How Lucasfilm Games Can Be a New Era For Everyone

Posted on **February 11, 2021** (https://news-throughds.com/2021/02/how-lucasfilm-games-can-be-a-new-era-for-everyone/) by **Ryan Fitzmaurice** (https://news-throughds.com/author/ryan-fitzmaurice/) | **Game Editorials** (https://news-throughds.com/category/game-editorials/)

After eight years and five new games, the diverse era of EA Star Wars exclusivity has come to its conclusion. On January 11th, Disney **signaled a change** (https://www.starwars.com/news/lucasfilm-games) launching the "Lucasfilm Games" brand. Lucasfilm Games is a "collaborative studio" consisting of "creators from around the world **announced** (https://news.xbox.com/en-us/articles/1ftuf0i/1ftuf0i/p2/page.jsp?.cdmdl=and-lucasfilm-games-announce-new-partnerships-star-wars-game) a new open-world Star Wars game with developers, confirming that EA's grip on Star Wars has ended. The death of EA's monopoly was inevitable, and it's a good thing for the franchise. The exclusivity agreement wasn't necessarily awful, or even a failure, but it was limited in its offerings.

With their Star Wars titles, EA chased trends and the lowest common denominator. Their flagship entry was *Battlefront*, which chased the success of Activision's *Call of Duty* and revive the glory of Pandemic Studios' beloved Lucasfilm era shooters of the same name. Instead they became trend-to-controversy over loot boxes and pay-to-win, developed a finally found a true audience years later, only to have support cut off shortly after the release of the sequel. Beyond that, EA published a handful of other Star Wars games, up for expansion and yet, fallen short. Some, such as Electronic Arts' Bioware, Order-received acclaim, and with the following year's Squadrons, EA responded by attempting to serve another audience. Two, who were Star Wing

Fallen Order and Squadrons were steps in the right direction. Attempting to appeal to more than the most mainstream shooter fans, EA realized there were other audiences out there. The both were bound by the paradigms of mainstream. Triple-A studio gaming. With a new era, Lucasfilm Games and the opening up of the Star Wars license, perhaps there is the potential for more?

The original Lucasfilm era of Star Wars contained far broader possibilities for gaming. Yes, they made entire shooters like *Battlefront*, and single-player adventures including the Dark Forces, *Jedi Knight* and Force Unleashed games, but there was also more branching out. Old-school point-and-click adventure games, the Lego-inspired Traveller's Tales titles, and even fighting games – Empire At War maintained an active modding community to this day. The Rogue series explored Star Wars' potential in an X-Wing-style racing game, taking inspiration from the popularity of the Phantom Menace's podracing. Racing and strategy games long been pillars of gaming, and hopefully Lucasfilm Games can find a way to bring them back into the Star Wars fold.

The Lucasarts team's biggest titles have been action-adventure games, ranging from classics like *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II*, *Jedi Outcast*, *Jedi Academy*, strategy simulation (Stronger Frontiers) and puzzle games (Droid Works). Many of these games contain a strong narrative focus, and the quality of many titles has been lauded by the fan base. The Lucasfilm Games team has a lot of talent, and they don't just seek what was most popular, they saw the potential in the Star Wars franchise and wanted to see how those games could be the best versions.

The Lucasfilm Games of 2021 should adopt this innovative process. Video games are broader and more popular than ever before, there are wider and more varied audiences, and games don't have to be limited to huge, expensive projects. There are many amazing developers out there making games with limitless potential.

Imagine, if you will, what Paradox Interactive could do with the Star Wars license. These are a series of strategy-based games that focus on the rise and fall of empires, and the control of space with most imaginable simulations and mechanics. Their last game, Stellaris, is a sci-fi game that allows for the creation of the Star Wars galaxy. I've also enjoyed Empire at War: The Gathering Storm. For Away, it is still ground for a serious astrophysical game.

Anything new genres have popped up that weren't available when Lucasfilm was around. Roguelikes—games centered around the concept of permanent character death, with procedurally generated maps and randomized elements—are a fairly popular indie video game. Are Rogue Legacy, Binding of Isaac, Spelunky, and FTL Faster than light. Spelunky centers on an adventurer who venures into hazardous caves; the player explores in the traditional side-scrolling manner of classic Mario games, gaining new items to bring deeper. Upon death, they lose all the items and experience they have gained and must start over from the beginning. Binding of Isaac has also adventured, the layout, items and enemies in the cases will have changed the last time of Spelunky will ever be the same, and each death brings an entirely new experience.

Star Wars: Jedi Knight – Dark Forces II. Lucasfilm's Star Wars games have been a mixed bag in depth. In FTL, the player controls a starship flying on a dangerous mission, traveling across the stars, leaving enemy ships, hostile aliens, supply shenanigans, and natural events. Each decision is a matter of life and death, and the destruction of the player's ship means starting over with a new one. As the player is allowed to name their ships and their crew, bonds are formed, and every new run creates a new narrative. The potential for the Star Wars license here is limitless—imagine attempting the Kessel Run over and over again in a FT-1300, or Boba Fett's Slave I, or Lando's Millennium Falcon, or Ben Solo's Kylo Ren shuttle.

Games don't even have to revolve around action or violence. What not have a story-rich Star Wars visual novel or narrative game? Narrative-focused games like Supermassive's *Until Dawn* and Telltale's The Walking Dead—which can easily be described as interactive dramas are more popular than ever. These genres involve largely around narrative choices and branching paths that result in different endings. Supermassive's *Until Dawn* is a cinematic interactive drama can be far more accessible to audiences who are turned off by complex and difficult gameplay. Telltale, which was founded by former LucasArts employees, has had financial difficulties in recent years. Perhaps Star Wars could be their chance to rise from the ashes?

Meanwhile, city simulators are experiencing a renaissance with Paradox and Cities: Skylines, in a city simulator, the player fills the role of an administrator tasked to make a large city work up. They are in charge of everything from housing and zoning to budgeting and utility management. These games don't rely on fighting wars, or even much of a story—the appeal comes from the immersive nature of the simulation. Imagine a city on Coruscant, or Star Wars Kuat, or Star Wars Corellia, or Star Wars Alderaan, or Star Wars Naboo, or Star Wars Coruscant, and allowing people to actually live, to make themselves enjoying building a city on Naboo or Tatooi.

Gaming currently enjoys the broadest and widest audiences it's ever seen. Its not rake advantage of that and make games appealing to all Star Wars fans would be a tragedy. Lucasfilm Games is facing a new beginning and a fresh start after a tumultuous eight years with EA. I hope they choose to make the most of it.

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