

The History of Star Wars Games

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THE HISTORY OF STAR WARS



GAMES

Star Wars games have been around almost as long as the **games industry** itself. **Total CONTROL** decided there was a story there somewhere – and **stone Yoda**, we were right. **Bringing you the tale is Rebel leader**, Keith Pullin...



STAR WARS



Video and computer games have attempted to simulate and expand upon George Lucas' Star Wars universe for the last sixteen years. Since Atari's arcade cabinet first appeared in 1983, more than 50 (yes, fifty!) Star Wars related games have appeared in various guises, ranging from 3D shoot-'em-ups to pseudo-chess conversions. That's a staggering amount, and a major contributing factor in bringing the exploits of Luke, Leia, Han, Chewie and co. to a newer, richer generation. Would Star Wars be as popular today without this omnipresent games production line to remind us all of that galaxy far, far away? Probably not.

Star Wars games are an indication of the state of the software industry itself. Should an 'outsider' want to assess the current state of interactive games technology, they need look no further than the newest Star Wars releases. Look at *Force Commander* and *X-Wing Alliance* on the PC – graphics don't come much better. But more on that later...

"Back in my day..."

In 1983, Simon Le Bon bore the look of blow-dried Ewok, Nick Kershaw looked like a homeless Wookiee, and Tina Turner looked dangerous. It was also the year Atari released the first Star Wars arcade game. Unlike most games of the time, the Star Wars arcade cabinet and monitor could be used for nothing else other than the game it was meant for due to its revolutionary 3D vector line-graphics. When viewed alongside the dowdy likes of *Spy Hunter* and *Phoenix*, *Star Wars* looked truly sensational – Atari were onto a winner. And then a strange thing happened...

In 1984 they followed *Star Wars* with *Return of the Jedi*. Aside from the obvious fact that it was released before *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Jedi* was also nothing like the first Star

Wars game. What were Atari playing at? Instead, we were treated to an isometric approach similar to *Zaxxon*, featuring speeder bikes in the Forest of Endor and death-defying Millennium Falcon rides. Luckily for Atari, it was good. Ten pence pieces were easily lured from our grasp – but where the hell was *Empire*?

Well, Atari badly wanted to cash in on the release of *Jedi*, which had just hit cinemas, and had apparently decided to skip *Empire*. But had they? Of course not.

In a move of dubious virtue, Atari released a chip set which could be slotted into the back of the original *Star Wars* cabinet to magically transform it into *The Empire Strikes Back*. Minimum cost, minimum fuss, maximum revenue. Atari were back to the adrenaline pumping 3D shoot-'em-up format everybody loved, and now they had three Star Wars arcade games while the film hype was still hot. Very clever. Very clever indeed...

You can still find all three machines if you scour the country long and hard enough, but whether it's still safe to sit in front of that monitor when the Death Star explodes is another matter...

Star Wars is coming home

While the Star Wars arcade cabinets conquered the piers and seaside arcades of Britain, Atari's erstwhile VCS console was conquering homes. A total of five Star Wars games were released by Parker Brothers, who, amongst other things, were also responsible for classics like *Q*Bert* and *Frogger*. They also conceived the highly alternative *Strawberry Shortcake: Musical Match-ups*, but that's another story entirely.

In reality, between 1982 and 1984 Parker Bros. monopolised Star Wars games development in the same way

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY ARCADE...

Star Wars, original arcade version by Atari Inc., 1983.

The *Star Wars* arcade game boasted many revolutionary features. The state-of-the-art 3D vector engine was converted from a two year old unfinished project called *Warp-Speed*. The flight stick was designed by modifying the controller used in the military version of *Battlezone*. And on top of that, it was the first Atari game to produce speech, and although it sounds slightly mechanical, all the samples were lifted directly from the film soundtrack. Another first was the use of four 'Pokey' chips (sixteen independent voices in total) to simulate the symphonic acoustics. The game itself was fairly straightforward: The first level catapulted the player into a spectacular space battle against imperial TIE Fighters.

The second stage saw the X-Wing down on the surface of the Death Star, which was covered with laser bunkers and towers. The third and final stage took 'Red-5' down into the Death Star trench, where the ultimate goal was to shoot a proton torpedo into the exhaust port to destroy the Death Star itself – "just like Beggar's Canyon back home..." Historic rating: 7/10 – Still one helluva rush!



The Empire Strikes Back, original arcade version by Atari Inc., 1985.

Grab a few new chips, shove them in the back of the original *Star Wars* arcade machine and what have you got? *The Empire Strikes Back*. Atari certainly didn't over elaborate when it came to knocking this one out.

The first stage saw the player soaring over the terrain of Hoth in a Snowspeeder shooting down Probots and transmission signals. After that came the stomping Imperial Walkers and Scout Walkers, and finally we were whisked away into space to take on a wave of TIE Fighters in the Millennium Falcon. But wait. What's this? There's more? Yes, *The Empire Strikes Back* had a whopping great four stages, with the real final stage being the Millennium Falcon's roller coaster ride through an asteroid belt. Hmm. Bit of an anticlimax then? Well yes, but still worth playing, if only to fly through the legs of the Imperial Walkers on stage 2.

Historic Rating: 7/10 – Slightly more variation than the first, but generally more of the same.



Return of the Jedi, original arcade version by Atari Inc., 1984.

Return of the Jedi was released before *The Empire Strikes Back*, and represented a marked contrast. Instead of blasting away at wiry polygons, *ROTJ*'s engine was based on the more traditional shooter called *Zaxxon*. The player viewed the action from an isometric perspective and controlled one of three different craft, namely a Speeder Bike on the first stage, the Millennium Falcon on the second and an AT-ST Walker at the end.

Winding through the trees of Endor on the Speeder Bike was strangely compelling. Han Solo's cries of "I'm going in!" were unforgettable, and rumbling around in an Imperial Walker lent a well-needed bit of firepower to proceedings. It was certainly spectacular, but it was also very difficult, and there were only three stages.

Historic rating: 7/10 – Challenging and atmospheric, but nowhere near enough levels.

This is one of the actual posters used to sell *The Empire Strikes Back* chip set to arcade owners



LucasArts do today. Not only did they swamp the VCS, and subsequent Atari 2600/5200 with a plethora of titles, they even managed to release *Star Wars: The Arcade Game* for Coleco's Colecovision console, and *The Empire Strikes Back* on Mattel's Intellivision.

The first 8-Bit Nintendo also started appearing at this point, but there was no place for *Star Wars* in the unfashionable grey box from Japan. The closest it came was an add-on robot called *R.O.B.*, looking like a giant Swiss army knife with all its blades out, this little guy was supposed to play against you in the same way a mate would, but C3PO it most definitely was not. Nintendo's time had not yet come...

As prolific and successful as they were, Parker Brothers succumbed to the infamous video game crash of 1984 – but they weren't the only ones. The market collapse, caused by the advent of home computers like the Sinclair ZX Spectrum and Commodore 64, annihilated virtually any company associated with home console games.

Atari survived, as we know, but have never quite managed to dominate like they did from 1976 to 1984. Still, it's their legacy that prospers today: Atari were the true pioneers of home interactive entertainment. They convinced the world to interact with their television, they changed home entertainment forever, and a lot of that success was down to their *Star Wars* ties.

A new hope

The *Star Wars* licence was about to enter a new era. Atari tried to claw their way back to respectability with the Atari 400/800/XL series of home computers, and quick versions of both *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back* helped convey the illusion that Atari could still mix with the best of them, but

it wasn't to be. More significant was the 1985 Commodore 64 version of *Star Wars*: this was the closest anybody had yet come to duplicating the arcade version. Here was a game that was virtually identical. Okay, you never got the 16 channel symphonic sound of the original, but it was still damn good.

However, Sinclair Spectrum owners weren't happy. Where was their version? Atari weren't interested. They concentrated instead on releasing *The Empire Strikes Back* for the C64, and duly did so. Spectrum owners seethed, but in 1987 the wait ended courtesy of Vektor Grafik – *Star Wars* had finally made it onto Clive Sinclair's rubber-keyed wonder. Domark published it under license from Atari, and the game was greeted rapturously. A year later, the same talented bunch of individuals came up with *The Empire Strikes Back*. Yet again, it was a near perfect conversion of the arcade game. The only bad point was David Whittaker's music, which farted along ominously. Bless.

In 1988, Atari ST conversions of all three arcade games followed in quick succession. To be fair, by then everybody had seen it all before, and considering most ST owners had upgraded from either a Spectrum or Commodore anyway, there was really nothing to shout about. The arcade conversions had been done to death, and there were better 3D shooters around. It was time to move on – a new approach was needed. LucasFilm, too, decided that the fate of the new rebellion should rest in their hands...

The console strikes back

In the helter-skelter world of the interactive games industry, fortunes were about to change yet again. Oddly, in Japan, Nintendo's NES system (or Famicom as it is known in Japan) had gone from strength to strength since the 1984 crash. The Japanese, it seems, never fell for that home computer 'fad', and

CONSOLE YOURSELF, DEAR BOY

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (Atari VCS/2600) – Parker Bros., 1983

Drawing inspiration from *Defender*, this erstwhile quick-fingered shoot-'em-up had you flying around in your Snowspeeder, knocking off as many AT-ATs as possible. When it came to looks, this blotchy baby was in desperate need of a plastic surgeon, but at least you could work out what everything was meant to be – as you can today.

With that in mind, this remains a classic Atari console game, and is still popular with video game 'cults' today.

Historic Rating: 9/10 – Ooh baby! What beautiful legs you have...



Star Wars: Jedi Arena, (Atari VCS/2600) – Parker Bros., 1984

Do you remember in *Star Wars* when Luke does his lightsabre training, and he has to defend himself from a floating ball? Well, this is the video game version – kind of. The aim is to send a bolt of electricity through your opponent's shield by directing it with the paddle controller. Unfortunately your opponent is trying to do the same, so in true Jedi fashion you have to beat the offending article away with your trusty lightsabre.

Ultimately, *Jedi Arena* is another ultra-difficult *Star Wars* game. Definitely one for the Jedi Masters, and maybe one for the money masters too, as it's actually quite rare. Owning a boxed copy in good condition could even net you a few bob...

Historic Rating: 6/10 – *Jedi Arena* anybody?



Use the force, use the force, use the force...
Oh, I give up...

THE COMPLETE SOFTOGRAPHY – AT A GLANCE...

After days of back breaking research, the definitive list of *Star Wars* games has been created. Cast your eyes down this list and witness history...

1977

Star Wars
(Film)

1979

The Empire Strikes Back
(Film)

1982

Star Wars: Jedi Arena
(Atari VCS/2600)
Parker Bros

1983

The Return of the Jedi
(Film)
Star Wars
(Arcade)
Atari
Return of the Jedi: Death Star Battle
(Atari VCS/2600/5200)
Parker Bros

Return of the Jedi: Ewok Adventure
(Atari VCS/2600)
Parker Bros

The Empire Strikes Back
(Atari VCS/2600/Intellivision)
Parker Bros

1984

The Return of the Jedi
(Arcade)
Atari
Star Wars: The Arcade Game
(Atari VCS/2600/5200/Colecovision)
Parker Bros
Star Wars
(Commodore 64)
LPL/Atari

1985

The Empire Strikes Back
(Arcade)
Atari
Empire Strikes Back
(Commodore 64)
LPL/Atari

BOXING CLEVER

Any of these old boxes look familiar? Got a few lurking under the stairs? If so, go and get them valued immediately. In fact, why not try and swap Intellivision's *The Empire Strikes Back* for *Rogue Squadron* on the N64? Go on – I dare you.

Year: 1983

Name: Return of the Jedi: Death Star Battle

Format: Atari 2600

By: Parker Brothers

Availability: Rare



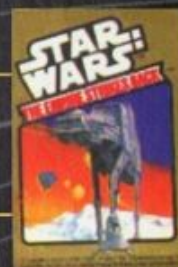
Year: 1983

Game: Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back

Format: Intellivision

By: Parker Brothers

Availability: Quite rare



Year: 1984

Game: Star Wars: The Arcade Game

Format: Atari 2600

By: Parker Brothers

Availability: Very rare



Year: 1985

Game: Star Wars: The Arcade Game

Format: Atari 5200

By: Parker Brothers

Availability: Rare



Year: 1983

Game: Return of the Jedi: Ewok Adventure

Format: Atari 2600

By: Parker Brothers

Availability: Unbelievably rare



while the UK and American markets tossed, turned, fretted, and then mourned the death of various computers (due in no small part to severe piracy), the Japanese forged ahead with consoles and improved upon them in true bionic man style. Inevitably, in 1990 consoles re-emerged in the UK, and with them, a reinvigorated wave of Star Wars titles.

First was *Star Wars* on the NES. Designed and developed by LucasFilm Games, programmed by Beam Software and published by JVC (with Nintendo retaining overall rights), it was the first Star Wars game for six years that wasn't an arcade conversion. As it happens it was a pretty good platformer – zingy sound effects, challenging gameplay, loads of characters, and a fantastic speeder section on the surface of Tatooine. This was just what the doctor ordered. Shortly after, a painfully difficult version of *The Empire Strikes Back* was released through the same convoluted licensing channels, and once again a myriad of characters assailed the player's senses. A token Sega Master System version of *Star Wars* also appeared, but it never received the same acclaim as the NES duo.

In 1992, Gameboy versions of *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back* made it possible to fit Princess Leia into your trouser pocket. How both games managed to seethe their way through the bureaucratic red tape thrust before them is a mystery to this day; make sense of the following if you dare: Both were developed by NMS Software Ltd as a UbiSoft production under license from LucasArts Entertainment Ltd and licensed by Nintendo. Everyone was after their slice of pie, and considering both games were basically direct conversions of the NES games, it was probably easy money for all involved. Surprisingly, they weren't bad games.

The final Star Wars game on the Gameboy – *Super Return of the Jedi* – was developed by Black Pearl Software and published by THQ. Why new developers were chosen is unknown. Whatever the reason, they produced a game virtually identical to the first two anyway. Still that was the way of the 'Boy – platform game, after platform game, after platform game... Oh, and *Tetris*.

In 1993 the Super NES played host to what is arguably the finest trilogy of games on any console or computer ever. *Super Star Wars*, *Super Empire Strikes Back* and *Super Return of the Jedi* were masterful platform creations. Admittedly, if you've played your way through the first two, *Jedi* can be a little repetitive. Still, they were consistent, and like the films, all three were compulsive entertainment from start to finish. The trilogy proved to be JVC's finest hour. Alas, it also proved to be the last Star Wars games published under their banner.

The eastern of the computer

1993 was a landmark year for the games industry. For the first time in history, consoles and computers seemed to be living peacefully together. LucasFilm became LucasArts, and they began to take a firm grasp of their own destiny. And, for the first time ever, Sega also started to receive a share of the Star Wars licence with *Star Wars: The Arcade Game*, *Rebel Assault* and *Star Wars: Chess* all arriving on the Sega 32X, with the latter two even appearing on 32X CD.

Star Wars: Chess remains one of the most ill-conceived game concepts of all-time – effectively it was normal chess, but with Star Wars characters. Chewie moves A4 to C4 and takes Leia from behind – all that... *Rebel Assault* was a spooled arcade shoot-'em-up, which in truth was little more than a couple of hours of vaguely interactive FMV. Even so, 3DO got the Rebel treatment too.

Then the PC games market exploded. With Virgin Interactive as UK publishers, LucasArts got their act well and truly together. *X-Wing* (by Totally Games) appeared, then the stubborn *Rebel Assault*, and in 1994 the floodgates opened – *TIE Fighter*, *Dark Forces*, *Rebel Assault II*, *Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight*, *Shadows*

of the Empire, X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter, Yoda Stories, Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith, and finally Rebellion last year. It's almost as if LucasArts had some kind of contractual obligation to release 'X' amount of titles before the new film...

Net-to-digital store

Nowadays the PlayStation also has its fair share of the Star Wars pie, boasting Dark Forces, Masters of Tera Kasi and Rebel Assault II, while the N64 gets in on the action with Shadows of the Empire. Never before has such a rich vein of Star Wars games been available, and as far as the future is concerned, things are looking pretty rosy. Current PC publishers Activision will be responsible for Star Wars: Force Commander and Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance, and THE will guide Rogue Squadron on the N64.

Whether we'll be treated to another sixteen years of Star Wars games is hard to say. It might actually be quite nice to get out of the house and communicate with real humans for a change. Alternatively, with the ongoing construction of the Earth's own International Space Station, it might not be long before we find our own Death Stars and Ewoks. Space is infinite after all, and with infinity comes infinite possibilities. Pure fantasy? Of course. But that, my friend, is what it's all about...

STAR WARS ON THE INTERNET

Star Wars with the Gipper

For a very, very silly bit of Star Wars nonsense, point your browser this way:

www.galcit.caltech.edu/~doug/computer/java/sdi/sdi.html

Star Wars RPGs on the Net

Some people like to spend their lives in state of denial, shunning anything to do with reality. When such an urge overwhelms you, pop along to this site.

www.roleplayinggames.net/starwars/index.html

Official Star Wars Website

Want to know about the first three films? Want to see a trailer for the new film? All your dreams will come true at:

www.starwars.com

Official LucasArts Website

For more information on any of LucasArts Star Wars products, nip along to this very entertaining haven of hope.

www.lucasarts.com



C64 VS SPECTRUM

Commodore and Sinclair's bitter struggle for market supremacy was another classic "Good Vs Evil" battle. It was fitting then, that these two Goliaths of the home computing world should go head to head with Star Wars arcade conversions, and most satisfying when C64 owners faces dropped like medicine balls when they saw what delights the good old Speccy had coughed up.



The Spectrum didn't need any force to help it along... Unlike the Sinclair C5, which needed loads



1986

Star Wars
(Atari 400/800/XL)
Atari

The Empire Strikes Back
(Atari 400/800/XL)
Atari
Star Wars
(Spectrum 48k)
Domark

1987

The Empire Strikes Back
(Spectrum 48k/128k)
Domark

1988

Star Wars
(Atari ST)
Domark/Atari
The Empire Strikes Back
(Atari ST)
Domark/Atari

1989

Return of the Jedi
(Atari ST)
Domark/Atari

1990

Star Wars
(Sega Master System)
Sega/Atari

1991

Star Wars
(NES)
JVC/Nintendo
The Empire Strikes Back
(NES)
JVC/Nintendo

1992

Star Wars
(Game Boy)
Ubisoft/Nintendo
The Empire Strikes Back
(Game Boy)
Ubisoft/Nintendo

1993

Super Star Wars
(Super NES)
JVC/Nintendo
Super Empire Strikes Back
(Super NES)
JVC/Nintendo
X-Wing
(PC/Macintosh)
LucasArts
B-Wing
(PC)

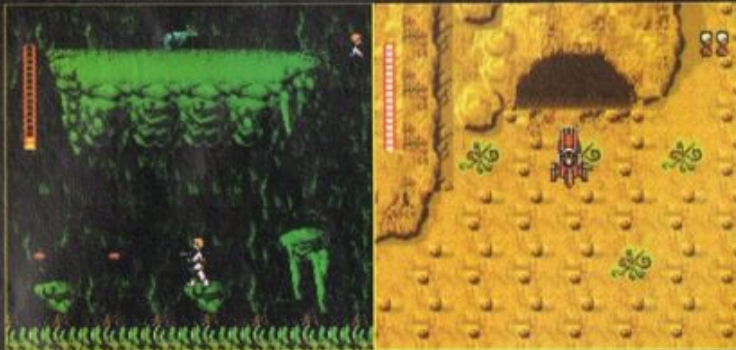


NINTENDO CRESCENDO

There have been a total of ten Star Wars games across the four Nintendo consoles released in the UK, and there's not a stinker in the house. True, there have been some painfully difficult ones like *The Empire Strikes Back* on the NES, and some visually-disturbed ones too, like well, *The Empire Strikes Back* on the Game Boy, but certainly nothing dire. Oddly enough, the least pleasing of all the Nintendo collection is *Shadows of the Empire* – the most recent release. Whether *Rogue Squadron* nips that particular lull in the bud is something we'll find out shortly. Don't hold your breath though. You'll die.

Star Wars (JVC) - NES, 1991

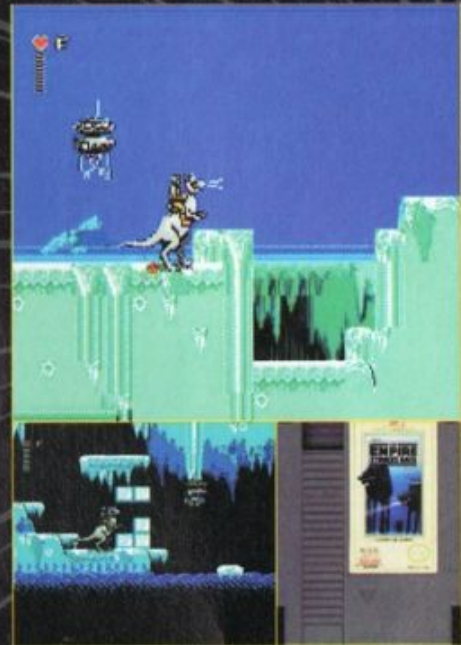
There were quite a few platform games out for the NES at this time, so it was often difficult to get noticed. Thankfully NES *Star Wars* was one of those games that did manage to stand out, and with some great ideas, it proved to be a worthy pursuit on a rainy day. **Overall: 7/10**



The Empire Strikes Back (JVC) - NES, 1991

Could this game be any harder? The NES version of *ESB* was one of the cruellest platform games of all time, though it did boast a rather canny side-scrolling flying section where you had to trip AT-ATs with tow-ropes. All in all – difficult, but good.

Overall: 7/10



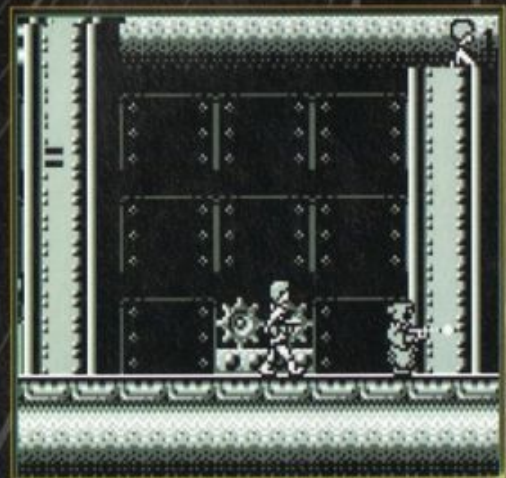
The Empire Strikes Back (Ubisoft) - Gameboy, 1992

More of the same really, but with slightly improved graphics, and more challenge. The most memorable scene has to be when you die; a little picture of Darth Vader appears with the phrase "All too easy" embossed underneath. You have to laugh. **Overall: 7/10**



Star Wars (Ubisoft) - Gameboy, 1992

Even with its minuscule monochrome screen, this version somehow managed to retain all the features of the NES game, including speedbikes, huge levels and plenty of end of level 'bosses'. Train commuters everywhere had a platform they were happy to stick around on. **Overall: 7/10**



Super Return of the Jedi (THD) - Gameboy, 1993

New programmers were employed for the final part of the trilogy, and they rose to the task admirably. This time we could choose to play with either, Luke Chewie or Leia. Cute. But by then our patience for Game Boy platform games was wearing thin.

Overall: 6/10



Super Star Wars (JVC) - Super NES, 1993

Super Star Wars was a blend of two gaming genres: space shoot-'em-up and 2D platformer. Rich with characters, gameplay and dodgy movie sequences, Super Star Wars proved to be great fun, but suffered appallingly from slow down when too many sprites were on screen. Apart from that it was hard to fault.

Overall: 8/10



Super Empire Strikes Back (JVC) - Super NES, 1993

Spot the difference. Again, with both platform and arcade sections, it was hard to see how this differed from Super Star Wars. In reality it didn't (bar a few costume changes), but if something isn't broken, why fix it?

Overall: 7/10



Super Return of the Jedi (JVC) - Super NES, 1994

Deja'vu? Yes, the platform/arcade mix extended to the final game of the trilogy, and subsequently Super Return of the Jedi held few surprises. However, by now the slow down problem had been more or less solved, so gameplay had actually improved. Of the three, this was the best.

Overall: 9/10



Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire (LucasArts) - N64, 1998

Nintendo games are full of contradictions: On one hand they often contain gameplay of exceptional quality (Legend of Zelda, Super Mario World), and yet on the other they get so bogged down by graphical possibilities, the entertainment value is completely lost. Sadly, this limp cinematic shoot-'em-up is one such case.

Overall: 5/10



Star Wars: Rogue Squadron (THD) - N64, 1999

Nintendo's latest foray into the Star Wars universe is an arcade flight simulation based on the comics, and takes place in-between Star Wars and The Empire Strikes Back, with many of the film characters making an appearance. Featuring a 4MB expansion Pak, there are plenty of explosive effects and a barrage of FMV cut-scenes. Due in March, it should prove to be the perfect remedy for N64 owners who are pining for the new film.

Overall: 8/10



LucasArts

X-Wing Imperial Pursuit
(PC)

LucasArts

X-Wing Tour of Duty
(PC)

LucasArts

Rebel Assault
(PC/3DO/Sega 32X/CD)

LucasArts

Star Wars:
The Arcade Game
(Sega 32X)

LucasArts

Star Wars: Chess
(Sega 32X)

LucasArts

1994

Super Return of the Jedi
(Super NES, Game Boy)

JVC/Nintendo

TIE Fighter
(PC/Macintosh)

LucasArts

1995

Dark Forces
(PC)

LucasArts

Rebel Assault II
(PC)

LucasArts

1997

Masters of Teras Kasi
(PlayStation)

LucasArts

Rebel Assault II
(PlayStation/Macintosh)

LucasArts

Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight
(PC)

LucasArts

Shadows of the Empire
(PC)

LucasArts

X-Wing versus TIE Fighter
(PC)

LucasArts

Balance of Power
(PC)

LucasArts

Yoda Stories
(PC)

LucasArts

Dark Forces
(PlayStation/Macintosh)

LucasArts

USING THE FORCE

Under LucasArts' guidance, PCs have taken Star Wars games to a new level. Here are the games that made it possible...

X-Wing, 1993

This ever popular space shoot-'em-up is so good it spawned three campaign disks: *B-Wing*, *X-Wing: Imperial Pursuit*, and *X-Wing Tour of Duty*. You can still find it on compilation disks today.

Dark Forces, 1995

LucasArts' first attempt at the first-person shooter featured the notorious 'Stormtroopers taking a piss' scene. But what was the game like? Bloody marvellous!



Rebel Assault II, 1995

Sequel to the 1993 non-event. The graphics are slightly better, but the play was still restricted. Apparently it's a love/hate kind of thing.



Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire, 1997

Owning this is a sin.



TIE Fighter, 1994

The sequel to *X-Wing* is an absolute gem. Better graphics, better gameplay... and this time you're the bad guy! What more could you possibly want (save your own TIE Fighter to fly down to Tesco's).

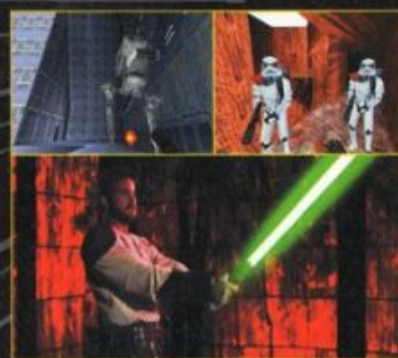


Rebel Assault, 1993

Aaaaaah! Take it away. When it comes to compelling arcade games, this is at the bottom of the list. Sit through utterly linear gameplay, and then wonder why Star Wars ever got so popular. Can't be right.

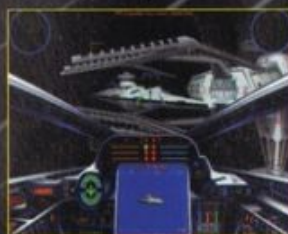
Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight, 1997

Jackpot! According to popular consensus, this is one of the best games of all-time. Massive levels, wonderful graphics and sheer quality from start to finish. Mark it!



X-Wing Collector Series, 1998

Containing enhanced versions of *X-Wing: Collector's CD-ROM*, *TIE Fighter: Collector's CD-ROM*, as well as *X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter: Flight School*, this is an essential purchase for all Star Wars space combat fans.



Yoda Stories, 1997

Join Luke Skywalker as he trains to become a Jedi and save the galaxy. Err, not really too sure what to make of this 'Desktop Adventure'. Still, worth a shot if you have the mental age of a five-year-old (or actually are five-years-old).

X-Wing versus TIE Fighter, 1997

A return to deep space for the third in the *X-Wing* series meant temporary stagnation as far as Star Wars 3D shoot-'em-ups were concerned. It's by no means bad, but definitely not up to previous standards. The campaign disk, *Balance of Power*, is now also available.

Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith, 1998

An absolutely stunning game. The depth and scale felt whilst playing this sends shivers down your spine. An all-time classic – and sexual equality to boot: the star of this game is female Jedi master, Mara Jade.



Rogue Squadron, 1998

Our reviewers weren't overly impressed with this, and to be fair, your average PC user expects a little bit more nowadays. Not a bad shoot-'em-up though – better than *Shadows of the Empire* at least.



Star Wars: Rebellion, 1998

Not one of the best Star Wars offerings we've ever seen, but if you want a real-time strategy game based in the Star Wars universe, this is your only hope...



SONY SUB-SPACE STATION

SONY SUB-SPACE STATION

Nintendo have recently signed an exclusivity deal with LucasArts meaning PlayStation Star Wars games are about to become surplus to requirements. Don't fret, though, there are some out there, it's just that they're, well, err, not brilliant, shall we say. The poor PlayStation has had a rough deal really.

Will Sega's Dreamcast fare any better? Judging from Sega's past experiences, the prospects are not too good. But rest assured we'll let you know when we know ourselves. Back to the PlayStation...

Dark Forces, 1997

This conversion of the PC classic is by far the best of the PlayStation bunch.

Masters of Teros Kesi, 1998

Alongside *Star Wars: Chess* on the Sega 32X, this awful beat-'em-up rates as one of the poorest Star Wars games to date.

Rebel Assault II, 1997

Okay if you like mindless shooting, but Star Wars fans are more discerning, aren't they?

STARS FOR THE FUTURE

At the moment there are two Star Wars titles guaranteed for release on the PC this year, but rumour has it there's at least two more based on George Lucas' Episode One film. Apparently one of them is even going to make it onto the shelves in time for the film's May 1999 release. We'll see...

Star Wars: Force Commander, LucasArts

Delayed now until next winter, *Force Commander* is based on the new films and allows the player to control hundreds of different units across many different planets. Looking similar to *Total Annihilation*, *FC* looks set to be the first real-time simulation Star Wars fans have experienced. Look forward to it.



Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance, LucasArts

Expected in the first quarter of 1999, *X-Wing Alliance* is being developed by Totally Games – the team responsible for the previous *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* sims. So what's new? Well, the main difference is the inclusion of Han Solo's Millennium Falcon. Larry Holland, lead designer for Totally Games, had these words to say: "The highly anticipated addition of the Millennium Falcon in *X-Wing Alliance* finally gives Star Wars game fans what they've long hoped for: the chance to emulate Han Solo by flying the legendary Corellian transport into the heat of battle." Thanks for those words of wisdom Larry, but for now we'll all have to make do with these screenshots.



1998

Jedi Knight:

Mysteries of the Sith
(PC)

LucasArts

Rebellion
(PC)

LucasArts

Rogue Squadron
(PC)

LucasArts

Shadows of the Empire
(N64)

THE/LucasArts

X-Wing Collector Series
(PC)

LucasArts

1999

Force Commander
(PC)

LucasArts

X-Wing Alliance
(PC) LucasArts

Rogue Squadron
(N64)

THE/LucasArts

Star Wars: Episode I: A Phantom Menace
(Film)

And much, much more...