we ALL end up taking exponentially more time, especially because a number of our high SP characters are leaving flipmode after the Arsed thing. Small changes in DPS will end up having larger impacts than it may seem because we're shooting these towers for 1-2 hours at a time.

Large Remote Armor Repairer

*This ***must*** be online, ALL of the time. It is our only defense against any number of myriad strategies that may jump out at us. Pretty much this is the "in case shit" option, and the more people have it the less likely any one or all of us will die. However, do not worry if your geddon is not cap stable when it is on - it's pretty much a gigantic PITA to make it cap stable (although you CAN do it). Pulsing is 100% OK.*

Mids:

3x Cap Rechargers OR 3x Cap Rechargers and a Tracking Computer

The former option is preferred, the latter option is if you don't have enough optimal (basically lower skilled players might have some optimal issues while they get some gunnery support trained up)

Lows:

1-2x Reactor Control Unit;

Enough to fit your guns and the LRAR

1-2x Capacitor Power Relay

Enough to keep your fitting cap stable when firing your guns. It's important that the number in EFT for your specific fitting is about 33%ish - EFT will occasionally lie to you and say a fitting is stable at 20%. It never is, because peak recharge is more around 33% (I'm not

100% on where it is exactly, but it's around there). Please don't accept a fitting where your cap will run dry. Eventually you will forget to cycle and we will lose out on your dps.

1-4x Heat Sink II

Smoke em while you got em. Yes, you'll run into the stacking penalty. I don't care. Also pretty much if we ever need a non-standard fit, the first thing to go is the 4th and 3rd HS.

Drones:

5x Bouncers OR 5x Curators. (have both available to you)

You will end up using the Bouncers 90% of the time (better DPS, Longer optimal). Occasionally, we'll hit an Amarr POS and we'll use the curators. If the POS is omnitanked, use the Bouncers.

Things to have around for when we need to mix our fittings up:

- A couple of 1600mm Plates (drop a couple of HS for these. If you run into fitting issues, offline a gun to open up your PG for this)*
- A Damage Control*
- Armor Hardeners (say, 2x of each type. We'll very very VERY rarely use these, but have them available just in case)*

AlphaMeridian – Flipmode forums

<http://arsclan.net/forum/showthread.php?t=30344>

“Anti-ECM Strategy Overview”

*It's been a while since we've done this, so I just want to let all the newcomers get a overview of what the anti-ecm strategy IS and how we can fucking abuse it for fun and profit. First off, the goal is **not** to be impervious to racial ECM - the sensor strengths are WAY too high to be impervious. What you want to do is have a good chance of struggling off a jam from NON-racial ECM, and those non-racials have HILARIOUS strength.*

So, of what I remember from last time, here's now we're going to do it.

First off: Gallente CS running Information Warfare ganglink just chillin (does not need to be in corp) That'll give us a bonus off the bat.

Right below that, we'll have scorpions running projected ECCM (I swear to god this stuff is underutilized for the 120% bonus to sensor strength it doles out) (these guys also do not need to be in corp, which is fucking WONDERFUL for logistics, let me tell you)

*and right below that, we have our geddonswarm. You will be running 2x racial local ECCM (the midslot stuff). While in this configuration, you **do not need** to be cap stable. Just make sure you can shoot for like 5 minutes or so and you should be ok, because you WILL be jammed by the racial POS ECM. However you will be shrugging off MOST of the non-racial stuff, and **that** is the key.*

While we are doing this our primary targets will be 1) The amarr ECM 2) the Caldari ECM 3) the rest.

After we're done killing the ECM (1.5M armor per module) we switch back to normal configs and chillmode the tower.

AlphaMeridian – Flipmode forum

<http://arsclan.net/forum/showthread.php?t=32956>

Why Did It End?

With the release of the Tyrannis expansion on May 26, 2010, CCP made it so that all POS modules (including Mobile Laboratory and Advanced Mobile Laboratory mods) were now to be player-built, instead of just seeded on the market by NPCs. That left the lab pricing vulnerable to supply & demand, and I recall an initial issue with players stockpiling and then reprocessing certain types of modules in order to gain raw materials to build other mods at vastly reduced prices. This helped to kill the market, and quickly cut prices for labs down to about 50-60% of their original price.

With prices having dropped significantly, AlphaMeridian called a temporary end to Flipmode, unless prices ever managed to recover. He went off to play other games (I recall World Of Tanks in particular), though he stayed in touch with ARSED to keep abreast of hilarious *EVE* drama. Sadly, he was never to return to restart Flipmode, as he passed away on March 28, 2011.

Alpha, thanks for all the great times. You were a class act, a great leader, and you are sorely missed.

