“YOU’VE SEEN THE MOVIE, NOW PLAY THE VIDEO GAME”: RECODING THE CINEMATIC IN DIGITAL MEDIA AND VIRTUAL CULTURE

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Although seen as an emergent area of study, the history of video games shows that the medium has had a longevity that speaks to its status as a major cultural force, not only within American society but also globally. Much of video game production has been influenced by cinema, and perhaps nowhere is this seen more directly than in the topic of games based on movies. Functioning as franchise expansion, spaces for play, and story development, film-to-game translations have been a significant component of video game titles since the early days of the medium. As the technological possibilities of hardware development continued in both the film and video game industries, issues of media convergence and divergence between film and video games have grown in importance. This dissertation looks at the ways that this connection was established and has changed by looking at the relationship between film and video games in terms of economics, aesthetics, and narrative. Beginning in the 1970s, or roughly at the time of the second generation of home gaming consoles, and continuing to the release of the most recent consoles in 2005, it traces major areas of intersection between films and video games by identifying key titles and companies to consider both how and why the prevalence of video games has happened and continues to grow in power. By looking at a wide variety of games – those found in arcades; on home consoles and home computers; for portable devices included dedicated gaming units, cell phones, and other personal digital assistants; and games that exist in other forms, such as those found in web browsers or as bonus features on digital video discs – this dissertation illuminates a
complex history that intertwines technological development, economic forces, and aesthetic considerations of visual and narrative design.
For my Mom and Dad who bought me my first, and certainly not last, Atari.
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INTRODUCTION

“You’ve Seen the Movie, Now Play the Video Game”: Recoding the Cinematic in Digital Media and Virtual Culture

“In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best – so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics, and its world might be explored and experienced through game play. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained enough to enable autonomous consumption. […] Reading across the media sustains a depth of experience that motivates more consumption. […] Redundancy between media burns up fan interest and causes franchises to fail. Offering new levels of insight and experience refreshes the franchise and sustains consumer loyalty. Such a multilayered approach to storytelling will enable a more complex, more sophisticated, more rewarding mode of narrative to emerge within the constraints of commercial entertainment.”


Introduction

Video games are everywhere. They can be found in watches, cell phones, handheld units, on a variety of home consoles and computer operating systems, and within arcades, played by solitary gamers as much as groups of friends or strangers, in private or public, across networks, and even at professional video game competitions. They are a pervasive component not only of American society but also of global culture, with a complex history that intertwines technological development, economic forces, and aesthetic considerations of visual and narrative design. In addition to being consumer products themselves, video games have established ancillary markets ranging from toys to television shows. As an industry, they employ thousands of people worldwide, and interested students can take classes on game development and design at many college and university programs, including MIT’s Comparative Media Studies program and UC Irvine’s Center for Computer Games and Virtual Worlds. Although there are many perspectives from which to consider both how and why the prevalence of video games has happened and continues to grow in power, one particularly fruitful locus is in the intersection of

[1] The quotation in this title is directly from the end credits to the film Stargate (1994). This film also has the distinction of being the very first film to have an official website related to its release.

Films directly or indirectly inspired, and continue to inspire, the development of many games; the influence here is as much visual as it is conceptual (in terms of characters and narrative). While early games tended to have very brief instructions setting up the circumstances of the game – sometimes with an on-screen visualization – they were frequently of the “defend the home world from alien invasion” or “destroy the monsters and get treasure” motif. In later interviews, a significant portion of programmers from that time said it was easy to draw inspiration from film, for the very nature of working within a visual medium caused their thoughts to drift towards the cinematic, allowing them to circumvent plot development or story creation by citing an established referent. Contemporary game developers still draw upon the cinematic when crafting their own original intellectual properties. For example, Jordan Mechner, perhaps best known as the designer of *Prince of Persia* (1989), admits that his game *The Last Express* (1997) tries to mimic camera techniques from Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954) and that *Karateka* (1984) was based on early silent film techniques Mechner learned.

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2 For an expanded discussion of games turned into films, see “Play the Game, See the Movie” in the Conclusion.
3 Certainly the economic intersection plays an important role in the cost of development as do technology issues, especially when it comes to obsolescence of gaming platforms.

Since the inception of video games, their development bears some interesting parallels to film, evolving from simple black and white productions developed by one or two creators dabbling in a technical hobby to adding sound to adding color, richer audio, and higher production values (driven by technological advancement), with a corresponding increase in the
size of the development team and need for collaboration among the team members.\(^4\)

Additionally, the progression of the industry has given rise to major publishing studios (that often acquire smaller start-ups and their products), small specialty units, independent developers, and a host of amateur programmers working on the fringes of the market. The development of the industry has also resulted in a binary star system, producing legendary characters of the game screen – from Pitfall Harry to Mario to Lara Croft – that have become icons in popular culture as well as legendary creators of game titles and characters – including developers such as Shigeru Miyamoto (Donkey Kong, 1981), Roberta Williams (King’s Quest, 1984), John Carmack (Doom, 1993), and Will Wright (SimCity, 1989) among many others – that are perhaps more well known within the gaming industry.\(^5\) Video game manufacturers were not adverse to drawing from the film industry for talent. In the most direct manner, video games have long been using film actors in the development phase for voice talent as well as for acting within video games (in terms of

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\(^4\) The origin of the video game is a particularly contentious issue. In 1947, Thomas T. Goldsmith Jr. and Estle Ray Mann applied for a US patent for the Cathode-Ray Tube Amusement Device. It used eight vacuum tubes to simulate a missile firing at a target with control knobs to adjust the curve and speed of the missile, but lacked the means to electronically draw the graphics commonly associated with video games. In 1951, British computer scientist Christopher Strachey developed a program for the game of draughts (checkers), which eventually ran on the Manchester Mark I. In 1952, a British student named A.S. Douglas used an EDSAC computer to play Tic-Tac-Toe. In 1958, Tennis for Two was created by American physicist William Higinbotham using an oscilloscope and a Donner analog computer. It was used as part of a display on Visitor’s Day twice at the Brookhaven National Laboratory (operated by the US Department of Energy, the site specializes in nuclear physics research). In 1962, Steve Russell finished coding Spacewar! for a DEC PDP-1 computer while at MIT. Hampering each of these three instances is their requirement for using massive computers as part of their design. In 1966, Ralph Baer, then working for Sanders Associates, wrote a four-page paper for a system capable of playing simple video games on a home television set, in particular a version of ping-pong. This concept was patented in 1967 (Baer, 14). Magnavox then licensed the technology from Sanders Associates, and in the middle of 1972, the company began selling the Magnavox Odyssey, the first home video game console. In 1971, students at Stanford University attached a coin-operated mechanism to a PDP-11/20 computer and allowed people to play Galaxy Wars (a version of Spacewar!) for ten cents (the cost of the hardware was $20,000). Later that year, the first mass-produced arcade game, Computer Space (again running a version of Spacewar!) was released by Nolan Bushnell and Nutting Associates. While Computer Space was not a success, Bushnell’s next arcade game, Pong (1972), was and established his new company, Atari, as the principal force in the new video game industry.

character modeling, full motion video, and motion capture) as the technology progressed, and actors have also found employment as spokespeople for the products.  

Introductions to studies about digital media such as this one are generally concerned, on some level, with the timeliness of the subject, attempting the difficult task of arresting the state of the technology and distilling it into a concentrated analysis. The interpreter sometimes projects hopes and fears into the Wunschmachine of digital media. While any screenshot of a culture that morphs as quickly as that of video games runs into its own inherent set of limitations, that shot still may be examined to discern individual components and define what they are, how they came to be, and what they might become if these ideas are all framed by and within the context of the screen. One has to be aware of the distinctions between representations of technology, incorporations of technology, and projections onto technology, as suggested by Jeffrey Sconce in his article, “Tulip Theory.” Sconce sees academics in a strange place, at once seemingly able “to be building the future rather than watching it arrive” while indulging “academics in the vibrant fantasy that they can be both producers and critics of media” (Sconce, 184). If one considers Sconce’s essay as an invitation to think about how an area of discourse might be contested, colonized, and canonized into a discipline, this meta-analysis mirrors an earlier suggestion by John T. Caldwell in his introduction to Electronic Media and Technoculture in the way that he calls awareness to the academic drive that has “systematically envisioned, aggressively analyzed, and grandly theorized…[the] present rush to the cyber and

6 The two notable directors to have early influence on the video game industry were Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, and their involvement continues to this day. Magnavox famously hired Frank Sinatra for a television commercial in 1972 featuring their Odyssey home console. Atari signed Alan Alda to a five year contract in 1983 to be the spokesman for their computer line (DeWitt, 14). Twentieth Century Fox used Jamie Farr as part of a national advertising campaign for the M*A*S*H (1983) game for the Atari VCS. Even Mattel contracted with George Plimpton to be their spokesman in an ad campaign during the 1980s that showcased the power of their Intellivision console over that of the rival VCS. Nintendo Power ran a monthly column that interviewed various celebrities (including Jay Leno, Fred Savage, Michael Dorn, and Tori Spelling) about their projects and gaming interests. The involvement of actors in making licensed video games also legitimizes the projects to a certain extent.
digital” (Caldwell, 1). It also encourages a researcher to consider digital media – to paraphrase from Sherry Turkle’s *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* – in relation to the simultaneity of life on the screen, in the screen, and with the screen.

From magic lanterns to silver screens to rendered realms, technology has mediated American culture’s experience of the world. Virtual culture, an expansion and recoding of visual and aural culture, is a field that is continually under transformation by newer technologies. For media studies, the constant reconfigurations place the intersection of virtual culture and American culture in moments of transition. The cinematic screen must find a place with the computer screen, home theater, cell phone, and other display/delivery formats. Celluloid becomes one option for a storage medium among many alternatives that include videotape and various digital media (e.g., optical discs, hard drives, flash drives, cloud computing). An audience is recast as users with interfaces, which invites the complex issue of interactivity. Users of digital media are involved in a colonization of cultural production – that also includes manufacturers, distributors, marketers, researchers and others – that occurs at an increasing rate and in ways that are not immediately apparent or go beyond initial design parameters.

In “Film and Changing Technologies,” Laura Kipnis suggests that the “hesitation around technological change is that film studies is, to a large extent, premised on an understanding of film as a discrete technology” (Kipnis, 597). If discreteness provides definition, what happens during media fusion and/or convergence – the promise of the pluralist inclusiveness of multimedia – when the borders between media are altered? The liberatory aspects of open

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7 The temptation to invoke the term “new media” will occur at multiple instances throughout this text, particularly as the term offers a way to distinguish not only between certain types of media but also certain histories of media. Instead, consider the transitory possibilities afforded by the ambiguity of leaving designations of new media open to interpretation and integration, particularly as the cultural production of media continually negotiates its own context(s).

8 This might also raise the question of how American culture, particularly as an exportable product, is itself already a virtual one.
source manipulation are a fundamental aspect of digital translation when one considers how all data is converted to a binary structure, where meaning is derived from the encoding, decoding, and recoding of bits, which presents new meanings of Stuart Hall’s notion of viewers encoding and decoding media texts. Presented as a series of ones and zeroes, this information has the power to become an equalizer as the privilege of indexical relationships may be changed by the users of digital media via the erasure of distinction between special effects, editing, and production. Indexical relationships in this regard now function less as discrete packets of discourse and more as pathways for information management and exchange as mediated through the applications of media technologies by their users.9

In their introduction to *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, Anna Everett and John Caldwell posit that digital media technologies “are revolutionizing our sensory perceptions and cognitive experiences” (Everett and Caldwell, xi). Certainly part of the study of “new media” as an emergent discipline is concerned with the revolutionary potential that its applications present or suggest. Questions of verisimilitude have particular resonance with discussions of cinematic and game realism, especially as digital media may move from supporting to supplanting cinematic representation. The promises of digital media technologies and the actual practices of the same to “deconstruct, recode, reconstruct, and re-present formerly neat epistemological categories” underscores the tension between “individuals’ technology access and technologized social processes” (Everett and Caldwell, xi-xii).

9 Indexical relationships are often privileged in certain visual mediums, such as photography and film, where a corresponding association between an object and its image is assumed to have a one-to-one correlation. This is problematized in other visual fields, such as comic books and video games, where there is a level of abstraction between an object and its visual rendering. In particular with video games, as the technology has progressed to allow increasing levels of photorealism (note the importance of the terminology in this instance), some indexical relationships are now purposefully sought (such as in games like *Crysis* and *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*, both released in 2007) as much as purposefully eschewed (in games like *Ökami* (2006) or *Team Fortress 2* (2007)). Further discussion of this topic would certainly involve virtual actors and the uncanny valley.
Everett crafts the term “digitextuality” – in “Digitextuality and Click Theory: Theses on Convergence Media in the Digital Age” – by conjoining “digital” with “intertextuality” (specifically from Julia Kristeva) as a response to the “myth of total cinema” of Bazin and the “complete film” of Arnheim. Everett wonders if the diffusion of consumer-grade digital technologies – such as those represented by video games – and their challenges to traditional media industries has brought about Godard’s “end of cinema” (or at least heralded a “posttelevision age”). Everett sees the fragmentation of the mass audience as a liberated one, after a fashion, through the “audience dispersal services and outlets” made possible by digital technology, although she does not specifically address the increase in marketing venues that are commensurate with the proliferation of audience services (Everett, 4). Part of the ease of acceptance and use of these services is due to digital media’s ability to recode or rearticulate itself in terms of previous media systems; for example, Everett attributes the information-richness and graphic density of internet sites to newspaper and magazine design schemes from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while streaming media technologies incorporate the audio and visual modes from radio, cinema, and television (Everett, 6). Since video games can recast a wide variety of information, looking at what they do (dis)similarly from cinema enables certain aesthetic considerations.10

The frequently changing systems of digital media then call for a hyperattentive theory (or pixellated gaze) when defining digital media in terms not only of technology but also of aesthetics. In “Post-media Aesthetics,” Lev Manovich considers the impact of the digital among technological and cultural developments. For him, the origins of digital media analysis lie in the

10 This is not to ignore possible relations between video games and television, especially with regard to episodic storytelling and image composition for smaller video screens, but the focus of this research has much more resonance between the film and video game industries (even as video games based on television shows can be found throughout the history of the medium, from Dukes of Hazzard (1984) to Desperate Housewives: The Game (2006) and beyond).
disruption of a key concept from modern art, namely the definition of medium. The topography of art has historically been divided into a set of distinct mediums related not only to their aesthetic qualities but also to their (technological) construction (i.e., drawing is different from painting which is different from sculpture because of what is produced as much as what is needed to produce them). The introduction of artistic forms – such as assemblages, installations, happenings, intermedia, mechanima, and flash mobs – has threatened the established typology of established mediums (painting, sculpture, drawing, theater). Manovich situates his discussion in terms of modern art as this is the age of art practice most directly influenced by media-based developments. Even relatively new developments like photography and film have found acceptance in terms of being artistic mediums while television and video have had a harder time, and video games are now entering a similar phase in terms of debate over artistic capacity and function.\(^\text{11}\) Manovich attributes the acceptance of photography and film to their being typed as representative of spatial and temporal arts (as well as having different material bases), while the latter two – sharing the same base of a broadcast electronic signal – are split into separate mediums based on sociological (such as the size differences of audiences for each) and financial reasons as well as distribution mechanisms and proliferation of copies.\(^\text{12}\) Given similar notions about audience, economics, and content delivery, video games represent a slippage between media as much as between the cultures that produce them. For example, a title such as *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005) was released two weeks before the theatrical

\(^{11}\) The response to Roger Ebert’s writing on video games failing to be art is one testament to this debate.

\(^{12}\) The issue of copies is a particularly contentious one with video games (and with film in increasing times of digitization) as the technology which allowed their production – both creation and manufacture – also enabled illegal reproduction. Piracy of video games, and movies, is a major concern within their respective industries. Video games have tried to combat this through a variety of copy-protection techniques, including software and hardware security, and offering additional materials (art books, cloth maps, action figures, posters, and other trinkets) to entice a consumer into buying a legal copy of the game (in the early days of interactive fiction, software company Infocom referred to these as “feelies”). These enticements represent a curious analog artifactual of a digital product and would be interesting to consider further particularly in conjunction with Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1935).
release of the film, and the game included not only narrative links to the film’s plot but also
digitized sequences from the unreleased film itself, giving players a look at the film before the
theatrical experience.\textsuperscript{13} The ability for this sort of release is possible because both the film and
game studios are part of one larger company, with the producers seeking to provide a game
consistent with an established cinematic universe that also has generated a distinct virtual culture
of its own.

Virtual culture is comprised of many different systems of memory storage, representing
spaces that are repositories of certain crafted histories. The history of film has created a cinema-
reality as a stand-in or simulacrum for physical reality that may supersede physical reality
through a standard of idealized presentation (as indexical identity). That is, inherent in the
production of cinema is the erasure of the awareness of that very production, such that choices
for lighting, editing, and even dialogue evoke a sense of natural formation (or realism). The
mutability of digital media and its spatial properties may contest the regime of visual realism, so
why does virtual culture strive for emulation of cinematic realism?\textsuperscript{14} How is the seamless use of
digital elements at odds with the Brechtian strategy of incorporating the mechanisms of art into
the art itself? While virtual culture is not inherently tied to digital media (certain architectural
creations – like cathedrals, stage theaters, and even cycloramas – could be regarded as virtual

\textsuperscript{13} This type of “insider” knowledge can change the way people view the subsequent film, especially in cases where
extranarrative information, beyond that of simple backstory, is contained within a game and available only to those
who access that information somehow (for example, either by playing the game or reading a summary of the game’s
narrative).

\textsuperscript{14} The drive of early cinema to index the movement of nature (e.g., the ripple effect of wind across a field of wheat)
is now paralleled in games and their advancement to present a more authentic (i.e., technically sophisticated in terms
of the programming – usually referred to as Artificial Life (AL) – that drives a game world’s “natural”
characteristics) rendering of virtual world no matter how fantastic the overall design.
spaces), what is it about the digital that increases an awareness of virtuality, and in what ways does this awareness manifest itself in contemporary American society?15

**Economic Collusion and Colonization**

In “The Four Last Things: History, Technology, Hollywood, and Apocalypse,” Paul Arthur sees an internal struggle within Hollywood to reconfigure its industry to handle digital technology and avoid “the eclipse of its material bases of image production” (Arthur, 342). Arthur finds the conflict between established modes of production and emerging technologies manifesting itself directly in Hollywood’s output of science fiction films of the 1990s; thus, the desire for technical mastery not only informs the methods of film production but also the content of those films.16 Arthur generalizes his basic premise to speculate that threats to cinematic sovereignty – “TV sitcoms, video verité, comic books, computer animation, and music videos” – will instead be reformatted (and hence absorbed) through the growing technical possibilities of film (Arthur, 344). This is important for contemporary American culture given media consumption through a particular configuration of commercial franchise designed to maximize management and profitability. Although the film industry has responded well to past threats such as broadcast television and the rise of the music video industry, consumer purchase and use of video games represents a complex development for film. A key aspect of industry control then is evidenced through economic channels. In 2001, box office receipts from films totaled $8.4 billion, while video game sales hit $6.5 billion. Advancing digital technology has continued to drive growth in the industry, enabling the development of ever more sophisticated platforms

15 While virtuality initially referred to the possession of force or power, and it is useful to keep this concept in mind, it enters the lexicon of digital media through its use by Theodore Nelson who applied it to a description of interactive computer systems in 1980. Sometimes virtuality is offered as the opposite of reality – although Slavoj Žižek argues against this position through his use of Deleuze in “The Reality of the Virtual” – but for purposes of this discussion virtuality is best regarded as the potentiality of experience as mediated through a variety of agents.

16 The current hype over 3D cinema, which is starting to appear as some tentative forays in 3D gaming, might be another example of the influence between industries.
and software. Video game spending through 2004 was stimulated by console platforms that were introduced in 2000 and 2001, such as Sony’s PlayStation 2, Microsoft’s Xbox, and Nintendo’s GameCube. In 2004, worldwide video game sales reached $28 billion, while worldwide film industry sales posted $45 billion, a number achieved only by including sales of digital video discs (DVDs), videocassettes, rentals, and television licensing revenue.\footnote{The film industry is not the only one being affected by video game sales. In a report titled “Global Entertainment and Media Outlook” from PricewaterhouseCoopers, in 2004 consumers worldwide spent $30.5 billion on music, while video game enthusiasts paid out $28 billion (with approximately $10 billion spent in the US).} Although film revenue spiked in 2002, when American moviegoers bought 1.61 billion tickets, and ticket sales for 2007 showed a 4 percent increase over 2006, this actually comes after only another very small increase in 2006 and three preceding years of sharp declines (Barnes, 1). In comparison, the US video game industry overall saw sales of $18.8 billion in 2007, a 40 percent increase from the $13.5 billion generated in 2006. During the summer 2007 movie blockbuster season, in a list of the top action games across all platforms for June compiled by Yahoo! Games, 26 out of 50 of the games were licensed film titles, including \textit{300: March to Glory} (2007), \textit{Shrek the Third} (2007), \textit{Transformers} (2007), \textit{Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix} (2007), \textit{Spider-Man 3} (2007), and \textit{Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End} (2007). The latter two claimed the third and top spots, respectively. The following month, at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), gaming publishers previewed titles derived from films such as \textit{The Golden Compass} (2007), \textit{The Bee Movie Game} (2007), \textit{Star Wars: The Force Unleashed} (2008), and \textit{Iron Man} (2008), which was still one year away from being released (as was the theatrical film).

Thinking about the relationship between the film blockbuster and the development and marketing of major video game releases is illustrated by the launch of \textit{Halo 2}. According to the \textit{Seattle Post-Intelligencer}, Microsoft reported selling 2.38 million units of the game in the US and Canada, which meant a one-day take that exceeded $125 million (greater than the $114
million of *Spider-Man* (2002) the highest-grossing opening weekend for a holiday film in cinema history at the time). The release of *Halo 2* was treated as a major media event, saturating various news agencies with anticipation for its release. The marketing of the game was distributed through ancillary products including books, action figures, clothing, a soundtrack CD, and a “limited edition” version of the game containing a separate DVD that replicates many of the bonus features that accompany film releases on home video, such as a documentary on the making of *Halo 2*, concept art, level design from script to game, narrated storyboards, character tests, and even cinematic trailers for both titles in the series. *Halo 3* – released 25 September 2007 in regular, limited, and Legendary editions – posted first day sales of $170 million, a figure that exceeded $300 million by early October, an impressive number considering that this game is an exclusive title for the Xbox 360 game system. The limited edition included a second DVD disc similar to that of *Halo 2*, while the Legendary edition was a box set presenting three discs in a replica of the Master Chief’s helmet; the first two discs were the same as the limited edition, while the third disc was essentially all the cinematics from the first two games edited into one two hour film. *Halo: Reach*, the final entry in the series done by Bungie, the original developer, posted launch day sales of $200 million in 2010, taking the combined sales for the entire *Halo* series close to $2 billion.

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18 Some film industry analysts worry about how the release of video game blockbusters impact film blockbusters, specifically in terms of release and box office take. That is, if a major game title is released, will gamers (who often constitute the core audience for both video game and film blockbusters) go to see films or will they be too busy with the games? Industry insiders tried to blame the late September release of *Halo 3* (2007) for the weak October opening of *The Heartbreak Kid* (2007), and unnecessarily fretted about *Grand Theft Auto IV* (2008) debuting a scant three days before the theatrical release of *Iron Man* (2008), despite the fact that past indicators – such as the October 2004 release of *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* having no impact on the following weekend’s opening of *Saw* – show that there is enough of the 18-to-34 demographic’s money to go into both media.

19 In contrast, according to the research firm Media by Numbers, total film ticket sales were down approximately 25% in October, with overall domestic receipts down by 6%. Josh Golberg, a Microsoft *Halo 3* project manager, expressed no surprise at the game’s ability to compete with cinema: “We marketed it like a film and now we’re just as big or bigger than film.”
The release of the newest generation of consoles – PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, and Wii – have only helped to propel video game sales, with hardware sales jumping 50 percent over 2006 figures (Paul, 1). According to a *Daily Variety* review of 2006 data from industry tracker NPD Group, the best selling movie game titles were *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* (2006) and *Cars* (2006), posting sales of 2.3 million units each in the US. Also selling more than 1 million units each were *Kingdom Hearts 2* (2006), *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game*, and *Star Wars Battlefront II*, the latter two both 2005 releases that continued to do great business in 2006. As impressive as these film-to-game title sales are, they frequently lag behind the bigger titles in the video game industry. For example, Activision Blizzard’s *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* (2009) posted first-day combined sales between North American and the United Kingdom of $310 million. Movie-to-game titles have yet to reach this level of success, even those based on wildly successful films, such as James Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009); despite $2.7 billion worldwide ($748 million domestic), the companion game only sold 2.7 million units, impacted by the late release date in the year according to Ubisoft CEO Yves Guillemot, with underperforming sales eventually bolstered into profitable levels by price cuts and the release of the film onto home video (for which it set sales records on DVD and Blu-Ray). On the other hand, the lack of a licensed game, such as one for the *Twilight* franchise, has cost the property owner and the video game industry millions of dollars.

Geoff King’s “From Big Screen to Small” begins with a straightforward statistical breakdown of the revenue streams for non-theatrical film screenings, which account for 74% of

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20 While hardware sales slowed in 2008, software sales increased, as owners of new gaming platforms sought to expand their gaming libraries, resulting in even more revenue; according to NPD Group, US video game sales rose 10% in November 2008 despite the global economic turmoil, and total sales for the year topped $22 billion.
21 Licensed games in 2006 that sold under 400,000 units in the US, and thus were considered financial disappointments, included *Superman Returns*, *X-Men 3: The Last Stand*, *Monster House*, *Open Season*, and *The Da Vinci Code*.
22 Figures current as of May 2010.
global profits, a striking distinction between New Hollywood and Classical Hollywood Cinema. King is quick to point out that Hollywood has had a long involvement with the small screen, citing early studio interest in operating television stations as early as the 1940s (eventually prevented from entering broadcasting by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)), studio sale of back catalogues for broadcast in the 1950s, and even Paramount’s experiments with theatre television in the early 1950s as well as subscription television service (the latter again blocked by the FCC). Eventually studios moved into owning cable networks beginning in the 1970s in addition to home video sales and rentals. Recently, the arrival and widespread acceptance of digital video discs (DVD) reconfigures film expressly as software, a series of data to be interpreted by a processor, manipulable in some ways as video games. King extends his analysis of franchise development with the merger of media corporations to create conglomerates in the 1990s before prefacing (and unfortunately only that) cusp technologies such as video-on-demand and internet distribution, the latter area being a very fascinating one given the freedom to operate outside of Hollywood distribution channels being threatened by the Hollywood rush to incorporate cyberspace. For example, recent battles over redistribution of content via the internet were exacerbated by the Federal Government’s mandate to switch to digital television (DTV) in the United States on 17 February 2009 (an issue deemed so important that the Federal Government established a website, www.dtv.gov, to advertise the switchover, complete with vouchers for consumers to download towards the purchase of digital converters). Since DTV can carry a high definition (HD) broadcast of a film – which not only includes a notable improvement in lines of resolution (1080 lines versus 480 for regular broadcast) but also a 16x9

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23 Video game hardware manufacturers have been eager to tout how their game machines also double as movie playback devices as a selling point, particularly Sony with its incorporation of DVD in the PS2 and Blu-Ray in the PS3. As the current generation of consoles is also internet-enabled, distribution services such as Netflix and Hulu are partnering with the video game hardware manufacturers to turn the game systems into entertainment hubs.
aspect ratio and digital surround sound – that essentially offers the same quality as a standard DVD, film studios were worried about loss of home video sales and piracy since the selling points for HDTV also make it a more attractive option for content theft. Peer-to-peer file-sharing services and torrent sites are hard to regulate because of the individualized nature of their networks. Since computer networks have been used for quite some time to distribute video games, and the technology (broadband in particular) has advanced to the stage where extremely large file transfers (such as those necessary for a higher quality of film transfer or the large installation files of a video game) are easily done, monetary issues are not merely related to franchise; they also involve distribution as a means of control. Getting software to legitimate users has always been an issue for the computer industry, and with the proliferation of cheap computers and game systems the video game industry has found itself involved in the control of content in a similar fashion as the film industry.  

In the United States, video game distribution has moved beyond specialty retail outlets like software stores into video stores, music stores, and general merchandise superstores such as Wal-Mart and Target. This expanding range of retail outlets and competitive pricing boosts consumer spending on the games and reflects the broadening demographic for game players. Sixty percent of all Americans over the age of six now play video games (the average age of a player is thirty), and female players have been turning to games in increasing numbers,

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24 Home consoles themselves are an area where the distinctions between media are being altered due to the very nature of the playback medium (digitally encoded discs read by a laser-based system). Both Sony’s PlayStation 2 and Microsoft’s Xbox can also double as DVD players, provided users purchase the appropriate hardware (a remote control) that unlocks this functionality. Thus, these game systems treat all inserted compatible media as a form of software. The PlayStation 3 features a Blu-Ray drive, and Microsoft was selling an HD player as an add-on accessory for the Xbox 360. Since the issue of the next-gen format wars was recently settled, with Blu-Ray emerging as the victor, Microsoft has discontinued selling HD players, and Circuit City (before it went out of business) offered consumers the opportunity to trade in home theater HD players and discs for Blu-Ray versions.
representing close to forty percent of the game-playing population. According to an April 2009 NPD Group report from an online study with more than 11,000 respondents, more Americans now play video games than go to movies, with 63% of consumers reporting having played a video game compared with 53% reporting have gone to a movie within the same six month period, and expenditure on gaming which translates to roughly $38 per person per month. According to Anita Frazier, video games industry analyst for NPD, “Video games account for one-third of the average monthly consumer spending in the US for core entertainment content, including music, video, games.” While 31% of gamers bought a console or handheld video game in the past year, up 7% over last year, another factor contributing to this increase is with new play outlets, including social networks (10%) and downloadable games (5%, 2% over last year). Among those who played on a home console or portable gaming device, 31% played games on a website, 12% played games on a social networking site, 19% played games bundled with their mobile phones, and 11% downloaded a game to their mobile phone. Publishing the results of an amazing longitudinal study that ran from 1975 to 2009, the private equity firm Veronis Suhler Stevenson analyzed all consumer media (television, movies, video games, internet, and so on) consumption and noted that annual usage is up from 2,843 hours per person in 1975 to 3,532 in 2009, and about half of those hours are spent on video games, internet, and mobile services.

**Versions of Verisimilitude**

In his mid-1990s essay, “True Lies: Perceptual Realism, Digital Images, and Film Theory,” Stephen Prince surveys the effects of digital media on film theory, noting that: “Because the digital manipulation of images is so novel and the creative possibilities it offers are

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25 According to an April 2004 study from Michigan State University and information from the Entertainment Software Association.
so unprecedented, its effects on cinematic representation and the viewer’s response are poorly understood” (Prince, 115). Prince’s essay represents an interesting moment in film, a time when the potential of computer generated imagery (CGI) was really beginning to show but had yet to achieve the level of prominence, and proficiency, that the capabilities of the technology now hold even while they are constantly being upgraded. This look at a certain moment in technological development speaks directly to a difficulty in trying to define a particular moment in virtual culture because the field changes rapidly. Many writers dealing with the influx of digital technology in film take extra effort to show how pervasive the use of digital imagery has become. This component of the analysis is interesting in that it foregrounds cinema both as a site of production and as a site of reception (particularly as some game developers pursue a standard of reproducing an acceptable “cinema-reality” or what Prince terms “perceptual realism”), an issue that has particular resonance with the virtual cultures promoted by video games.

Prince states that “viewers routinely make assessments about the perceived realism of a film’s images or characters, even when these are obviously fictionalized or otherwise impossible” (Prince, 116). The idea that a constructed image routinely requires a level of perceived realism leads to a main idea regarding digital imagery, namely that it must be perceptually realistic despite being referentially unreal. It seems as if perceptual realism both influences reception and in turn is influenced by it in terms of (investment of) credibility. The acceptance of a manufactured representation is possibly a correspondence between synthetic and real (non-virtual) cues; if a creature or effect fits within the construct of reality as defined by a film or video game, then it is successful, but if it fails, then it is discounted within the virtual context. Prince sees a correspondence-based model of cinematic representation as a way to address problematic areas in contemporary film theory, particularly those of formalism, realism,
indexical realism, cinema as discourse, and realism as discourse on “the many ways in which film spectatorship builds on correspondences between selected features of the cinematic display and a viewer’s real-world visual and social experience” (Prince, 120). Concerns about representation have resonance with video games, particularly as conceptions of realism influence the design of digital imagery. Additionally, it appears that some of the discussion around digital imagery and representation is similar to discussions of representation that were present at the birth of film. Prince makes particular note of comparisons in representation between film and photography, in particular how the film came to supersede photography as a more credible source through promoting its own type of indexical referencing (i.e., cinema reality supplanting photographic reality). Perhaps this could now be recast in terms of representational differences between film and video games, for even as the latter gains in popularity through its appropriation of film elements, video games also promote their own developing reality constructs. The “rapidly evolving category of imaging capabilities” that is made possible through digital media provides a set of environments that both film and video games are investing with production elements that cross over and reference their own forms of representation (Prince, 126).

The alterations in realism and representation that concern Prince also manifest in Steven Barclay’s *The Motion Picture Image: From Film to Digital*. While both Prince and Barclay are speculating on the transformation of contemporary film production by digital media, Prince is thinking more specifically about the impact as it extends through to film theory. Barclay adheres more closely to the mechanics of the medium and traces a progression from analog to digital film to indicate that, while certain principles of filmmaking will remain (such as “the basic underlying ability to produce compelling and fitting images”), a widespread switch to a digital format appears to be inevitable (Barclay, 211). Even if celluloid will not be completely abandoned –
and most other writers on digital technology in film see a long period of coexistence between the different mediums – the growing dominance of digital processes causes Barclay to refocus on the motion picture image itself in terms of what is rendered technically and what is produced aesthetically. In particular, Barclay stresses the need to understand traditional film technology since it set “the standard by which all other [‘photo-realistic’] forms of imaging technology are judged” (viii). Given the push for digital film to accurately copy cinema realism over alternate aesthetic possibilities, the primacy of the look of traditional film is well affirmed.

In addition to referencing Bazin and Arnheim and recasting certain discourses about digital media in terms used to discuss film at earlier points in its history, Anna Everett’s “Digitextuality and Click Theory: Theses on Convergence Media in the Digital Age” also makes connections between current discussions and those of cinematic forebearers like Jean Epstein, Germaine Dulac, and Dziga Vertov. For example, the alteration of the representation of time through the digital effects of “bullet-time” and “hypertime” – popularized by The Matrix and first adapted into the Max Payne (2001) video game series – has much in common with Epstein’s 1920s experimentation with slow-motion cinematic effects; in “The Spirit of Slow Motion” (1928), Epstein writes, “At no point in the film will the spectator be able to say to himself: this is slow motion […] We are now on the verge of rediscovering lost time […] This capacity for discrimination in the mechanical and optical super-eye clearly demonstrates the relativity of time […] The drama is placed outside ordinary time” (Everett, 23). In “The Essence of Cinema: The Visual Idea” (1925), Dulac tries to articulate what a “pure cinema” might look like based on

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26 Geoffrey Gilmore (Director of Film Programming at the Sundance Film Festival) sees the debate in film about competing technologies as an inquiry into the literacy of the image – specifically as a type of hyperrealism inherent in a digital aesthetic – but views playing with its parameters as akin to Godard’s play with realism (Roman, 193-4).

27 Scott McQuire’s Crossing the Digital Threshold, which has been referenced several times by other writers in discussing digital creations, discusses how the credibility of computer generated imagery is related to its ability to produce “camera-reality”: the introduction of grain, lens flare, blurring effects, and other subtle artifacts of celluloid film.
future possibilities and advancements in visual representation (i.e., an art of the eye similar to that of the kino-eye). Perhaps the reach back through history puts Everett in a “what’s old is new again” mode as she ends her essay by stating that digitextuality raises questions that “always return us to the body activating and making sense of the interface,” and Everett believes that a return to the body is inevitable for the users of “cyberspace, computer-enhanced television, pocket computers, wireless and handheld devices” because these “apparatuses of click” ultimately fail at providing a transcendence of the body (Everett, 25).28 The return to the body is a curious conclusion given that some of the discussions about digital technologies challenge basic definitions of the body, such as in the case of digital actors, player identification with video game characters they control, and other ideas of virtuality. If what constitutes a body is being questioned in virtual culture, then Everett’s reference to an interface similarly opens itself to a multiplicity of interpretations as the interface could range from the perception of a human subject to the kino-eye of the camera to a game controller.

As means to permit access to a text, interfaces are under constant change by digital media in contemporary American culture. Everett contends that “popular culture audiences today understand and expect that most contemporary media texts, including films, are produced with some degree of digital manipulation” (Everett, 9). In this regard, digital media often revels in its ability to dazzle, and Everett cites the success of films ranging from Forrest Gump (1994) to The Matrix to Monsters, Inc. (2001) as having the power to avoid issues of authenticity and representation because of their use of digital technology in challenging “the digital literacy and

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28 Given the popularity of the Nintendo’s Wii, in particular its wireless remote (and the Balance Board) and the way this encourages a certain type of interactive game development and play that is far more kinetic than what the standard type of controllers offer, these “apparatuses of click” are under some potential for change. Both Microsoft and Sony are attempting to connect more with the bodies of their gamers, following Nintendo in developing motion-sensing input devices with the Kinect (originally known as Project Natal) and the Move. The history of video game development, however, is littered with many such devices from numerous remote control joysticks to the Mindlink (1984) and the Foot Craz (1983) for the Atari 2600 to Nintendo’s own Power Pad (1988) and Power Glove (1989).
scopic competencies of contemporary media audiences” as applications of digital media sometimes aim for concealment of effect (or deflection of attention) (Everett, 9). In other instances, the use of digital media is overt and meant to be clearly discerned. Sometimes the digital effects in a film want to appear seamless for various reasons (to enhance the mise-en-scène, to advance the plot, to provide editing continuity) and other times the digital effects want to draw attention (as spectacle, as art, as sensation, as technical prowess). The development of video games is also driven often by their ability to dazzle or push the technology of their systems in ways that are not expressly related to game play or comprehension, and this drive towards spectacle sometimes takes precedence over economic or narrative considerations.

While there are numerous technology issues involved with film and video game production, for purposes of his essay, “Die Hard/Try Harder: Narrative, Spectacles and Beyond, from Hollywood to Videogame,” Geoff King divides production issues in video games between “contemplative spectacle” and “impact aesthetic” (which also are related to marketing considerations and ideas about cinema-reality). King’s article focuses primarily on games based on major film franchises. The spectacle (or fantastic) aspect of game design pushes it towards certain film franchises over others as certain types (genres) of narratives lend themselves to game adaptation more readily than others: “A feature like Star Wars, full of futuristic, electronic space hardware, might attract an audience more likely to play space games than would, say, Caligula” (Shifren, 6). That said, there is tremendous variance in terms of game design and play given the technology changes over time. For King, these technological differences are now decreasing.

29 It could be argued that the use of digital media is sometimes meant to be both subtle and brazen, to be eye-catching yet enhance the realism of the mise-en-scène, causing the viewer to regard a particular application from a multiplicity of perspectives.

30 A cursory look at the titles listed in the Appendix will reveal numerous film-to-game adaptations based on science fiction films, fantasy films, and animated (children’s) films, unfortunately reflecting ideas in both industries about what films might make playable, or at least marketable, games.
between film and video games, particularly as more games attempt to replicate a cinematic aesthetic. In turn, some films are drawing their source material, in terms of story and/or visual representation (not only style but also the increasing fabrication of visual elements through digital media), from video games. This adoption of design codes from film has led to a growing conflict over representation and design in the video game industry. Some critics argue that too much linearity is counter to open-endedness and interactivity that defines game play, that cut scenes (in-game cinematic sequences) disrupt the rhythm of play by enforcing a viewing passivity on the part of the player, and that having conclusions to games (thus limiting their replay value) encourages a certain model of product consumption. Despite some of these tensions between film and video game producers, it is clear that the space of the screen permits a mélange of syntheticity for the two industries in terms of narrative construction as well as the flow of sound and image.

The evolving system of mutual influence, such as suggested between film and video games by King, becomes a central topic in Lev Manovich’s “What Is New Media?”, which is devoted as much to future speculations as it is to describing “computer media’s semiotic codes, modes of address, and audience reception patterns” (Manovich, 7). Manovich realizes the challenge in theorizing about a subject that changes so rapidly and so his genealogy of digital media includes cinema as a preceding cultural form. Nevertheless, the infusion of digital media into virtual culture redefines the nature of representation and creates new aesthetic possibilities. To explore theories about the function of digital media, Manovich looks at concepts such as the parallels between cinema history and the history of new media, including the historical ties

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31 This is not meant to indicate the obvious direct adaptations, such as Street Fighter (1994) or Double Dragon (1994), but how films like Crank (2006) or Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World (2010) are narratively structured and use visual iconography that show an influence of video games on their productions.

32 As suggested previously, churches and theaters could be regarded as virtual spaces that were developed before the advent of digital media. Thus, Manovich attempts to place digital media into a larger historical context of virtuality.
between new media and avant-garde film, and the functions of screen, mobile camera, and
montage in new media as compared to cinema (Manovich, 9). Manovich’s historical
comparisons are not done to suggest a simple binary between cinema and new media but instead
to establish some working definitions for terms that may be quickly recoded by changes in
technology. For example, Manovich initially saw that “the popular understanding of new media
identifies it with the use of a computer for distribution and exhibition rather than production”
while production now is as equally dependent on computer involvement as distribution or
exhibition (Manovich, 19).

Manovich uses film history to recast cinema as new media, gesturing to a strong
connection between film and digital representation as both being inherently about sampling.
Film samples time typically at twenty-four frames per second (FPS) and a digital image is a
matrix of pixels which is a sample of space (which itself has been turned into a complex
numerical representation).33 It is this systematization of distinction based on sampling modes
(akin to Althusser’s concept of interpellation) that Manovich hopes to challenge through his
work as he sees the users of new media able to question the “pre-programmed, objectively
existing associations” that ask us “to mistake the structure of somebody else’s mind for our own”
(Manovich, 61).34

Pixel-Swapping: Digital Characters in Film and Video Games

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33 Digital filmmaking conflates these two ideas by emulating the sampling rate of film while also spatially
organizing this data in a different medium that permits more contravention of linearity. Video games push
particularly hard on the subject of frame rates, as each iteration of game engines are designed to take advantage of
new hardware developments. Most video games are designed to run from thirty to sixty FPS, mainly to ensure
stability with the program, as the hardware can typically generate much faster frame rates (e.g., modern video cards
can easily achieve 160 FPS and much higher).
34 This is something that Malcolm Le Grice recognized in his essay on “Computer Film as Film Art,” namely how
the fundamental methods of computer programming impose underlying ideas about the arrangement of data on the
user, thereby influencing design (Le Grice, 219). In other words, something so simple as the arrangement and/or
availability of certain onscreen programming buttons might influence the designer’s choices.
One area of association between a structured creation and a viewer (or user) is that of character. The uses of computer generation to create characters in films and video games are becoming more interrelated, not only through the programs used in their generation but also overall design. Barbara Creed’s article on “The Cyberstar: Digital Pleasures and the End of the Unconscious” introduces a number of newly formulated words – “synthespian,” “cyberstar,” and “vactor” (virtual actor) – that attempt to define the nature, or composition, of a type of performer based wholly or partially in the realm of the computer generated image. It is interesting to note that in 2000 when Creed originally wrote the article, virtual actors were primarily relegated to playing parts that would be handled by extras, not the principal cast. Today digital media has advanced at such a speed that CGI characters are contributing more substantially to a cast (outside the specialized – and somewhat marginalized – genre of animation). Currently in digital acting, the technology has been refined to the point where virtual characters are not merely replacements for extras, and “vactor” seems reminiscent of video game terminology.

Conversely, the technology has not progressed sufficiently (and perhaps the skills of the human programmers/artists as well) to have created a well-regarded digital actor – against which an idealized human performance, that particularly ascribes something to the actor’s ability to transcend other influences (such as direction or cinematography), is still held as the standard – so “synthespian” might stand as a sort of goal for the digital community: “a fully convincing, nuanced, intuitive human performance” (Creed, 130-31). Synthespian seems to have certain loaded connotations about a quality of performance that is somehow elevated beyond normal levels when the ability to generate better performances continues to advance with technological developments. There also remains a certain bias of aesthetic in that the digital character is supposed to deliver a convincing human performance as if the pixels are a form of
anthropomorphized cosmetics. It seems most likely that Creed settles on the “cyberstar” as the current middle ground between these two formats.  

Creed prefaces her discussion of the cyberstar by returning to the moment of film’s invention and noting how the combination of technology and (visual) illusion helped to create a vision of realism that more closely resembled the “surreal stream of images that seemed to match the movement of the Unconscious” than that of non-cinematic reality (Creed, 129). Perhaps its mode of representation is part of film’s enduring appeal in terms of working on a psychological and/or semiotic level. It is within that Unconscious appeal, however, that Creed problematizes the cyberstar, namely that an illusory phantom must nevertheless incorporate an emotional range that connotes the presence of an Unconscious. Creed sees this presence manifested in terms of a fundamental difference between the experiences of a living star and a cyberstar and gives a list including events such as “mothering, oedipal anxiety, hunger, loss, ecstasy, desire, death” (Creed, 132). For Creed, the impact of these fundamental experiences on the human psyche presents a dilemma in terms of how to import these effects into a cyberstar’s construction.

The problem of producing a more nuanced performance that has been associated with cyberstars has not been introduced with regard to video games, even as digital characters are being programmed to portray increasing levels of realism in terms of their reactions both to the game player and the game environment. If one regards a game as a virtual space similar to that of animation (be it a short Warner Bros. cartoon or a feature length Pixar production), the issue of realism in games has to contend with two key ideas. The first issue regarding realism is how

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35 Cyberstar could also reference Andy Warhol’s manufactured creation of the “superstar.”
36 It could be countered, however, that many characters have been played by actors who had not experienced this range of human events and associated emotional responses, although Creed might then push her idea of Unconscious further to speak of some sort of universal human response (possible biases notwithstanding). It is interesting that at this point Creed does not more closely scrutinize the role of the programmers in imbuing their digital creations with this sort of Unconscious. Motion capture devices have enabled programmers to not only engage in creating more complex animations but also to build a library of pre-coded movements and behaviors, in essence creating a tool set of shortcuts for programming acting routines.
much the virtual world should emulate the physical world of the user to provide perceptual realism. For example, the visual rendering of a game may have varying degrees of abstraction (compare here the whimsical look of *The Sims* (2000) with the gritty detail of *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* (2001)) yet feature realistically encoded rules of physics in terms of gravitational effects on objects and directional light sources. The second issue regarding realism is how to represent the game character (or avatar) such that the majority of game players can identify with the character given differences in age, race, gender, and other characteristics (akin to how a wide variety of viewers can identify with specific characters in a film). This may involve aesthetic considerations in giving the character certain physical abilities or traits or how the character itself is depicted in the game world.\(^{37}\) In terms of narrative, the choices of role(s) that the player’s character may take—such as being clearly designated as a shining hero in *GoldenEye 007* (1997), a reluctant hero in *Tron 2.0* (2002), or an anti-hero in *The Punisher* (2004)—can also affect player attraction and response to a game.\(^{38}\) As Geoff King notes in “Die Hard/Try Harder: Narrative, Spectacles and Beyond, from Hollywood to Videogame,” one of the elements present in film but absent in video games is “any developed sense of character or personality” (King, 64). That people engage with video games is obvious, but a key question is how might this engagement differ from or align with film engagement, particularly if character identification is an important narrative, and often visual, element? In American culture, the use of films and games by consumers and the relationship between video game and film production is at an

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\(^{37}\) In particular, the ability to customize the look of a character, either with what is provided within the game or through externally imported “skins,” has become a significant feature in attracting players to the point of creating entire subcultures within gaming communities devoted to these modifications. Many games that feature third-person action are giving players a more powerful and nuanced toolset used during the character creation phase.

\(^{38}\) This issue is sometimes a function of the linearity of the game. Many games feature a single scripted plot. Some games that deal with moral choices—such as *Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption* (2000) or *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* (2003)—feature alteration of storylines based on a player’s actions. In open-ended games, particularly in the style of *EverQuest* (1999), a character is defined more by its relationships (specific, personal, and to a certain extent unscripted) to other characters than to its actions within the larger narrative of the game.
interesting point because of the evolutionary convergences of their digital compositions. The similarity of the medium, the packaging, the home playback systems, and even the way that upcoming releases are marketed encourage certain patterns of use. Differences include price and some issues of digital distribution, but perhaps the key area here is in the area of interactivity, specifically in ways people interact with both films and games, not merely in terms of obvious mechanisms such as controllers but also the amount of time involved in using the media and how that media is further integrated (or not) into their lives.

Related to the role of the player in a video game, having gamers act as characters within a specific franchise environment also gestures to the roles of synthespians (such as Gollum or The Hulk) that Barbara Creed analyzes (in addition to heightening market awareness of such a character as product). The ethics of imagery is often raised in terms of cyberstars, most directly in relation to purchasing the rights to use images of famous stars (and presumably less famous ones). Virtual Celebrity Productions already has purchased licensing rights to the images of Marlene Dietrich, Vincent Price, and others. The estate of Bruce Lee licensed his image to appear in a new martial arts film. Programmers can use similar digital technology, with increasing levels of precision, to reproduce likenesses in video games; recent titles where characters played by human actors have been recreated within the code of the game’s engine include *Heavy Metal: FAKK2* (2000), *The Lord of the Rings* series (2001-04), *Enter the Matrix* (2003), *Batman Begins* (2005), *Star Wars – Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, *The Godfather* (2006), and *James Bond: Quantum of Solace* (2008). Virtual characters also complicate other areas, such as membership in the Screen Actors Guild and (perhaps most visibly) film awards, particularly those given for acting. These issues are blurring defined boundaries while raising questions about the nature of acting in film as well as video games. Going by the rules of the
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, seventy-five percent of a film must use animation effects, a vague term, for it to qualify in the animation category, yet numerous live action films – especially those heavily reliant on CGI to create their entire mise-en-scène, alter their actors, and generally dominate the post-production process – are running very close to the marker for the animation category. For example, in the film 300 (2006), of the 1,523 shots in the film, 1,006 of them (roughly 66 percent) are visual effects shots enhanced, created, or otherwise manipulated by digital animation effects. When films that use extensive green screen and digital effects in practically every shot, such as Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow (2004) or Sin City (2005), are considered, the fact that these are not categorized as animated films appears problematic. Do the live actors trump all the digital manipulation going on around them? Given the increasing adoption of digital technologies in filmmaking, the question of what exactly constitutes animation will have to be revisited, and in some ways this line of inquiry will return cinema to its earliest days of inception.

From the perspective of an employee working at the crossroad of the industries, Katherine Sarafian devotes an extended discussion to the creation of virtual performers in “Flashing Digital Animations: Pixar’s Digital Aesthetic,” noting that computer generated characters are always in character, i.e., they have a one-dimensionality in having no role outside of performance. Currently, everything that a digital character does is completely scripted in terms of the programming. Although the Pixar aesthetic is in the highly stylized format of animation, Sarafian notes that “the robotic, high-tech look most readily achieved with a computer and software are appropriate only for certain kinds of stories and worlds” (Sarafian, 218). One the significant trends in digital media and virtual culture is to develop aesthetic alternatives to the styles of films (animation and science fiction in particular) that Sarafian
suggests are most compatible with computer generated imagery. Video games are now expanding into different genre properties, such as with the release of *The Godfather* and an announced, but now cancelled, *Dirty Harry* adaptation, although these tentative forays are using the success of other game types (like popular gangster games exemplified by the wildly successful *Grand Theft Auto* (2001) series) to assist with the development of new projects. If Sarafian’s point is to be taken, it may be some time before one sees an entirely CGI production similar to *My Dinner with Andrée* (1981) or a game based on *The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* (2002), but with video games based on television shows such as *Desperate Housewives* (2004), *The Apprentice* (2004), and *The O.C.* (2003), perhaps the video game industry will seek to expand its offerings beyond established genres.

Even if certain film treatments lend themselves more readily to incorporating digital characters, they still tend towards some degree of perceptual realism. For example, although *Jurassic Park* (1993) is based on a fantastic concept that stretches current scientific technology, the referentially unreal dinosaurs in the film still adhere to established (elsewhere) ideas of not only how dinosaurs might have looked but also how the computer modeling behaves in terms of ideas like texture mapping (for the look of the skin), collision detection, and locomotor mechanics, which includes modeling of joint rotation, ambulation, the relationship between muscles moving underneath skin, and even the effects of gravity on a body.\(^{39}\) The more of these variables that are introduced into a computer model, the more that the image approaches perceptual realism. Indeed, the introduction as well as the sophistication of programming of these variables has allowed for modeling rules to be implemented on something as complex as

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\(^{39}\) It is interesting to note that a number of digital effects studios were created by directors, like George Lucas and James Cameron, initially for very specific projects but then took on outside work and have flourished.
individual strands of hair, both on Aki Ross in *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* (2001) and Sulley in *Monsters, Inc.*.

Related to the idea of perceptual realism, Sarafian articulates a distinction between presentation and representation in digital technology, beginning first with programming: virtual elements are combined through computation to create actual elements which are then given the appearance of reality through the process of rendering. Sarafian moves to the issue of digital projection, arguing that it “does not take digital movies to the next level so much as it *keeps digital movies at their pristine, high-resolution level*” (Sarafian, 219). Sarafian echoes comments by George Lucas and other digital technology advocates when she refers to the ability of digital technology to present “a computed, manufactured world at its most accurate and pure” (Sarafian, 219). Within this statement then seem to be competing ideas between technology’s ability to present a filmmaker’s vision as intended for the sake of art versus a techno-utopia representation mediated through the promise of digital media. Since the digital image, however, can endlessly be deconstructed, recoded, reconstructed, and re-presented – reconstituted in every detail – does this not problematize the very notions of accuracy and purity that Sarafian and others are promoting?40

Coded with the digital image are the programs that direct it. One term that connects the ideas about digital actors that Creed, Prince, King and others have addressed is that of artificial life software. Manovich sees AL software as a development of automation that begins with simple software agents (like those that help users create documents or modify images) to ones that handle more intricate tasks like “natural phenomena such as fire and waterfalls” and “flocks

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40 Purity can also be regarded as a style, imparting the idea of digital purity with an echo of modernist minimalism.
of birds, ant colonies, and crowds of people” in Hollywood films (Manovich, 32).\textsuperscript{41} Motion capture devices have enabled programmers to create more complex animations as well as to build a library of pre-coded movements and behaviors, in essence creating a tool set of shortcuts for programming acting routines. For example, human agents were used in the initial motion capture for the huge army melee sequences in \textit{The Lord of the Rings} (2001-03). While digital artists created the looks of the orcs and other creatures to match that of the live action, the thousands and thousands of generated creatures by Massive, the special effects software program used in the film, were programmed with a version of fuzzy logic that enabled each individual to choose from a repertoire of subtle motions and reactions, in effect rendering each creature as both part of a group and an autonomous character reacting in a very personalized way. While some similar types of artificial intelligence (AI) routines have been used in video games for many years now, this may be the first instance of AI being used in conjunction with digital creatures. If the parameters of a system like Massive can be ported to another system – along with databases of behaviors – this development may fundamentally change the way that digital characters can be created as well as their performances. For example, rather than controlling every action of a digital character, such as Shrek, one could introduce levels of autonomy that might produce more realistic performances (from a human point of view). Thus, Shrek might be directed to walk from a drawbridge to a forest, but his behavior while executing this task could be “unscripted” to various degrees through a control program that allows for some randomization of action selected from a pre-established database. This sort of relinquishing of control, on many levels, could interestingly intersect with the expansive control offered by digital technology.

\textsuperscript{41} Even in the few years since the publication of Manovich’s book, AL software has become amazingly sophisticated, as evidenced by the crowd effects designed by Massive Software for \textit{The Lord of the Rings} trilogy. Massive Software, whose corporate slogan is “Simulating Life”, has had its products used on over 60 other films such as \textit{King Kong} (2005), \textit{Flags of Our Fathers} (2006), 300 (2006), \textit{The Dark Knight} (2008), \textit{Australia} (2008), \textit{Invictus} (2009), and \textit{Avatar} (2009) as well as one video game, \textit{Lost Odyssey} (2007).
At a certain level of programming complexity AL software crosses over to the realm of AI. Manovich expands the definition of AI to include a number of diverse programs, including poetry and fiction systems from the 1970s, a virtual theater with virtual actors designed at New York University, and a virtual environment with interactive characters created by the MIT Media Lab. Manovich emphasizes the greatest developments in AI coming about via video games in the 1990s which used “a variety of approaches to simulate human intelligence, from rule-based systems to neural networks”; however, Manovich also points out that currently “computer characters can display intelligence and skills only because programs place severe limits on our possible interactions with them” (Manovich, 33-34). These limitations are also even greater in digital characters in films as they are the end product of “a human creator who manually assembled textual, visual, and/or audio elements into a particular composition or sequence” (Manovich, 36). The complexities of a performance by a virtual actor would have to be enhanced by creating databases of pre-scripted routines or components that the virtual actor, or its programmer, would have some autonomy (or loosening of command parameters) in choosing to build a performance. Technological advancement in digital media could theoretically be used to modify the performance of a digital character in a similar manner to how the special effects in older films are being upgraded with newer techniques due to technological advancements, which foregrounds the possibility of a product of digital media never being a completed or static text. In the same manner that the marketing of films includes restored prints, deleted scenes, director’s cuts, and special editions, video games are now adopting this

42 Admittedly, examining a potential marriage between narrative film techniques, acting theories, and advances in AI programming would be worthwhile, but given the increasing complexity of digital scripting – the sets of codes and rules that govern AI behavior – this might be an interesting area to explore at a later date.

43 Build here functions both in the traditional sense and with reference to computer terminology, where a build refers to a particular iteration of a computer program that contains more corrections and enhancements when compared to a previous version.

44 For example, as seen in numerous alternate versions – marketed as unrated, director’s, special edition, and so on – of films released on home video.
model, releasing reprogrammed games with new source engines, limited or specially
packaged/bundled editions, and even enhanced “director’s cuts” of titles. The
recommodification of product is what Manovich means when he speaks of the variability of
media – a modularity of information – such as with George Lucas modifying the original Star
Wars (1977) property or computer games like Tomb Raider (1996) being remade into films
(Manovich, 43).

The Interaction of Spectacle and Narrative

In looking at film and video games as media products, one should ask what the function
of narrative is and the ways in which it is used. How do issues of interactivity affect the
construction of narrative? For Mat Kraemar, Lead Designer at Sanzaru Games, this creates some
significant problems:

I have worked on numerous licensed titles in my career and have found that most
of the bad licensed games are created because the publisher or holder of the
license wants specific items in the game that don’t work well in an interactive
experience. For licensed properties everything must be approved by numerous
parties and may take a long time to get the team the information they need to
move forward. Imagine creating six months of work on a driving engine and then
you get the feedback back from the publisher or license holder, ‘Oh, the main
character never drives a car in the movie, so could you take that out?’

Geoff King begins an analysis of the function of narrative and spectacle in films and video
games by considering their causal relationships. While both films and video games have been
read as texts, establishing comparative ways of reading them through the use of digital media in
their production is another way to explore their interaction. A strong connection between film
and video games lies with their attention to spectacle, particularly in terms of special effects,
action, and the underlying market forces that drive product development.45

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45 Economics is very important when one considers that being able to play a video game requires considerable more
outlay of resources (both in terms of money as well as time) for the consumer than watching a film.
King sees a distinction in the role that narrative plays in terms of games being interactive; for example, in the *Die Hard* games (1996-2004), interactivity comes from the player negotiating the action of the game play rather than fundamentally affecting the narrative itself. The sort of linear progression through one dominant line of plot is something that game theoretician Espen Arseth sees as restrictive when compared to Massively Multiplayer On-line Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) such as *EverQuest* or *Ultima Online* (1997) as these games typically have little narrative structure and rely primarily on the players to generate story arcs and personal narratives. The nature of interactivity is especially important to King, as it illustrates many questions about the “structure of possible future hybrids between film and more interactive media such as video games” (King, 54).46

Discussion and analysis of video games through magazines, television shows, and internet venues mirrors similar methods concerning cultural treatment of film. The computer tools offered by technology for the creation of video games can easily be turned to dissection, so that a game player could conceivably analyze a game’s images, frame rate, and even source code instead of only interacting with the game by playing it.47 Circumventing or disrupting the play process of a video game – where working through a set of problems could yield different outcomes based on solving methods – might reconfigure player investment within the narrative. For now, King believes that the tendency towards spectacle (the wow factor of what the technology can do) and replicating the aesthetic experience of mainstream film is driving video game production more than narrative.

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46 Related to this is the idea, debated in film studies, about the passivity of film viewing, particularly in terms of how the viewer cognitively and emotionally engages with a film. This moment in video game studies coincides with renewed interest in audience analysis in film studies.

47 For many years, some games – like *Lode Runner* (1983) and *Doom* (1993) – have been released with editing tools that allow players to create new levels, design new characters, or add other embellishments to the game. These modifications have created a subset of game play that is a thriving area of creation and commerce, especially with digital distribution. Some titles, such as *LittleBigPlanet* (2007) and *WarioWare: D.I.Y.* (2009), actively encourage gamers to develop new games and submit them for others to play.
The rise of film and video game consumption within a domestic setting are used by King to the compare the formats of theatrical and television exhibition in “From Big Screen to Small” and to touch upon stylistic differences in terms of narrative construction as well as the flow of sound and image. The ability for the viewer to affect the linear playback of a film is one area where there are some marked distinctions. Theaters dictate show times, show commercial shorts (commercials and previews) before the film, and then play the film without any breaks (barring technical problems or other disasters), thus preserving an overall linearity to the viewing process (despite the internal narrative of the cinematic-reality). Home viewing, however, offers not merely the freedom to stop and start a film as desired, but moreover the ability to time-shift, i.e., to rewind, fast forward, and otherwise disrupt analog chronology; this is even more intense with digital media, thinking here not only about laserdiscs, DVDs, and digital video recorders (DVRs) but also with video games.48 The ability to change how a film or video game in the home is used is complex in terms of how a user chooses to experience a digital media product once it is acquired. While the inclusion of narrative has encouraged the development of certain game types over others – for example, the transition from side-scrolling shooters to mission based scenarios – it also affects certain game design decisions, such as the length of subsections (or “chapters”) of the overall story, how much of the game play to incur in real time, and even how or when to allow the game player to save the progress through the game.

What is a Video Game?

48 For Le Grice, the appeal of digital technology is its potential to disrupt the (dominance of) linearity of film (Le Grice, 243). Strikingly, in Experimental Cinema in the Digital Age, Le Grice also directly references the ability of computer games to resist and/or transform linear narratives (Le Grice, 245). Although his digression into this idea is mostly an intellectual sketch, in the ten years since he wrote the essay, it has grown in terms of what he called “psychological investment and desire” and “competitive sport with its own inherent psychological forms and symbolism” (Le Grice, 248-49).
This question is vigorously debated by people within the industry, such as Chris Crawford with *Chris Crawford on Game Design* (2003) and Jesse Schell in his book *The Art of Game Design* (2008), and outside of it (perhaps most famously, Roger Ebert in his writings about video games not being art). To answer that question, one first has to consider what is a game? All games are simulations. One might ask, however, what separates this type of simulation from that found in a book or a film? While proponents of video games might invoke the nature of interactivity promoted by video games, books and films also demand some sort of interactivity from a user, even if just on the level of mental engagement.\(^49\) Then it might not be the interactivity itself, but the type of interactivity, specifically one that involves rules (and sometimes goals) coupled with challenge. These parameters still do not exactly clarify a certain type of experience for the user of a video game that is different from books and films, as both of these can challenge their readers and viewers and both generally operate with an internally consistent set of rules (from the grammar of printed text and the language of cinema to the verisimilitude established within the context of the work). The type of interactivity that games seem to offer has to do with the mutability of their components within the defined space, known as the playing field, of the games.

In games, the playing field is a described space for action. This space could take the form of a predefined area such as a field or a board or a created area from a repurposed item (so that a tabletop becomes a tableau for a game of poker or miniature-based wargames). In the case of video games, the playing field is explicitly a screen.\(^50\) These screens are any type of display

\(^{49}\) In *Racing the Beam*, Montfort and Bogost note that “Even if we image a poem or a movie as interactive, it is often not very meaningful to characterize such a work as having an interface apart from its visual or aural appearance” (146). Because video games involve some sort of mediation between the program and the user, often in the form of hardware (specifically the game controllers), the issue of the interface becomes very important to consider.

\(^{50}\) Both “video game” and “videogame” are accepted constructions of the term; however, the decision has been made to use the two word version to underscore the importance of how the video element is a major defining component of the medium.
device that provides output (information) supplied as an electric signal. By keeping this definition as broad as possible, the displays can become very inclusive, as represented by monitors (such as those used for computers, arcades, and televisions), watches, handheld units, and cell phones, while maintaining an openness for technological advancement. Within this playing field, the player interacts with coded objects through a controller interface. This interface has taken many forms throughout the history of video games, but the dominant form is some type of joystick mechanism coupled with a button to initiate a response.

Video games encompass a wide number of platforms (electronic systems) for play. Subordinate classifications of these games include arcade coin-operated machines, home consoles, computer systems, and handheld devices, both dedicated (or fixed) and interchangeable. In particular primarily with consoles, computer systems, and handhelds, the issue of hardware improvements, upgrades, and revisions illustrates the short duration of certain platforms (Entex’s Adventurevision or Nintendo’s Virtual Boy) but the longevity of particular game delivery formats (cartridges, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, and now digital distribution) where one technology is invariably supplanted by another.  

For a particular property to be kept alive, the game must be updated for a new generation of hardware or the new hardware must be made backwards-compatible with the older storage formats. Additionally, the older technology could be kept alive by enthusiasts or collectors, and many video game companies have found additional revenue in releasing older games playable through software emulation of an older platform’s hardware. 

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51 The issue of digital distribution is becoming an increasingly notable one, as this involves everything from economics (reduction of printing and distribution of physical software) to competition from developers outside of established delivery systems to corporate manipulation of the industry. As Todd Howard, Executive Producer at Bethesda Softworks, asks, “A standard platform across all consoles and PCs for games…Think about a DVD – you can play it on your PC but also on your TV. Or in your car. Why not a game?” (Elliott and Ashley, 61).

52 This slippage in the availability of certain game titles has resulted in some terminology regarding video games, particularly those deemed as “classic” or “retro”, to delineate particular eras as becoming more muddled, so it is
of ways, including access to older games, which speaks to a sort of techno-literacy. If the game can no longer be played due to a lack of appropriate hardware, this makes the medium much more dependent on hardware. In contrast, generally a printed book does not require a completely new type of literacy for comprehension, outside of perhaps learning some new vocabulary or advancement in cognitive understanding. Even film, which has gone through a number of stocks over its history and is now negotiating the movement to digital formats for storage, and is predicated on a certain types of technologies for playback, has not experienced the rapid progression of hardware developments in such a short time when compared to video games.53

Represented on these platforms are a wide range of game genres. The genres that make up video games may be categorized into discrete taxonomies based primarily on method of game play, but other factors such as goals or art direction can be considered; sometimes they can be combinations of several different genres, which often leads to new genres emerging (e.g., survival horror such as *Resident Evil*).54 Because genres are dependent on content for definition, technological advancement and more sophisticated production values in video game development have also introduced new possibilities for play (such as games which use some sort of camera recognition as part of the control interface).55 Film-to-game translations, while often indicated as such in a sort of genre, actually take the form of many different game genres, such

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53 The hardware history of video games also points to a systemization of corporate control (perhaps analogous to studio system of the film industry) so that independent developers are relegated to the fringes of the industry (or pushed out altogether) while major development houses work on big budget titles which appear only on licensed systems. This is complicated by the entire side of the video game industry that can create games for computer systems, which most often are not proprietarily controlled.

54 Unlike film, video games are classified independently of their setting, so that the game play will remain basically the same no matter what the context is (one set in on futuristic alien outer space station or in the 1880s American West). Setting is still a consideration when it comes to marketing, however, so that the genre of a game is often modified with additional descriptors.

55 Because of the rapid nature of video game development, often genres which are thought of as new and radical – such as the virtual pets popularized by Tamagotchi and even more so by Pokémon – have antecedents that are historically obscured.
that one might see game play that includes sidescrolling platformers, first-person shooters (FPS),
point-and-click adventures, puzzles, and real time strategy (RTS) among many others. While
the types of genres most often seen in film-to-game adaptations are usually influenced by the
source material (i.e., an action adventure film will usually be translated into an action adventure
game), this is not always the case, and film-to-game adaptations that are typically regarded as
successful are those which do not adhere to such obvious translation.

The Cinema of Attraction Becomes the Game of Attraction: Towards a Typology of Film-
to-Game Licenses

Movie properties are just one in a host of licenses sought by the video game industry -
others include sports, television, comic books, cartoons, and toys – and games based on films are
the most licensed source material. This franchise effect has cast some stigma on licensed
property games of all kinds, devaluing their potential as media and equating them with other
derivative products from their respective intellectual properties. That film-to-game titles
function as ancillary marketing commodities cannot be denied in some cases, but in others they
enhance, and even occasionally surpass, the source material in areas of creative expression,
audience engagement, and revenue. These areas are likely, but not always, interrelated, such that
a critically praised game enjoys significant sales. In a report released late in 2009, The Nielsen
Company analyzed the attributes of households that purchased games based on movies. Based
on a two-year study involving households that purchased at least one game based on a movie,
Nielsen reported that families with children between the ages of 6-12 were the most likely to
purchase games based on movies. Households likely to purchase a movie-based game also had a

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56 Detractors of film-to-game translations have been the most vocal in pigeonholing these types of games into a
marginalized classification as if the very nature of the adaptation predetermines a poor game. While many film-to-
game translations have indeed produced substandard games, this is typically the result of the advantages and
constraints of video games as a medium not being dealt with adequately in the development process, which can also
be problematized by additional creative, technical, and marketing factors.
household income averaging over $70,000 a year and typically spent almost twice as much as average families on games and DVDs. When looking at a tendency to purchase such games by ethnic type, non-Caucasians, especially Hispanics and Asians, were most likely to purchase film-to-game titles.

Aside from the obvious marketing tie-in, how do video games based on movies function in other ways? Given that film-to-game adaptations can cover a wide range of genres, one way to think about this question involves considering the position of the game in relation to the narrative of the film. The first category is products expressly tied to one film’s narrative, such as *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), *Die Hard: Nakatomi Plaza* (2002), or *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*. These follow the narrative of the film, either in its entirety or key scenes, and allow the user to move principal characters through recreated sets and action sequences. Since creative game play can be limited by following an established (and often linear) narrative, sometimes additional material, from narrative exposition to play spaces not seen in the source film, is added as an enticement for players as a way to enhance their filmic experience and an incentive to play a game where major plot elements could be known in advance. Making games related to specific films, especially unreleased but upcoming ones, usually involves hitting certain production deadlines so that the game can help promote the film. From the designers’ perspective, this can cause problems. As Cordy Rierson, Development Director for The Collective, notes:

“It would be great to start the process of making a game at the same time as the movie, but that doesn’t happen. Film has a very different production cycle than most games do. The pre-green lighting process is much, much longer. A lot of

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57 In the early days of video games, it was not uncommon to have games in development or already completed to be rebranded to exploit a film license (Twentieth Century Fox single-handedly set this precedent). Unfortunately, the connections between most of these games and their sources were often spurious at best and resulted in film-to-game adaptations being saddled with negative expectations that have remained over the years. Even now, repurposing of games to serve as film tie-ins, such as reskinning *Bejeweled* (2000) to promote *The Ant Bully* (2006), still happens.
the time, games are being handled by the movie studio’s product division. They’re sitting alongside the same things as lunchboxes and action figures, and the same people are managing them all.”

The timing of a game’s release – before the film, with the film, or after the film – can drastically alter the game’s reception as well as any impact it may have on the film’s sales (both theatrically and on home video). As a promotional tool to sell the film, a video game based on a film that is released in advance of the title sits in an unusual position in how much it adheres to or deviates from the narrative of the source film. Dean Martinetti, Producer at Spark Unlimited, finds the situation to be taxing:

“Working on a license is usually a pain in the ass. Nine times out of ten the person you have to work with on the licensor end has no idea how to make a video game or what it takes to make one, much less what makes a game fun. They only care about the license and the “brand” of it all. Usually it’s ‘We need to get this game out when the movie comes out,’ and the developer will ask ‘Well, when does the movie come out?’ and they get ‘nine months from today’ or something idiotic like that.”

From Rierson’s and Martinetti’s comments, echoing the research of this project, it can be construed that the dominant mode of film-to-game adaptations – to promote a film’s release and generate additional revenue – tends to produce games that do not take full advantage of the medium.

The second category is products that function as sequels, prequels, or parallel/alternate narratives (sometimes using dominant points established by films). Games such as *Heavy Metal: FAKK2*, *Blade Runner* (1997), *Star Wars: TIE Fighter* (1994), and *Evil Dead: Hail to the King* (2001) are positioned around the source films so that a player who is familiar with the source material could have a more nuanced level of play yet must be self-contained enough to offer a satisfying game experience for those unfamiliar with the referenced film(s). Eric Lindstrom, Creative Director at Eidos Interactive, noted the creative negotiation inherent in this duality:
“The biggest challenge there is with licenses is the inability to be agile when it comes to decisions that intersect with the character and presentation. If you want to make a change, and you believe it’s right for the game and the franchise, you still need to go through an approval process before moving forward on the decision.” If a game is narratively situated between two films, such as *Star Wars: TIE Fighter* or *Enter the Matrix*, the films serve as anchor points for the game’s design. In the case of *TIE Fighter*, since the source films had come out years before, the game play had far less constraint than *Enter the Matrix*, which was intended as a bridge between the released *The Matrix* and its theatrical sequel, *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003). As ambitious as this transmedia narrative was, technical issues with the game and major changes in protagonists between the films and the game resulted in significant confusion for both game players and film audiences, even in cases where the demographics overlapped. Because *TIE Fighter*, while serving as a bridge between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* (1983), presented an alternate narrative not covered in the films, it was able to introduce new characters and situations while referencing film elements and plot points to drive its own design and narrative progression.

The third category is products in milieu established or created by film, but not expressly related to established filmic narrative. A game like *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing* (2004) used the current Bond actor’s likeness and voice (Pierce Brosnan) as well as supporting actors from the films, the requisite Bond girls, a new title song with a credit sequence done in the signature Bond cinematic style, and the standard international action within a completely new script written just for the game. *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* uses the familiar visual

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58 Many other video games are unofficially licensed/derived – *Xenophobe* (1987) inspired by *Aliens* (1986), *Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop* (1992) ripped right from *Dirty Harry* (1971) – or so inspired by cinema, e.g. significant parts of the *Grand Theft Auto* series, that this would be an interesting area to explore, but beyond the current scope of this project. It should be noted that the popularity of *GTA* most likely made possible new games based on gangster movies such as *The Godfather* and *Scarface*. 
referents and some plot points to create an entirely new era in the *Star Wars* universe, setting the game 1,000 years before the action of the films. While this technically could be seen as a prequel of sorts, the characters and vistas are so far removed from their filmic origins that it ostensibly functions as a derivative product that is almost new in origin. Games of this type tend to be more well-received by players as there is just enough expansion of a film’s universe to retain familiarity but enough expansion to permit innovation in narrative and game play. While the scope of this project was widened to include as many instances of film-to-game adaptation as possible (represented within the Appendix), especially given technological advancements (such as with cell phones) or alternate uses of media (such as movie DVD mini-games), primary consideration was given to stand-alone titles for the most dedicated hardware platforms (arcade machines, consoles, and computers).59 These tend to command more market share, reflect a wide range of ideas about game design, and receive the most attention in terms of critical discussion and/or review.

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59 Obviously, issues about the type of gaming experience that can be had on small screens versus large screens echoes some similar ideas in film theory about what defines a “cinematic experience”.
As indicated by Figure 1, the number of film-to-game adaptations has changed over the years, showing an interesting array of ascension and decline. These fluctuations are due to: the complex interaction of film and video games, notably with companies, such as Disney and Warner Bros., that are more willing to do film licenses than others, and the genres of films (science/fiction fantasy, children’s, animation) that tend to be more readily adapted than others; the impact of technology on the gaming industry, especially hardware cycles, so that when newer, and more powerful, technology becomes available, designers seek to showcase it; and the longer production cycles for video games, particularly when compared to those of film. For example, the fourth generation of home console releases (beginning in 1988 in Japan, 1989 in the
United States, and 1990 in Europe), saw a related spike in adapted titles, and this was witnessed again with the seventh generation releases in 2005-06.

**Dissertation Overview**

This project looks at how digital media has established and affected the relationship between film and video games generally in terms of 1) economics, 2) aesthetics, and 3) narrative. It examines a wide range of associations between the American film and video game industries, using film-to-game adaptations as the primary examples. Although this study involves some technical details related to film and video game production, it is more accurately configured as a cultural analysis of video games as a medium and changes in its production and reception over time. This analysis intends not to take a positive or negative position on digital media and virtual culture, but instead presents a measured discussion of effects within and between the film and video game industries.

The first chapter looks at an abbreviated history of video games, beginning in the 1970s, to see particular moments where the film industry intersected with this new industry and to demonstrate how they quickly became increasingly related through the mid-1980s. Included in this chapter will be a notation of early film properties related to video games, such as *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) and *TRON* (1982), which function as case studies to illuminate certain concepts or trends. Issues here include: the development of the film blockbuster that began in the 1970s and a similar occurrence in the development and marketing of major video game releases known as killer applications; the formation of revenue streams in terms both of licensing and of additional profit; how franchise is encouraged through media distribution; the way that production technologies impacted design choices and aesthetics; and the cultural influences of video games. The first chapter comprises the golden age of arcade machines, the
first and second generation of home consoles, and early home computers before ending with the video game crash of 1983.

The second and third chapters expand on the franchise elements suggested in the first chapter, charting developments between the film and video game industries in terms of adapted properties. Ostensibly, the association between film and video games began primarily as one motivated by economics, with business partnerships formed by companies who saw the potential for new markets and products resulting from a combination of the two industries, reinforcing the concept of franchise in terms of consumer product. The commercialization of product that arose in both film and video games underscored the tension within these media between creators who wanted to express themselves artistically and investors who responded to the market demands of profit. With the recent outperformance of video game revenue over film revenue, more attention is being devoted by both industries to the interaction of their respective markets. Chapter two begins immediately following the video game crash, noting how gaming on home computers showcased the power of video games even while new companies such as Nintendo were rising to prominence. In particular, the importance of some lucrative film licenses, such as *Batman* (1989) and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), are analyzed, and Lucasfilm/LucasArts is noted with some important *Star Wars* releases in 1993. Like chapter one, chapter two spans roughly ten years, covering the third through fifth generation of home consoles, the introduction of handheld systems, and the transition to CD technology before ending in 1994 on the cusp of the internet reaching a mainstream American audience. Chapter three covers yet another decade, seeing the rise in online gaming, burgeoning mobile phone gaming, the sixth and seventh generation of consoles, using the introduction of the most recent hardware generation as a demarcation point for the period. Chapter three discusses more involvement of film companies
into video game production and looks in detail at several titles, including perhaps the most well-regarded film-to-game adaptation, *GoldenEye 007* (1997).

By moving chronologically through the history of game releases and hardware advancements, this project aligns itself with other video game histories – such as Burnham’s *Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age, 1971-84* (2001), Kent’s *The Ultimate History of Video Games* (2001), and Donovan’s *Replay: The History of Video Games* (2010) – written as a way to systematize the medium. The state of the discipline of game studies is such that the chronicle style of this project’s character helps to identify a particular vector in game development which closely shows the involvement with the film industry. A few texts – such as *ScreenPlay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces* (2002) and *Hollywood Gamers: Digital Convergence in the Film and Video Game Industries* (2010) – have attempted to explore the connection between the film and video game industries, but these works tend to lightly treat or otherwise ignore the long history of video games in favor of contemporary titles. By looking at the entirety of video games and tracing the history of film-to-game translations, this project corrects the previous oversight and codifies information, which was scattered throughout the discipline, into a centralized location. Furthermore, by showcasing this historical area, the opportunities for expanding game studies past that of history and into approaches such as genre or formalism become more apparent.

The conclusion reframes some questions, speculates on future directions, and brings in new topics including the sharing of technology between the film and video game industries, a look at game-to-film adaptations, and more about product placement. An appendix of film-to-game titles, as many as could be identified, rounds out the information presented in this project; it primarily covers the years identified by the primary chapters, although the notation of film-to-
game titles has continued beyond this period to identify potential trends in the field. Hopefully this list of games may encourage additional study but will not receive the same level of critical attention as the various case studies throughout the dissertation.
CHAPTER I. THE CLASSIC ERA OF VIDEO GAMES, 1975-1984

The Classic Era of Video Games, 1975-1984

Although video games have a record that now spans more than half a century, the developments that most directly affected the industry began in the 1970s before rising to full prominence in the early 1980s, only to crash in 1983-84. The period from 1974 to 1984 has been heralded as the “classic” era of video games in the emerging field of video game history. Interest in classic era games and systems has prompted several early histories of the video game industry to be written, including Leonard Herman’s *Phoenix: The Fall & Rise of Videogames* and Ralph Baer’s *Videogames: In the Beginning*, as well as collector’s guides, including *The Digital Press Collector’s Guide* and the *Official Price Guide to Classic Video Games: Console, Arcade, and Handheld Games* (no doubt aided by sales on eBay and other internet sites). These histories tend to jostle against each other in sometimes contradictory ways, showing discrepancies in development information or corporate organization, but divide into several distinct taxonomies. For the game developer, this body of history represents a list of successes and failures predicated on hardware capabilities as much as programming skills. For the game-consuming public, the history is a repetitive cycle that ends with the second-to-last game system actually owned (and now gathering dust at the bottom of a closet) but forever stretches dreamily into the future with promises of increasingly satisfying gaming experiences. For the collector,

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60 Currently the nostalgia for this time is feeding the development of video game re-releases and updates of older games for current generation systems, ranging from PC and console releases of Atari, Activision, and Commodore 64 titles to plug’n’play units by Jakks TV Games and other manufacturers featuring arcade titles (such as *Pac-Man*, *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Galaga*, *Dig Dug*, *Xevious*, and others) to an active fan base of video game enthusiasts who not only collect and preserve the old games but also continue to program and develop new ones specifically for the older systems. Anthologies of classic era games – like Atari’s *80 Classic Games in One* and Activision’s *Remix Edition Anthology* – not only provide games but also cultural and historical context via essays, interviews with programmers, digital photos of memorabilia, and even songs to create a virtual sense of the 1980s as a lived, and revisitable, experience (perhaps more distinct from the *fin de siècle* bricolage of the 1990s). A fashion boutique like Hot Topic can now market Atari “Fuji” t-shirts, *Pac-Man* sweatbands and fuzzy dice, *Centipede* stickers, and a host of other merchandise under the “retro” rubric of chic. In many ways, video game apparel still remains closely identified with the youth market as an old game can be made new again through repackaging and reprogramming.
video game history is a body of lore, of rare games, systems, and other merchandise, sometimes approaching the realm of legend, to be digested and divulged at classic game conventions. To the academic, this history is an unruly beast, replete with disagreement and confusion, waiting to be collected and sorted into an identifiable discourse: “To draw some simplistic parallels to an artistic medium that currently benefits from a great deal of preservation, primitive arcade games like Pong and home titles like Yars’ Revenge are the silent films that came before the talkies of Tekken and Myst. Pac-Man is Charlie Chaplin’s Little Tramp. Atari is RKO Pictures” (Sellers, 11).

By 1980, the popularity that began in the 1970s for video games began to grow wildly, both in terms of cultural impact, and perhaps most importantly, economically. During the early 1980s, the development of video games bifurcated into two primary schools, namely those of arcade video games and those of home games (a further division within home gaming that needs to be observed is the distinction between console and computer video games). It should be noted that this move also privatized video game playing by providing an alternative to the public space of the arcade much in the same way that the proliferation of home video altered the film viewing habits of the public. Although still regarded as merely a fad by some sectors of the business community, and often positioned as a subcategory of toys rather than a distinct medium, the financial success of video games, built by technical upstarts without any particular corporate model, soon caught the attention of other major players, especially in the field of communications. In particular, “Every major movie studio wanted in on the action, although none knew quite what route to take. While movies were generating less than $3 billion at the box office, estimates on the revenues from home video games and quarter-munching arcade games ranged as high as $8 billion” (Stern, 103). With economics foremost in linking the film
and video game industries, financial considerations would proliferate and ultimately shape the nature of the association.

“Have you played Atari today?”

Atari officially incorporated on 27 June 1972 (Herman, 13). Existing at first solely as a manufacturer of arcade games, Atari ported their wildly successful Pong game into a home console format and began selling them exclusively through Sears throughout 1975.\(^{61}\) The sales of dedicated game systems – both those that attached to a television and those of the hand-held variety – demonstrated that there was a viable market for home video games. The release of Fairchild’s Video Entertainment System (VES) in August 1976 showed that a console system that provided one hardware platform that could play different games stored in changeable cartridges would be commercially successful (Herman, 20-21). Atari had already built a prototype of a similar game system, but lacked the monetary resources to finish the design phase and move into manufacturing. In order to secure funding, Atari had to sell itself and attempted to do so with a number of entertainment companies, none of which were interested. Seeking to diversify and supplement sales from its flagging music division, Warner Communications – already involved with film and publishing in addition to music – acquired Atari in October 1976 for $28 million and immediately injected close to $100 million in operating capital to expand the company. Atari had been previously passed over for investment by both MCA, which owned Universal Studios, and Disney, which themselves in later years would establish their own video game divisions (Cohen, 57). This allowed Atari to complete their cartridge-based home console, the Video Computer System (VCS), and release it in October 1977, giving the company a crucial advantage during the holiday buying season. Other companies – such as Bally, Coleco, RCA,

\(^{61}\) Given the novelty of video games, Atari had trouble attracting corporate partners. Even Sears seemed unsure of what to do with the games as they sold them in their sporting goods departments.
Fairchild, and Magnavox – suffered severe financial setbacks with their game systems during this time, and Atari’s pricing plan plus financial backing from Warner Communications proved to be a successful formula for keeping Atari fiscally viable through the difficult holiday season.62

The burgeoning video game industry was quick to recognize the potential for property franchise as a way to generate revenue. 1978 saw the release of the first Superman film, based on the character from DC Comics, which was distributed in the United States by Warner Bros. Pictures. In 1979, Atari released Superman under license from DC Comics.63 Warner Communications not only owned Atari and DC Comics but also was the parent company for Warner Bros. Pictures in the 1970s and 80s. The economic potential for exploiting properties was obvious to the major media conglomerates as well as a more attentive sector of other businesses. DC, in turn, found their relationship with Atari profitable enough to turn Atari Force, a five issue mini-series from 1982 that was packaged with particular games as a purchasing incentive, into a 20 issue regular print series that ran from 1984-86. Rival game distributor Parker Bros. would eventually tweak Atari by licensing Marvel comic characters to

62 Originally, the VCS retailed for $200, a price that barely covered the costs for research and development, manufacturing, and distribution. The executives at Warner hit upon a brilliant strategy, however, when they realized that their profits would not come from hardware but software sales. Every $30 cartridge sold cost less than $10 to manufacture, creating a very heathy profit margin (Rolenta, 23). This policy of selling video game hardware to the consumer at what amounts to a loss for the game company and making all profit on software (game) sales, and associated accessories, is a policy that continues even to today, most recently and spectacularly illustrated by Microsoft’s entry into home consoles, the Xbox.

63 In an interview in Halcyon Days: Interviews with Classic Computer and Video Game Programmers, Warren Robinett, who was working on adapting the mainframe computer game Adventure into cartridge form for Atari in the middle of 1978, claims that he was directed, by new Atari president Ray Kassar, to modify Adventure in a Superman game to tie-in with the Superman movie (released December 1978) since both the film and Atari were owned by the same parent company, Warner Communications. Robinett said that he didn’t really want to do the adaptation, and so after a few weeks, his co-worker John Dunn volunteered to take the Adventure kernel and build a Superman game around it. The Superman game by Atari was released mid-1979, and nothing in the game, supporting documentation, or the game’s marketing makes reference to the movie (the artwork for the game box and label actually uses the DC Comics version of Superman). While there is little reason to doubt Robinett’s recollections, there is no official documentation to support the claim that the Superman game was intended as an official licensing of the film. Atari’s pinball game of Superman (1979), however, was expressly marketed as a tie-in for the film.
compete with Atari’s deal with DC, bringing the Marvel versus DC competition into video gaming.

This was not to say that Atari was creating serious profit, in fact, quite the opposite. Despite adapting their own popular arcade titles, such as Breakout and Night Driver, Atari was still sitting on nearly $40 million in unsold inventory. After firing Nolan Bushnell, the originator of the Atari company, and hiring Ray Kassar (formerly vice-president of textile company Burlington Industries) to provide a shift in marketing strategies, Atari made the unprecedented move to license a popular arcade title from another rival company for home video rights. Atari acquired Space Invaders from Taito and released the console version in January 1980, doubling their previous year’s gross sales to almost $415 million dollars against an operating income of $77 million, and a boost to the stock of parent company Warner Communications by 35 percent (Burnham, 148). This is not the first instance of Atari pursuing a licensing agreement, but the acquisition of Space Invaders was so wildly successful that it would set a major pattern for video game companies to seek licensing of other commercial properties, particularly those of other visual media: “After 1980, licensed arcade and film adaptations became popular as well, especially at Warner-owned Atari” (Montfort and Bogost, 15). Because many people went out to buy the Atari VCS solely to play Space Invaders, this marked the title as the first video game “killer application” and set a precedent where new console releases had their sales boosted by linking them with an exclusive and popular title, such as the Nintendo Entertainment System with Super Mario Bros. (1985) or the Xbox with Halo.

Following the success of Space Invaders, Atari’s next release for their home console was Adventure. Although nowhere near as successful as Space Invaders, Adventure was new and

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64 Adventure was a version of a mainframe fantasy text-based adventure designed in 1972 by William Crowther. Based on his experiences as a spelunker, Colossal Caves Adventure became known simply as Adventure and was
interesting enough to contribute to the success of the VCS, with 1 million copies of the game eventually sold. Notable for being the first console version of a quest game – multiple screens featuring multiple objects related to completing an overall objective, a design concept that would influence film-to-game adaptations from their beginning to the present – *Adventure* was to become a public vehicle for the expression of programmer dissatisfaction with the company. Following Warner’s acquisition of Atari from Nolan Bushnell (who would go on to start the Chuck E. Cheese Pizza Time Theater chain and advised the designer of Atari’s arcade hit *Breakout*, Steve Jobs, to start his own microcomputer production company that would eventually become Apple Computer), Warner decided that all games were company property and promptly stripped all names of the programmers from the products they designed. Warren Robinett, the programmer of *Adventure*, became upset at not receiving credit for his games, so he included a secret room in the game that could only be opened with an invisible dot (the procedure first discovered by a twelve year-old boy in Salt Lake City) as an inventory item in the game. Accessing this room caused “Created by Warren Robinett” to be displayed on the gamer’s screen. This became the first instance of an “easter egg,” a programming trick that has proliferated across video games and now even into DVDs. Fortunately for Atari, they managed to capitalize on this potentially damaging publicity and turned it to their favor as a neat trick in the game. Unfortunately for Atari, Robinett was not the only disgruntled programmer. Four of them – David Crane, Alan Miller, Bob Whitehead, and Larry Kaplan – planned on leaving Atari recoded into many different games over the years, including *Adventureland* (1978), Infocom’s *Zork* (1979), *Haunt* (1979), and *Mystery House* (1980). It proliferated through several incarnations outside of the US, eventually becoming *The Hobbit* (1983) in Australia (DeMaria, 51-52).

Creators subtly inserting themselves into their works certainly has precursors in other media, such as painters modeling a subject after themselves, film directors with cameos in their own productions, or the “Hidden Mickeys” in all manner of Disney merchandise, from films to even the theme parks. DVDs incorporating easter eggs, such as the Ultimate Edition of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* playing the alternate “Future Coda” ending of the film when the numbers 82997 (the date of Judgment Day in the film) are entered using the DVD remote, show how this idea from one digital medium was transferred to another through the capabilities of the software and user interface.
to create their own video game company, Activision. This would be the first instance of a company creating video games solely for use on other companies’ hardware. Although Activision games helped spark a renewed interest in the VCS – eventually selling $65.9 million of software in 1980 – Atari nevertheless sued Activision, citing violation of company secrets. While Atari would eventually lose the case (based in part on its likeness to a previous legal decision stemming from the 1950s regarding RCA’s development of 33 RPM LP records and players), the doors had been opened for third party game designers, with Imagic and Games by Apollo (a company consisting of one programmer) quickly following Activision. The corporate expansion of the 1980s found an exploitable industry in video games. By 1983, many companies who had little or no game experience of any kind had become eager to cash in on the video game craze and sell their licensing rights. Games were released featuring characters from Sesame Street and the Muppets, Mickey Mouse as the *Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, Strawberry Shortcake, and even Snoopy. Perhaps the most notorious example is how Ralston-Purina contracted with developer Spectravision to produce the mail-order only game, *Chase the Chuckwagon*, based on the dog food commercial. Johnson & Johnson hired a company to produce *Tooth Protectors*, Kool-Aid released *Kool-Aid Man* through M Network, Coca-Cola had Atari create a special game, *Pepsi Invaders*, for their Atlanta employees, *Sports Illustrated* collaborated with Avalon Hill to release *Wall Ball*, and even unreleased games developed for McDonald’s and Ralph Lauren’s Polo cologne have been discovered (originally intended as a shopping premium for New York’s Bloomingdale’s).

In addition to the explosion of third party manufacturers and corporate branding, video game developers began licensing any and all arcade games. Some of these were very well regarded; in addition to Atari’s *Space Invaders*, they also released *Missile Command, Asteroids,*
and Centipede, Parker Bros. had a smash hit with their release of Frogger and also released Q*Bert, and M Network did well with both Bump ’n’ Jump and Burgertime. Others were a bit more obscure, such as Sega’s Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom, Omega Race by CBS Games, and Tigervision’s Threshold. Atari would continue seeking licenses based on properties that had already proven lucrative for their owners. In 1981, Atari would release the home version of Pac-Man (1980), licensed from Namco. Given that much of America (and the rest of the world) had “Pac-Man Fever” – from record profits in the arcade to bed sheets and lunch boxes to music and even to his own animated show on ABC (running from 1982-84) – releasing Pac-Man seemed to be a guaranteed success for Atari. Wall Street security analysts predicted that Atari would earn $200 million from Pac-Man sales alone. Since Pac-Man had generated vast revenue in the arcade on the same order as Space Invaders (hundreds of millions of dollars in the first year of release alone), and since the home release of Space Invaders had given Atari a major boost in income, Atari felt that it had another hit in the bank and rushed the development on Pac-Man, so much so that an overzealous Atari ordered 12 million copies of the game made when they had actually sold less than 10 million of their home consoles.66 The released game vastly disappointed the public due to its substantial differences from the arcade version, but still sold a stunning 7 million copies. Atari had correctly surmised that the strength of the name alone would sell cartridges and thus made a huge profit while costing them some of their now disillusioned customer base. These cracks in consumer confidence would widen to allow new players to enter the lucrative business of video game development.

Parker Brothers Strikes Back

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66 Atari was also busy suing Magnavox, claiming that the release of K.C. Munchkin for the Odyssey2 infringed on Atari’s copyrights. Two out of three circuit court judges agreed, and Magnavox had to cease production of the game (Herman, 70). This lawsuit forced other companies to pay more attention to property issues as the video game industry had become increasingly litigious.
Parker Brothers entered the home console video game market in 1982, having previously found success in 1978 with their electronic handheld game *Merlin*, selling the entire production run of 700,000 before Christmas and achieving the milestone of $100 million in sales in 1979 (Orbanes, 174-75). Unfortunately, this success was short-lived as the handheld game market quickly became oversaturated (a situation that would be repeated a few short years later with the home video game market) and sales fell. In 1981, at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the head of Atari’s home computer division approached the senior vice president of research and development at Parker Brothers to ask if Atari could license some Parker Brothers board games for home cartridge versions. Given their success, however fleeting, in electronic handheld games, Parker Brothers decided Atari’s interest was evidence enough that they should develop their own games. At a cost of $50,000, a sum far cheaper than what it would have cost to develop a new game system, Parker Brothers was able to reverse-engineer Atari’s hardware which enabled them to go independently into cartridge production (Stern, 259). The first Parker Brothers software demo featured the *Monopoly* train icon, which would change color when a corresponding color bar on the screen was selected (Orbanes, 180). While game development was being pursued at Parker Brothers, this was not the only option under consideration. General Mills, then the parent company of Parker Brothers and Kenner Products, was investigating three possible scenarios. The marketing and design office was advocating the creation of a new video game system to compete with Atari, which would require a tremendous commitment of resources. Kenner was proposing a licensing of properties to Atari, thus minimizing any risk. Parker Brothers presented the compromise solution of internally programming their own cartridges, first for the Atari console, then for the Intellivision, and finally for home computers (Orbanes, 181). In-house development of their own games coupled with the licensing of easily
identifiable properties would be the key to the company’s success, and for their first title they turned to film and *Star Wars*.67

What made the entry of Parker Brothers different from many of the other third-party software producers was the fact that they were an established gaming company, albeit of numerous board games, and had a significant research and development division that had enabled them to make the transition from games based on printed matter to plastics to electronics. Their initial offerings were typically licensed from arcade games (such as *Frogger* and *Q*Bert among a dozen home conversions) as Atari had done and from there they branched out to other commercial properties such as television (*G.I. Joe: Cobra Strike* and *Strawberry Shortcake Musical Match-Ups*; both shows also featured a line of toys), film (*Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, *James Bond 007*, and the unreleased *The Lord of the Rings: Journey to Rivendell*), comic books (*Spider-Man* and the unreleased *The Incredible Hulk*), or even just a commercial enterprise itself (as illustrated for their unreleased *McDonald’s* game). The excitement at the debut of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* and *Frogger* at the 1982 Toy Fair prompted Parker Brothers to revise its initial profit forecast of $15 million several times over and decide to create at least four other titles for release that year (this number would quickly grow to a projection for twenty and then leap to 150 once the different hardware systems were factored in (Orbanes, 186)). From June through December of 1982, cartridge sales generated $74 million for Parker Brothers.

Given the technology limitations of the time, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* does not attempt to replicate or approximate the entire film’s narrative, as later film-to-game

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67 Since General Mills owned Kenner, the exclusive developer of *Star Wars* toys, and Parker Brothers, it was relatively easy for Parker Brothers to get the rights to game development and essentially outmaneuver Twentieth Century Fox on their own film property. Atari in turn would do the same thing to Parker Brothers by acquiring the arcade game rights to develop *Star Wars* games as Parker Brothers had only secured the home console licenses. The original *Star Wars* film was released in 1977, the same year as the Atari VCS.
adaptations would try, but to take one particular moment in the film and develop a game around that distinctive referent. In the case of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, the Empire assault on the Rebel’s Hoth stronghold was an especially memorable scene from the film, especially given that it was a pitched battle with a smaller force defending against a larger, invading one. Parker Bros. marketing manager Bill Bracy recalls the process of choosing the topic of the adaptation as coming from a small group “including traditional game designers, video game players, and a couple of us in marketing brainstorm[ing] on the various scenes from *The Empire Strikes Back*” and “developing storyboards and experimenting with game techniques” (Montfort and Bogost, 128). Limiting themselves to the Hoth surface battle, specifically the snowspeeders against the AT-AT Imperial walkers, the development team at Parker Bros. created a side-scrolling shooter that nicely fit into an already familiar genre for gamers. In dealing with the memory restrictions of the home consoles, the game elements devote the most detail to representing the look of the vehicles, which even though blocky, are still easily associated with their cinematic referents. The scale of the craft are also important, with the player’s snowspeeder notably dwarfed by the size of the AT-ATs, providing an effect not typically seen in games at the time, when the player and the opponents were often equal in size. This scale is another way that the cinematic image is referenced for the player. This is further enhanced through the use of parallax scrolling between the mountain range in the background and the surface ice in the foreground, which creates an illusory depth of field. Finally, the distinctive *Star Wars* theme from the John Williams score, as created through the platform’s audio hardware, is played when the game is first started and whenever the player avoids dying during play for two minutes. During the twenty second clip, the player is imbued with The Force and is invulnerable to enemy attack.
As viewers of the film are familiar with, however, the Imperial assault on Hoth is ultimately successful: the generators powering the installation’s shields are destroyed, the Rebels are routed, and Hoth is abandoned. Any sort of success in the game comes not from changing the narrative established by the film but in delaying its outcome as long as possible. While gamers had already become used to losing all of their avatars in a game, and indeed many games of this time have no ultimate, resolvable goal of victory – the aliens will always conquer humanity in *Space Invaders* or the world will always end in nuclear annihilation in *Missile Command* – with only the pleasure of the game play and perhaps a high score in place of a narrative conclusion, the idea of the Rebels losing, even though quite in line with the overall scope of *The Empire Strikes Back*, would not be revisited in another *Star Wars* title until the space combat simulation *Star Wars: TIE Fighter* (1994), which allowed the player to fight on behalf of the Empire.

*Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* is of major importance as it is considered the first official licensing of a film-to-game property. Produced for both the Atari 2600 VCS and the Mattel Intellivision, this game functioned as a cross-platform title. This business model differed from the exclusivity that Atari promoted with its film to game properties, and the decision to promote a title as exclusive to a particular console or to diversify across several different hardware platforms is something that is of major consideration in the contemporary video game industry, particularly as significant and potentially lucrative endorsement deals are imbricated in these decisions. For a company entering the video game market for the first time, the decision

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68 Noted author and fantasist Harlan Ellison wrote an infamous review of the *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* game in 1982 for the September issue *Video Review* magazine in which he likened the repetitive game play to myth of Sisyphus, described the “inspired exploitation of the *Star Wars* totem in videogame form…as the most virulent electronic botulism” (61), and generally decried the game because it did not allow for the possibility of winning (since the player will either run out of ships or the power generator will be destroyed). Years later, Ellison would again write about his experience with video games, this time describing playing *Jurassic Park* through an entertainment system onboard an airline flight.

69 See entry on *Alien* in the Appendix for one earlier possibility.
for Parker Brothers to provide cross-platform support gave them an advantage over Atari and Mattel, who were only producing games for their own systems, and demonstrated that Parker Brothers was making a serious commitment to video games.70 While the film *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* had been released two years earlier, the popularity of the title and success of its release as a game also set the precedent for video game developers to go and license films that had been released years, or even decades, earlier, an idea heavily endorsed by Twentieth Century Fox and still very much at work in contemporary video game production (as illustrated by recent games based on *Scarface* and *The Godfather*).

Even as Parker Brothers was entering the video game market in 1982, they were also running studies that ranged from watching what games kids were playing in arcades (with an eye towards licensing) to projected business trends, and one study “indicated that video game hardware was reaching the saturation point” creating an increased competition among cartridge sales “so intense that advertising expenditures were shooting up. Some game makers estimated that they needed to spend $3 million per game on advertising” (Stern, 105). The increase in advertising expenditures for game titles mirrored similar increases in film promotion as the video game industry increasingly came to understand the need to sell spectacle (in what new software and hardware developments could offer) and create hype. In June of that year, an average video game retailer could stock about 100 different game titles; by September that number had quadrupled. While these studies indicated that video game demanding was actually weakening,

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70 At the time that support for both systems was announced, Parker Brothers had actually only possessed the capability to program for the Atari. The engineers quickly employed their reverse-engineering tricks with the Intellivision and would later go on to do the same with the Colecovision platform and several home computer systems (Orbanes, 182).
Parker Brothers was ordered by General Mills to keep its earning forecasts high and to continue to deliver short-term profits (Stern, 259).\(^71\)

Two of the subsequent *Star Wars* titles – *Star Wars: The Arcade Game* and *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi – Death Star Battle* – done by Parker Brothers for the Atari 2600 also had versions created for the Atari 5200 (in addition to *James Bond 007*) and an additional 2600 title, *Star Wars: Jedi Arena*, was released, with yet another title in a *Return of the Jedi* line (*Ewok Adventure*) developed but never released.\(^72\) In watching Parker Bros., Atari had also sought out its own licensing agreements, gaining the rights to arcade games based on the *Star Wars* license, so that when Parker Brothers ported Atari’s *Star Wars: The Arcade Game* to home consoles, Atari was able to get a piece of that revenue.

The release of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* “shows how a compelling cinematic situation can be translated effectively into a videogame challenge” and also initiated the most prolific franchise in video game history, in addition to being the most licensed film property, with over 90 games as of 2010 reaching across all hardware platforms and ranging among most of the video game genres (Montfort and Bogost, 16). From a longitudinal perspective, the *Star Wars* video game franchise encapsulates almost the entire history of the video game industry.

**Atari Turns to Movies: Raiders of the Lost Ark and E.T.**

After witnessing the success of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) by Parker Brothers on the 2600 console, many companies began producing games based on film properties, and Atari was in hot pursuit of major properties.\(^73\) It scored two of the biggest film licenses in those years

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\(^{71}\) Today, Parker Brothers is a subsidiary of Hasbro, who formed a deal with Infogrames to publish games based on Atari licenses.

\(^{72}\) See entry in the Appendix for additional information on *Ewok Adventure*.

\(^{73}\) While video game companies had been producing television commercials for several years, in 1982 Atari produced a cinematic trailer for *Dig Dug* that was exhibited during the summer in national theater chains. The two minute trailer was designed by Screnvision (who adapted it into 30 and 60 second television spots), and encouraged
when it acquired the home game rights to two Steven Spielberg films: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and *E.T.* (1982), both reportedly for almost $20 million (DeMaria, 99). While Atari was not the first company to gain the rights to film properties – not only the Parker Brothers release of their *Empire Strikes Back* game but also the Bally Midway arcade debut of *TRON* – Atari did take advantage of its position as the market leader to craft a licensing agreement to adapt the Spielberg films solely for the Atari 2600 system and thus extend the idea of game title with game system exclusivity that they had introduced with *Space Invaders*. Much of the merchandising of both Atari games explicitly drew attention to how these games were the domain of the Atari corporation. One of the more interesting ads was distributed to store owners and others who would be interested in selling *Raiders*. Reproduced in a sepia tone, it features a man changing the marquee of the famous Stanley Theatre in Jersey City, NJ to read “Now Playing Only from Atari: RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK” while the ad’s copy promises positive reviews of the game that “will pour in as your customers experience the exciting adventures of Raiders of the Lost Ark”. These positive reviews are directly linked to increased sales – “Exciting…Profitable…More store traffic” – due in part to Atari’s plans to heavily market the game on prime time television, during football games, and even on teen radio. As part of Atari’s “new ‘movie’ game cartridges” sellers were advised: “So be ready to turn some of the biggest hits in the movies, into some of the biggest hits in your store.”

*Raiders of the Lost Ark* released in November 1982 (MSRP $37.95). A recognizable version of the signature character theme for Indiana Jones opened the game and showed Indy viewers to play the coin-op, which was often available in the lobby of the theater. Both Activision and Intellivision would also create cinema advertisements. In 1983, the *Dig Dug* spot won the CLIO Award in Cinema Advertising.  

74 David Crane, programmer at Atari rival Activision, acknowledges that the jungle adventures of *Raiders* inspired the idea that became the basis for his game *Pitfall!* (1982) and other influences came from *Tarzan* (1932) and Heckle and Jeckle (1946-66) cartoons (Montfort and Bogost, 109).

75 Interestingly, unlike with *Raiders*, the marketing for *E.T.* did not overtly tie the video game to the film, but perhaps the connection was so obvious that it was unnecessary and *E.T.* did have a shorter promotional time.
basically a generic stick man, albeit with an identifiable hat) being lowered on a platform away from the Ark of the Covenant (in graphically simplified form). A somewhat complicated mixture of solving puzzles with some action, it required the player to use both joystick controllers, one to control Indy and the other to manage the inventory of quest items. The game had been designed by Howard Scott Warshaw, who would go on to create *E.T.*; Warshaw had previously programmed the hit game *Yars’ Revenge* (begun as a licensed port of the arcade game *Star Castle*). *Yars’ Revenge* became the best selling original title ever for the 2600 system, which is quite notable given how many hits Atari had in such a short time, and because of its success Warshaw felt confident in volunteering to work on *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Warshaw was flown to Warner Bros. Studios to meet personally with Spielberg, who approved the concept of the game; Spielberg would stop in occasionally during game development but kept his involvement minimal (Stilphen, 6). Warshaw felt that he had to improve on Warren Robinett’s design success with *Adventure* and incorporated many elements from the film “to create a total videogame world – a complex experience with dozens of new discoveries” (Morgenstern, 7). To promote the game for the June 1982 Consumer Electronics Show (CES), Warshaw videotaped himself playing the game and simultaneously narrating his actions. Atari showed the footage to Spielberg at CES, and according to Warshaw, Spielberg’s first comment was “You know, it’s just like a movie” (Stilphen, 6). The merchandising arm of Atari strongly emphasized the film tie-in through their promotional materials, and Atari “was counting on the people who saw the

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*As with several other video games for the 2600 system, *Yars’ Revenge* was packaged with a special comic from DC that elaborated on the story behind the game. Atari also released an album through Kid Stuff Records that presented the comic book’s story as a radio drama complete with its own theme song. After the success of *Yars’ Revenge*, Warshaw and Tod Frye, who had programmed *Pac-Man* for Atari, were approached by Twentieth Century Fox to start up an independent game company. Frye informed Director of Software George Kiss about leaving, and two days later Warshaw and Frye were given bonuses as part of a newly introduced royalty system (Stilphen, 12). In later years, Warshaw would go on to earn a certificate in video production and become involved in documentaries.  

*Warshaw gave Spielberg a personalized version of the game where on power-up the name STEVEN is displayed in the inventory.*
movie to buy the game” (Cohen, 112). Atari’s own promotional ad in their game club magazine featured the film’s title followed by “Starring YOU!” and went on: “It doesn’t matter who you are – when you play Atari’s sensational *Raiders of the Lost Ark* cartridge, you’re transformed into Indiana Jones…Play *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and you enter another world” and countertop cardboard placards promised that players would “Experience all the action and chilling suspense of the hit movie”. With *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Warshaw delivered a game that was a financial as well as critical success for Atari.

The game based on *E.T.* was slightly a different story. This acquisition stemmed in part from “Spielberg’s fascination with Atari products…from coin-op arcade machines to the ATARI 800, which he owns and uses. One other ingredient was the interest of Steven Ross, Chairman of Warner Communications, in associating *E.T.* with the Atari label” (DeWitt, 20). In order to make a lucrative December sales date, which Ross had guaranteed to Spielberg, *E.T.* was rushed into production in late July, with only six weeks to code the entire game (Warshaw had done *Yars’ Revenge* in four to five months and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in six to seven) to hit a September delivery date in order to have enough time for manufacturing, packaging, and marketing. The issue of tailoring the release schedule to certain sales seasons or the release of other media properties (such as the source film a game is based on or a new hardware platform being introduced) that began with *E.T.* has remained to be a problem for film-to-game adaptations. Warshaw was personally tapped by Spielberg to write the game. The programming was further complicated as a large portion of the code had to be devoted to an elaborate title screen for the game that displayed a very recognizable likeness of E.T. under its name. Beyond that well designed title screen, with a snippet of E.T.’s signature theme song, was a game that attempted to follow the basic plot of the film with disastrous results, so much so that Atari
president Ray Kassar called the game “a very dumb idea” noting that Atari “never really made an action game out of a movie” (Kent, 237). E.T. had to find various pieces of electronics to “phone home”; these pieces were hidden in pits out of which E.T. could levitate with its extraterrestrial abilities (his energy reserves being replenished by a diet of Reese’s Pieces). While Warshaw had concentrated more on game play with *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, with *E.T.* what he “was going for was a game with some sentimentality to it. The whole thing with *E.T.* (the movie) was sentiment” (Stilphen, 7). Although E.T. was being pursued by both a scientist and an FBI agent, E.T.’s quest was helped by Elliott, and eventually the game reached a conclusion with E.T. summoning the spaceship and successfully boarding it for home (after this, an interlude occurred where points were tallied, and then E.T. landed back on Earth to begin the game again). Translating even this reduced narrative into gameplay on the 2600 resulted in a repetitious and unengaging experience, which drastically impacted sales of the game; another factor was that *E.T.* was also the first Atari title to sell for a then-staggering MSRP of $39.95. Although one million copies were sold (and eventually became Atari’s eighth best-selling title), another approximately five million sat in Atari’s warehouses (Herman, 72). The expensive lesson learned for the company was that having a license based on a successful film does not guarantee equally successful sales if the game is viewed as not worth playing: “*E.T.* just did not do gangbusters for Atari, nor did the similarly hyped *Raiders*. The reason is simple: there’s no way a videogame sardined into, say, 8K of a game cartridge’s memory is going to come close to duplicating the experience of a great film” (Schrage, 52). Along with other considerations such as narrative, visual design, and control implementation, creating an effectively translated film-to-

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78 Although this number is in dispute among various sources, five million is generally accepted as being the most accurate estimation. This also gave rise to the urban legend of Atari unceremoniously dumping the leftover *E.T.* games in a New Mexico landfill, along with other unsold stock, reportedly crushed by steamroller, covered with cement, and hidden by the desert.
game title means fundamentally ascertaining if a film lends itself to such adaptation. Spielberg himself would play a much more involved role with the *E.T. Phone Home* game designed for Atari computers.\(^7^9\)

The failure of *E.T.* has been unfairly linked with the video game crash of 1983 and is a misperception that continues to this day despite some critical reappraisal by video game historians.\(^8^0\) The problems in the video game industry were illustrated by problems with *E.T.*—notably the rush to development and corporate mismanagement, often based on a misunderstanding of the consumer base as much as the medium itself— but were not particular to this title or Atari as a company. One of the legacies of *E.T.* is that it saddled film-to-game properties with the perception that they were automatically going to be poor gaming experiences. Even now twenty-five years later, it is still referenced in the video game industry when discussing poorly executed property licenses, as notes Garry Kitchen, one of the programmers at Activision during the prime of the classic era: “It is very difficult to design a great game based on a licensed property. That’s obvious because so many have failed trying to do it, notably like *E.T.* on the 2600.” While a number of film-to-game adaptations suffer from problems with development and marketing, and are often seen merely as yet another product to push franchise profits (which some may indeed be), game developers and property holders who want to make

\(^7^9\) Spielberg also frequently visited the Games Group of Lucasfilm during its period (1985-89) at Skywalker Ranch, eventually pitching the idea for a game based on “The Dig,” a story he had written for the *Amazing Stories* television series. The development of the game took an amazing six years, from initial meetings to final release, and became “one of the very few disappointing games put out by the Lucasfilm crew, and remains notable primarily of Spielberg’s involvement” (DeMaria, 201). Bringing elements of film production to the video game was further complicated “by weaving a plot that would allow Spielberg to eventually produce a movie that would fill in more details about this tale of archaeology in space” (Smith, 94). Because of his position both as director and producer, Spielberg has had a very high number of his various film projects adapted into video games over the years. An avid player himself, Spielberg has continued to flirt with video game development, most recently signing a multi-project deal with Electronic Arts. Instead of a cinematic, visual-effects laden epic, Spielberg’s first project was *Boom Blox* (2008), a family-friendly puzzle game for the Nintendo Wii.

\(^8^0\) While there were several reasons for the crash, which began in 1983 and spread into 1984, the main cause was market supersaturation of hundreds of mostly low-quality games that resulted in the loss of consumer confidence and spending. Additional contributing factors included an overabundance of game consoles and competition from the home computer market.
games that are both enjoyable and profitable have found significant successes, as later chapters will note.

Despite difficulties with *E.T.*, in 1983 Atari was approached by Universal Pictures to create a new video game that was to be featured in a film project starring Henry Thomas, who vaulted to popularity as Elliott in *E.T.*, and Dabney Coleman, who had previously appeared in *WarGames* (1983) (Burnham, 341). Atari had been working on an arcade release, *Agent X*, and agreed to modify the game to serve the needs of the film; as part of this arrangement, the film would also feature Atari’s latest gaming console, the 5200, that was sorely in need of publicity as it had been performing poorly in sales against the Colecovision and its notable arcade ports, especially *Donkey Kong* (1982) and *Zaxxon* (1982). By repurposing their *Agent X* game into *Cloak & Dagger*, Atari followed the lead set by Twentieth Century Fox with their film-to-game adaptations and systematized the design idea of grafting a film license onto a pre-existing game, a move that saw occasional application throughout video game history.

In the film, Thomas plays Davey, a child who escapes into his video game-infused imagination to cope with a deceased mother and distant father. Witnessing the murder of a secret agent, who slips him a *Cloak & Dagger* cartridge containing secret plans, Davey is accompanied by his imaginary secret agent friend, Jack Flack, as he stays on the run while trying to solve the game and unlock the secrets that will save his life. The arcade game debuted in 1983 ahead of the theatrical release of the film (10 August 1984). While Davey plays the 5200 version in the film, this is actually the signal from the arcade game rerouted through a television, and the final revelation of the secret plans is rendered in the film with 3D graphics that were impossible to replicate either in the arcade or in the home given the technology at the time. This disparity between what could be done in film and what could be done in video games drove the
development of many gaming technologies, especially the push for greater video processing
capabilities in order to create visuals that would closely emulate that of film. Despite the
prevalence of *Cloak & Dagger* game boxes and cartridges for the 5200, the home console
version was abandoned in the wake of Atari’s sale to Jack Tramiel, the founder of computer
compny Commodore International who headed up Atari after Ray Kassar. Tramiel believed
computers, not video game systems, were the future, and he laid off the programming team
working on *Cloak & Dagger*. Even though the film would only go on to gross under $10 million
in domestic box office, it generated a fair amount of interest in a licensed game which could not
be purchased for the home and which was already hard to find in the arcades.

Atari returned to Amblin Entertainment to turn *Gremlins* (1984) into a home game (as
advertised on the Atarisoft home computer releases) “Based on the Spellbinding Movie” and
“Presented by Steven Spielberg”. Given the powerful visuals of the film – and coupled with
Spielberg’s writing and production credit on *Poltergeist* (1982), a film that generated much
discussion about the appropriateness of its rating given its content, something which also
occurred with *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (released two weeks before *Gremlins*) –
Atari had to carefully proceed with creating a game that would not generate an equivalent type of
controversy within the video game market. Eventually Atari released two different versions of
the game, one with simplified graphics and game play for the 2600 that seemed directed towards
younger players and another with more complexity for the 5200 as well as Apple and
Commodore 64 computers, taking advantage of the increased hardware power of those systems
over that of the 2600.

Atari’s arcade games division would continue their good success when compared to the
home console sales. In 1984, although Warner Communications sold the computer and game

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81 Spielberg had executive producer credit on *Gremlins.*
console divisions of Atari Inc. to Jack Tramiel, who rechristened the company as the Atari Corporation, it retained the arcade coin-op division, renaming it Atari Games. In addition to the original titles *Marble Madness* and *Paperboy*, Atari Games worked on two games in 1984 based on film properties: *E.T.* and *The Last Starfighter*. Both of these coin-ops were developed to varying degrees before being abandoned in the prototype phase. In 1985, Atari Games was sold to Namco, a rival arcade company (Namco had previously acquired the Japanese division of Atari Inc. in 1974), and a group of Namco employees subsequently bought Atari Games in 1986. Atari Games would release over thirty games from 1986 to 1993, including the arcade game based on Tim Burton’s *Batman*, when it was reacquired by Warner (as Time Warner) and turned into Time Warner Interactive, although it would keep releasing titles under the Atari Games logo. Time Warner Interactive was sold in 1996 to another formal arcade rival, WMS Industries, that had been formed from arcade game developers Williams and Bally/Midway, and continued to produce arcade games until 2001.

As for the once powerful Atari Corporation, while it had been capable of dealing with corporate problems even while hemorrhaging money during the video game crash (reportedly a loss of $536 million), the fatal blow would be delivered by the ill-fated decision to turn down Nintendo’s offer to market and distribute their Famicom system in the United States. Proud Atari would not become a corporate brand used to sell another company’s product – which is what many companies themselves did in making arrangements with Atari – and so Nintendo entered the US market as an entity unto themselves, releasing the Nintendo Entertainment System to much acclaim (and Atari’s dismay). As a company, Atari’s history would continue past the mid-1980s and into the 1990s, concentrating more on their line of home computers but still turning out game systems like the 7800 (initially developed in 1984 but not widely released
until 1986, after the success of the NES) and the first color portable handheld game system, the Lynx (released in 1989, the same year as Nintendo’s Gameboy – although the Lynx was technically a superior unit, Nintendo’s name had much more drawing power over Atari’s, who had essentially purchased the entire Lynx system from another developer, Epyx, and rebranded it as an Atari product). Atari Corporation also attempted to generate income by re-releasing existing titles, including a new run of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *E.T.* cartridges in 1986.

Atari’s last gasp at the home gaming market, the Jaguar, was released in 1993, hosting only a few film-to-game conversions like *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* (1993) ported from other systems and the platform-exclusive *White Men Can’t Jump* (1995). Atari succumbed to being sold off a year later to Jugi Tandon Storage, a hard drive manufacturer. At this point, Atari as a game producing entity was officially dead.  

1994 also marked Atari’s eventual resurrection, albeit in a somewhat altered form. While the increasing complexity of home computer games over home console games as the 1980s progressed had played a role in Atari’s demise, home computers later provided the framework for keeping interest in Atari alive. With the development of the World Wide Web, disparate computer networks were brought together and the simplicity of its graphic user interface (GUI) made it accessible for many users. Fans of Atari, once separated by physical location, were now able to form networks, most importantly for the trading of games (and hardware) and information. Some collectors of Atari and other game systems have paralleled the development of film enthusiasts and home theaters by creating home gaming rooms and home arcades (acquiring the very coin-ops that dazzled them in the past). A few hobbyists collecting Atari turned their technical skills to game development and system sustainment, and even now there is

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82 Atari officially terminated support for the 2600 on January 1st, 1992, meaning the system had an unprecedented lifespan of slightly over 14 years, holding the record for system longevity.
active legacy support for Atari products, with end-user developed games and hardware – known as “homebrews” – being created and sold, often with high production values (full color boxes and instruction manuals) echoing the look and feel of official Atari corporate products.

For Atari, Activision, and other survivors (or inheritors) of the classic era of video games, just their names are enough to invoke a sense of cultural capital through nostalgia. This wistful yearning extends from the simplicity of their games (particularly as the industry has become increasingly spectacle-driven) to their imbrication in the 1980s as shorthand to define the decade (at least partially). Atari as a brand name has resurfaced as a game distributor in the 21st century when Infogrames bought Hasbro Inc., who had absorbed the tattered remains of Atari Inc. (as well as additional video games companies Microprose and Game.com). Using the still distinctive name and logo to promote contemporary titles as well as their now historically definitive game library, Atari Inc. once again began publishing titles based on film properties including two Godzilla games, Mission Impossible: Operation Surma, Terminator 3: The Redemption, and most significantly, Enter the Matrix and The Matrix: Path of Neo. At the time of their making, these titles represented some of the most expensive video games ever developed in terms of multi-million dollar production budgets. Enter the Matrix sold over 1 million units each for the PlayStation 2 and the GameCube, making it a best selling title. Additional film-to-game releases by Atari include Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines (2004), Ghostbusters: The Video Game (2009), and The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena (2009).

Twentieth Century Fox

Witnessing the mounting profits reaped from video games by Warner Communications coupled with the rise of commercially successful third party software developers, film studio Twentieth Century Fox created the subsidiary Fox Video Games (with its trademark “Games of
the Century”) to enter the lucrative gaming market. While unaddressed until now, the smash success of the Atari 2600 game based on *The Empire Strikes Back* – a film which was distributed by Twentieth Century Fox while the game was developed and released under license by Parker Brothers – probably helped motivate the studio’s decision to review their large film catalog with an eye towards game adaptation.83 Since game development typically takes a substantial investment of resources (even in the days when most games were programmed by one person over a series of weeks or months), Twentieth Century Fox was looking for a shortcut to getting its name into the minds of consumers, and so it struck a licensing deal with another game developer, Sirius Software, to release the games it had already developed under the Fox Video Games imprint.84 These first four games – *Beany Bopper*, *Deadly Duck*, *Fast Eddie*, and *Worm War I* – in 1982 were not based on any Fox films, but the releases did enable Fox to promote their line of video games, including upcoming releases based on films such as *9 to 5* (1980), *Alien* (1979), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *The Entity* (1981), *MegaForce* (1982), *Porky’s* (1982), and *Six Pack* (1982) as well as some non-film related titles like *Crypts of Chaos*, *Turmoil*, and *Tough Enough*.85 Since Twentieth Century Fox had a large selection of science fiction films in its library – some from production and others through distribution rights – and since this genre lends itself to numerous game designs and strong sales much more readily than other genres, a large number of releases were derived from science fiction films: *The Earth Dies Screaming* (1965), *Fantastic Voyage* (1966), *Flash Gordon* (1980), and *SpaceMaster X-7*

83 In turn, MCA/Universal Home Video noted Twentieth Century Fox’s video game success and planned to enter the market with games based on *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, and *Jaws*, but these were never developed (Stern, 103).
84 By 1984, Fox would owe Sirius $18 million in unpaid royalties.
85 Purchasers of the early Sirius games received a catalog featuring current and upcoming releases that also included a coupon for a free *MegaForce* movie poster. A later incentive for a $3.50 rebate could be earned by purchasing select games (including *MegaForce*, *Alien*, and the non-film related Fox games) and submitting the proof of purchase tab plus a ticket stub from any 20th Century Fox movie. Fox’s last commercial enticement came in 1984 when it offered $5 rebates on select titles; given how cheap the games had become by then, this was a rather significant price cut.
(1958). For *Crash Dive* (1983), Fox used the title of its 1943 film and concept of a submarine but with a decidedly futuristic improvement over the original WWII vessel. *Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes* appears to be inspired by *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes!* (1978). A few more titles were put into development but never released, including *Alligator People*, *Planet of the Apes*, and *The Entity*, although these have been discovered as prototypes. Both *Porky’s* and *M*A*S*H* appear to be Fox’s only games based on films outside of science fiction despite announcements of *9 to 5* and *Six Pack*, which also never were produced. Interestingly, Fox licensed one of its film properties, *The Towering Inferno*, to US Games, which itself was a subsidiary of Quaker Oats.

Fox’s choice of science fiction films for adaptation represents a curious mix of titles across a large timespan. At the time of game release, consumers would have been most familiar with *Alien*, *Flash Gordon*, and perhaps *MegaForce*, and a few graphical elements in each of these titles is derived directly from the source film (such as fang-mawed monsters in *Alien* or flying motorcycles in *MegaForce*). Of these three, only *Alien* was a commercial success, and basing games on underperforming films was one way to recoup some of the initial investment, particularly at this time in game development (as development time and costs for video games have dramatically increased into years and millions of dollars, trying to bail out an unsuccessful

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86 *Flash Gordon* was not a Fox property but was instead controlled by Universal Studios under license from King Features Syndicate, Inc.; it is unclear how Fox solicited the license agreement from Universal.
87 Another Fox title, *Bank Heist* (1983), reputedly started as an adaptation of *Bonnie & Clyde* but was altered during development. An examination of the game cartridge label art suggests the possible origin of the game.
88 While US Games advertised the *Towering Inferno* game as a way to “Relive the movie in this challenging maze game”, Fox attempted to further diversify itself from film-to-game adaptations by releasing a trio of games whose proceeds were intended for environmental groups: *Save the Whales*, *Dutch Elm Defender*, and *Attack of the Baby Seals*. Only the first was actually programmed, but it was never released and no money was sent to Greenpeace, the named beneficiary.
film by creating a popular game has become a far less common occurrence).89 *The Earth Dies Screaming* and *SpaceMaster X-7* are rather obscure science fiction films that most usefully provided fantastic or sensational sounding titles for games that were fairly generic space shooters and radically different from the plots of their source films. Both films deal with Earth invasion by alien invaders, be it robots or space fungi, while both games involve destroying alien forces still in space. Because these films premiered several decades before their game versions, almost no player would have seen the films and have any basis for comparison between products. Out of all the adapted properties, *Fantastic Voyage* is the most direct translation of its film’s basic premise – in this case, a miniaturized ship traveling through a human system to destroy a life-threatening blood clot – and uses this premise as its sole basis for action. The player progresses through six different areas represented by different internal threats, but unlike the film, successfully saving the patient does not conclude the narrative but rather restarts it from the beginning with the difficulty level increased; eventually the game will become so hard that failure is inevitable, and at the moment of patient death the game is over, so the objective really becomes scoring the most points possible. *Fantastic Voyage* also functions as a scrolling shooter similar to other arcade games such as *Scramble* (1981), *Super Cobra* (1981), and *Vanguard* (1981), a popular arcade game that was released for the Atari 2600 in 1982, the same year as *Fantastic Voyage*.90 The tendency for game developers to emulate the design of a popular title

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89 *Alien* had a final domestic gross of almost $79 million (against an estimated $11 million budget), while *Flash Gordon* ($27 million gross against $35 million budget) fell short and *MegaForce* ($5 million gross against $20 million budget) flopped (imdb.com).

90 The coin-op *Vanguard* begins with a short piece of the theme music that bears a fairly strong resemblance to the theme used in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979) and also plays another song sample that is suggestive of “Vultan’s Theme (Attack of the Hawkmen)” from the film *Flash Gordon* whenever the player becomes invincible (www.klov.com). While the early video game industry was rife with lawsuits – involving Activision, Atari, Coleco, Nintendo, and others – due to its infancy it also was not as regulated as closely as it is now, and so creative appropriations like those found in *Vanguard* were not uncommon; indeed, some of the borrowing of imagery, sounds, and other ideas are not unlike the many hommages to be found in cinema, and made even more so by a
bears some rough parallels with multiple studios that develop films with similar subject matter at roughly the same time. Both are hoping to develop at standout product that will outperform the others, but even if the product does not distinguish itself it may still prove somewhat profitable merely by association, so that if a consumer liked one certain game or film, another of the same type may be tried, looking for a repeat of whatever made the experience satisfying.

Fox’s non-science fiction titles tended to rely more heavily on exposition in the instruction manual to link the game adaptation to its source film. Although Porky’s and M*A*S*H as films contain mature content, their adaptation into games strips away practically all of the material that might be questionable for young players. M*A*S*H becomes a two-stage game, where in the first part the objective is to pick up more wounded via chopper than a rival helicopter and the second part involves removing shrapnel in a way that is strongly patterned on the Milton Bradley board game Operation (1965), with variations on each stage possible by selecting different gaming options. The technology at the time permits only basic representation, so issues concerning the representation of blood and gore in later games are not a factor here. The packaging for the game and the game itself refer to the source material in title only (with a wink in that the player will require “a steady hand and a hawk eye”), reflecting the fairly generic nature of adaptation found in Fox’s science fiction games. The game manual much more expressly addresses the source material, and even conflates the original film with its namesake television series, by putting the player in the role of Hawkeye Pierce who is competing against fellow surgeons B.J. Hunnicut, Trapper John McIntyre, and Frank Burns (there is, however, nothing to distinguish any of these characters from each other). One game variation is named after Colonel Potter, but the manual is the only reference to this character. Given the memory

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strong trend of games that are not specifically tied to any films but nevertheless borrow liberally from them (i.e., Grand Theft Auto – Vice City (2002) appropriating whole parts of Scarface (1983)).
limitations of early video games, establishing the cinematic referent most often occurs through packaging or supplementary material rather than within the game itself, further highlighting the importance of a well-known film title. This idea sometimes is necessary if the connection between the game and the film is not particularly obvious, as in cases of repurposed games, or if the game’s narrative position is different from that of the source film and the player must be oriented to some reasons behind the game’s design features.

The instruction manual for *Porky’s* also shifts the focus on the content as the player, in the role of Pee Wee, is not in fixated on losing his virginity but instead exacting revenge on Porky by blowing up his bar; although the destruction of Porky’s bar was part of the plot in the film, here it serves almost exclusively as the source of action and is justified through the mildest suggestion that Porky has, according to the manual, “messed with Pee Wee and his friends”. The raunchy shower voyeurism scene from the film becomes a stage in the game where the objective is to avoid Balbricker, the female gym coach, while pushing objects into a pit to help with a road crossing sequence. In this case, reducing the plot dynamics from the source film has seriously compromised the narrative, although *Porky’s* is a rare title for the time in that it has a definitive ending (i.e., the destruction of the bar) so the objective is to achieve the highest score possible while “finishing” the game. More interesting is the decision to tone down the adult content. While adult title video games not for sale to minors due to sexual content had been released, such as *Beat ‘Em & Eat ‘Em* (1982) and the notorious *Custer’s Revenge* (1982), Fox certainly would have been more interested in generating sales, and avoiding controversy, by eschewing adult content, however graphically primitive the final results would have been. This is perhaps why
Fox shelved its game based on *The Entity*, a film where a young mother is terrorized, and ultimately sexually assaulted, by an invisible supernatural force.\textsuperscript{91}

Although Twentieth Century Fox quickly released a relatively small catalog of game titles under its Fox Video Games subsidiary before leaving the video game market, it returned in 1994 to release games under the Fox Interactive imprint. Fox Interactive primarily develops and publishes content based on film and television properties, although some original titles are also produced. In the first year of activity, Fox Interactive released two activity titles based on their popular “Simpsons” franchise, *The Simpsons Cartoon Studio* and *Virtual Springfield*, and two titles based on financially lucrative film properties, *Die Hard Trilogy* (1996) and *Independence Day* (1997). Other notable Fox Interactive releases include *Alien Resurrection* (2000), *The Pagemaster* (1994), *Planet of the Apes* (2001), and several more entries in the *Die Hard* franchise. In 2003, Fox Interactive was acquired by Vivendi Universal Games.

Even though Fox’s entry into the early video game market was relatively brief, it did establish the model for other film companies to create video game divisions within their studios to foster game development, whether done in-house or licensed to external developers, and publishing, prefiguring the rise of media conglomeration that would come to dominate both industries and beyond. Disney Interactive, LucasArts, Sony Pictures Digital (formerly Columbia TriStar Interactive), Vivendi Universal Games, and Warner Bros. Interactive all exist because of the first steps taken by Fox. The other legacy of Fox is the idea of repurposing completed, or in development, original games that are then rebranded as tie-ins with a film license. While some might regard this as an unscrupulous practice, it demonstrates how economic considerations in

\textsuperscript{91} Mark Klein, the programmer on *The Entity*, had another game he developed for Fox similarly shelved. In *Pick Up*, the player was supposed to shoot and capture various romantic objects (a flower, perfume, a wine glass, a heart) to bring to his romantic interest – literally a woman on a pedestal – at which point the character takes the woman to the Love Nest Hotel where the current round’s “score” is revealed (AtariProtos.com).
film-to-game adaptations sometime trump those of aesthetics or narrative. Although these rebrandings are rather uncommon in most of the contemporary video game industry, due to long production cycles for games, gaming on mobile devices has become an area where repurposed (or reskinned) games can be released in very targeted ways to promote interest in films.

**Wizard Video Games**

Perhaps what might be otherwise relegated to a footnote in the deluge of fly-by-night video game companies that proliferated shortly before the crash, Wizard Video Games commands some extra consideration given the subject matter of its adaptations and the subsequent social reception and reaction. The two major ideas foregrounded by Wizard deal with the intended audience for a video game (including the paradigm shift of video games being something exclusively for a youth market) and the function of violence in video games.

Wizard Video, who was the distributor of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) on VHS in the United States, decided to enter the lucrative video game market. In releasing *Halloween* (1983) and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1983), they introduced the first readily identifiable games in the horror genre.\(^92\) While other game developers had previously produced “scary” titles – like Atari’s *Haunted House* (1981); Data Age’s *Frankenstein’s Monster* (1983), a game not associated with any film version of *Frankenstein*; or Twentieth Century Fox’s *Alien* – in these games the player was put in the position of fighting against the monster antagonist. This formula continued with *Halloween*, as the player was put into the role of the babysitter (Laurie Strode in the film, although not mentioned by name, only occupation, in the game instructions) who has to protect the onscreen children from a “homicidal maniac [who] has escaped from a mental institution” (again this character is not named, but it is clearly meant to be Michael

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\(^{92}\) It is not readily apparent how Wizard Video managed to acquire the home game rights to *Halloween*, but the link between the two productions could lie with the Canadian distributors Astral Films and Astral Video.
Myers). The advertising and instruction manual both appropriate the tagline for the film – “The night HE came home!” – as it becomes “The game where HE comes home!” (quite literally here in the sense that the player had to buy the game) and asks “Can you live through the night HE came home?” and “Will you survive the night HE comes home?” Given the basic graphics of the games at the time, reproducing cinematic quality blood and gore was just simply unfeasible, but perhaps the overall adult nature of the source adaptation material was enough to provoke a strong reaction. Certainly this was the case with *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* as Wizard Video altered the gaming formula and cast the player in the chainsaw-wielding lead role:

> Grab your joystick and become “Leatherface,” the homicidal, chainsaw wielding maniac of your nightmares! A group of hapless tourists have trespassed on your property. One by one, they’ve been hunted down and eliminated. Now, only a handful remain! So, oil up your chainsaw and find as many victims as you can before your fuel runs out!

This change into the role of the antagonist was not necessarily a smooth one, as the released version of the game differs greatly from the first version programmed and retains only a few elements from the film. In the initial version, the player is Leatherface, but instead of being faced with helpless victims to chase down, only one exists, and this one is also armed with a gun. The game play consists of scoring points by damaging each other (either the player versus a CPU controlled adversary or a two-player competitive mode, which did not make it into the second version, where the players take turns in the Leatherface role for balanced game play) in a timed mode, and the character with the highest point total wins (this also is an interesting difference between the released version where Leatherface’s chainsaw always runs out of gas, thus ending the game). While many game elements changed from the original to the released version, the overall objective of attacking with a chainsaw seems to be the dominant idea behind both, and it is this representation of violence that raised some concern, particularly since the game aligns the
player with the serial killer character. Moreover, while many games of this time featured some sort of destructive action – whether typified by the shooter genre (*Space Invaders* and its ilk) or some other sort of less aggressive game play (such as the breaking of blocks in *Breakout*) – the issues of violence in video games raised with *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* have proliferated so thoroughly through video game development over the years that the bloody antics in *Splatterhouse* (1988) or *Grand Theft Auto III* (2001) make the depiction of violence in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* seem quaint.93 It is pertinent to keep in mind, however, that the issue of video game violence, and associated antisocial behavior, that had been quietly discussed upon occasion suddenly became much more important just as the home video game market was about to collapse from oversaturation (in part from a flood of games that did not offer much in the way of enjoyable game play, such as those produced by Wizard Video). Wizard Video was cited as corrupting of the youth, a charge previously directed at film, comic books, music (rock & roll as well as rap), and television. While these have been largely put to rest for those media, the video game industry even today continues to face repeated threats of legislation that seem quite at odds with the protection granted by the First Amendment. Although movies and video games can depict repugnant, and even criminal, behavior with startlingly graphic intensity, it is something about the interactive nature of video games, localized in the game play mechanics, that detractors repeatedly cite as why video games are more dangerous than any of the other media.

Although Wizard Video knew the methods for video distribution, this did not translate into knowing video game distribution (or even development), and their titles had poor market

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93 In terms of video game history, perhaps the first title that did cause a public outcry was *Death Race* (1976) an arcade game released by Exidy (approximately 500 were produced). While not officially licensed from the film *Death Race 2000* (1975), it did lift the major idea for the game: driving over people for points. There was enough of a public outcry that Exidy did eventually pull the game – at first trying the explanation that the people were really some sort of undead or “gremlins” – from arcades. The following year, Exidy slyly released *Super Death Chase*, which essentially offered the same game play as *Death Race*. 
penetration. This detail was acerbated by the fact that many retailers, fearful of a potential backlash against these adult titles in an overwhelming juvenile market, kept these titles hidden behind the counter separate from the rest of the video game stock.\textsuperscript{94} Interestingly, it is this scarcity, as well as crossover appeal to horror memorabilia collectors, that makes these games highly collectible today (particularly with the game box and documentation intact). Wizard Video had announced plans to turn \textit{Flesh Gordon} (1974) into a game but never released a title. In fact, \textit{Flesh Gordon} was actually completed (and stolen by Wizard Video, according to the programmer, in a bit of corporate theft) but not distributed. Since Wizard Video was having enough trouble distributing their two titles and the notoriety earned with their content, it was probably fortunate that they did not release \textit{Flesh Gordon}. It was advertised as “The First Adult Video Game!” – in this case, indicative of sexual content, not violence – although Mystique, another third-party developer, claimed this with their release of \textit{Custer’s Revenge} and two additional titles (\textit{Beat ‘Em & Eat ‘Em} and \textit{Bachelor Party}, not related to a film with the same title) the same year that drew the attention of the organization Women Against Pornography. In addition to images of violence, the problematic nature of female representation that had always been an issue for cinema had now found a new visual home in the medium of video games. These issues of violence and representation of anything coded as an other (race, gender, species) from the usual protagonist (who is usually white and male, as are most of the programmers of video games) continue to attract much of the critical attention about video games from outside of the industry.

\textit{TRON} – “See the movie. Play the game.”

\textsuperscript{94} In promotional materials sent to potential distributors, Wizard Video advocated for their “HORROR FILM CLASSICS”: “By staying one step ahead of the rest, Wizard Video Games put its finger right on the new market. Halloween and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre are two of the most popular horror films in movie history. So when we developed them into video games, we knew what we were doing.”
As the first film with an explicit tie-in to a video game, *TRON* was a movie about video games but also essentially a science fiction film that also borrowed strongly from animation, signaling two principal genres that would lend themselves repeatedly to film-to-game adaptation. More than any other genre, science fiction films are adapted into games, followed by animation. The expressiveness of imagination and visual effects, often driven in these films by computer technologies that can also be used to create video games, finds extended potential in what the games can generate. Because of the expectations created by genre, the flow from science fiction and animation appears to be more naturalized in games of the same nature. Because of how the technology has advanced over the years, filmmakers now have the capability to alter every single pixel in every frame of any film, and while the majority of films still remain live-action, the potential for all of the filmed visuals to be open to manipulation by digital composition that are extremely reminiscent of animation techniques should not be ignored.\(^9\)

Steven Lisberger, the writer and director of *TRON*, ran an animation production company that had already done early experimentation with characters made entirely of light. In fact, the character that would become Tron was originally part of the animated Lisberger studio logo, which was subsequently licensed to radio stations to adapt for promotional spots on television.\(^{96}\) Lisberger combined this style of hand animation with developments in computer animation and inspiration from a video game he had seen: *Pong* (the first coin-op released by Atari in 1972). Even though *Pong* is a basic ball and paddle game, according to Lisberger there was something about it that reminded him of gladiatorial games. While Lisberger would cite other film

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\(^{95}\) George Lucas began using this more significantly in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (1999). For example, he combined different takes (1, 7, and 15) of a shot between Natalie Portman and Jake Lloyd to select what he felt were the optimal performances and then further altered details such as the direction of Portman’s gaze, the position of Lloyd’s mouth, and the reversal of time for several seconds. Film editor Ben Burtt referred to it as “cyberdirecting”. This prompted Liam Neeson to remark, “We are basically puppets. I don’t think I can live with the inauthenticity of movies anymore” (Ellison, 1).

\(^{96}\) Tron’s disc was actually a vinyl record which later would be redone as a computer disc for the film and in so doing represents a mash-up of media formats: film, radio, television, music, and computers.
influences on the production of TRON – notably Spartacus (1960), Jaws, and Star Wars – the years from development to release saw the rise of video games in American culture and their influence became more pervasive in the film.\textsuperscript{97} Arcade games were kept scattered around the set – including Battlezone, Asteroids Deluxe, Astro Blaster, and Scramble – and while the filmmakers were aware that Bally/Midway was working on a tie-in game for the film, they knew very little about it and so designed their own version of the arcade console for the game that appears in the film.\textsuperscript{98} Interestingly, the very distinctive joystick that would appear on the Bally/Midway game – a translucent blue, interior lit model that would become synonymous with the TRON arcade game – does appear with slight alterations in the film.\textsuperscript{99} Released in 1982 two months before TRON, the television production Computers Are People, Too! discussed the possibilities of human and computer interaction and, created by Walt Disney Productions, served as a promotional vehicle for the upcoming film. Lisberger talked about TRON and some of the techniques used in the film and summed up the concept of the film by invoking one of the most popular video games of the era: “When thinking about TRON, you sort of have to picture yourself inside a Pac-Man game…this time the game looks real.” In this summation, Lisberger invokes the tension between the real and the virtual – the drive to create a photo-realistic representation of a player’s non-game reality – that drives much of game development even today. Richard Taylor, whose work on TRON included computer effects and visual effects supervisor as well as electronic conceptual design, also references the drive for reality in the commentary track on the film’s 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary DVD release: “There is no limit to the point of

\textsuperscript{97} Additionally, the flying pursuit Recognizers in TRON incorporated a stylized design based on the face of King Kong.
\textsuperscript{98} Bruce Boxleitner also remembers Pac-Man, Asteroids, Missile Command, Space Invaders, and Centipede being on the set (Claro, 4).
\textsuperscript{99} This joystick became so iconic that a home version (unfortunately not lighted) was bundled in a special package with the Atari 2600 versions of Adventures of TRON and TRON: Deadly Discs released by M Network and was also available separately through a special mail-in promotion. Midway originally used the joystick on Gorf (1981), the first video game to feature multiple levels.
the view to the camera, there is no limit to the physical reality of their objects.” Even as games try for increasing levels of photorealism, while at the same time CGI productions pursue the same goal, what codifies physical reality within a film or a game is defined by its internal rules of verisimilitude. This is why a production like *Transformers* (2007) has to devote more resources to making the robots appear plausible in an everyday world, while *Toy Story* (1995) benefits from a cartoon aesthetic. Taylor’s statement also presages the dissolution of the mise-en-scène – in an all-digital production, the film is made without a physical camera and everything is always assembled within the scene – that has yet to be fully realized within the burgeoning age of digital cinema.

According to Lisberger, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) refused to permit *TRON* to be nominated for the achievement in visual effects category because the use of computers was regarded as cheating, an ironic statement given how prevalent computer technology has become in all aspects of filmmaking. This attitude, however, is one that has continued to run through AMPAS since that time, as demonstrated by their reaction to the intrusion of digital technologies into the arts side of the awards, such as the character of Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, even as the Academy’s Scientific and Technical Awards are increasingly computer related. While *TRON* had live-action humans playing the lead roles, the encroachment of the virtual on the realm of the human analog was an apt metaphor for the film.

Lisberger originally conceived of *TRON* as an independent production and began funding its development through loans against the projected profits of the animated *Animallympics* (1980) project. As the project grew it became clear it was beyond the resources of his production

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100 The attitude of AMPAS to computer technology began to change after *TRON*, especially once the Computer Animation Production System (CAPS) was developed by The Walt Disney Company together with Pixar in the late-1980s.
company, and the search for funding drew him to Disney after negotiations with Warner Bros., MGM, and Columbia Pictures fell through, despite an investment of $300,000 in storyboards and computer generation samples along with approximately $5 million in private backing. To be able to create the film, Disney turned to the four leading computer graphics firms of the day: Information International Inc. of Culver City, CA, who owned the Super Foomly F-1 (the fastest PDP-10 mainframe computer ever made and the only one of its kind); MAGI of Elmsford, NY; Robert Abel and Associates of California; and Digital Effects of New York City.¹⁰¹ While computer graphics had already been used in some films – such as *Westworld* (1973), *Star Wars*, and *Looker* (1981) – the programmers had to become very vocal advocates for the feasibility of the work they were doing.¹⁰² Bill Kroyer, computer image choreographer on the film, notes that:

> when we started dealing with the computer companies on *TRON*, you have to remember that a lot of the people who develop software for computers are not really filmmakers, they didn’t begin their career as filmmakers, and so they won’t approach the creation of visual imagery in the same way that a filmmaker will. We went in not knowing anything about computer technology, we only knew what we wanted to achieve in the film.

The innovative approaches to animation issues by the programmers and computer technicians working on the productions affected the design of the film characters to some degree. Although Disney brought in outside collaborators, including Peter Lloyd as environment designer, renowned French comic book artist Jean “Moebius” Giraud as the main set and costume designer, and industrial designer Syd Mead as production designer for the vehicles, the introduction of computer generated imagery and special effects formed new areas of

¹⁰¹ Some members of these companies, most notably Ed Catmull and Alvy Ray Smith, would go on to work at Pixar Animation Studios (which began as the Graphics Group, itself part of the Computer Division of Lucasfilm that launched in 1979).

¹⁰² Both *Westworld* and *Looker* are Michael Crichton films. The former is notable for being the first feature film to use digital image processing to pixellate shots, while the latter is the first commercial film to attempt to make a realistic computer generated human character and the first movie to create 3D shading with a computer.
collaboration in film production for the programmers. Computer animation pioneer Bill Kovacs essentially started his career working on *TRON*, and after the film he went on to found Wavefront Technologies, a computer graphics company that developed and sold animation software used in Hollywood motion pictures and other industries as there were no off-the-shelf computer animation tools available at the time. Wavefront’s first graphics product, *Preview*, was used by Universal Studios, NBC, NASA, and the video game company Electronic Arts and followed by their flagship product, the *Wavefront Advanced Visualizer*. The Wavefront software was used in numerous films, including Disney’s *Aladdin* (1994), *True Lies* (1994), and *Stargate* (1994), all of which would have their own film-to-game adaptations. Richard Taylor, a Cinematic Director for Electronic Arts, said that Wavefront’s software was “so beautifully designed that even a non-technical person could learn it. Wavefront was a major reason that CG took a leap forward” (Wolff, 1).

Despite the hyping of the CGI elements in the film, only about twenty minutes of actual computer generated animation was used in *TRON*, and much of this was blended with traditional animation and other optical effects specifically designed to emulate the look of the virtual computer-rendered computer world. Most notable was the use of backlit animation where live-action scenes inside the computer world were filmed using only black and white mise-en-

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103 In 1982, Mead was also working on visual effects for *Blade Runner* and has continued to work on a number of notable science fiction film projects as a visual futurist, eventually bringing his skills to video games as a conceptual artist on *Wing Commander: Prophecy* (1997).
104 Kovacs himself was educated in architecture at Carnegie Mellon and Yale, but his interest in computer-aided design (CAD) “was immediately transformed when he saw how computers were being used at the Hollywood studio of Robert Abel and Associates” (Wolff, 1).
105 Also in 1994, Wavefront’s corporate rival, Alias, made a lucrative technology deal with video game juggernaut Nintendo, prompting Wavefront to partner with the Atari Corporation to develop the GameWare graphics and animation development system for Atari’s final home video game console, the Jaguar.
107 The computer animation in *TRON* was rendered at the rate of 10 minutes per frame or about 5,000 hours of processing time. With technical advancements, current game consoles can produce better graphics in real time.
scene elements set against an entirely black set, printed on 65mm high-contrast film, then colorized with traditional photographic and rotoscopic techniques to produce a digital aesthetic (i.e., harkening back to the early days of cinema, many of the individual frames had to be laboriously hand tinted). This process was more labor-intensive than that of a conventional cel animation feature and would never be attempted again as computer technology quickly advanced, making the work much easier to do within a completely digital environment. Additionally, the varying quality and age of the film layers caused different brightness levels for the backlit effects from frame to frame; this change in saturation of circuit traces and other glowing outlines was rationalized as a natural “pulse” of electricity and data of the digital world by the film’s creators. These circuit traces would be replicated on the arcade game’s distinctive cabinet using fluorescent paint, and a pair of blacklights, one located just above the controls behind a clear plastic shield and one underneath the panel, causing the circuit lines to glow.

While the film’s production was ramping up, game designers at Bally Midway, the leading producers of video games in the United States until the late 1980s, were granted access to early drafts of the film’s script, which would go through rewrites using Disney’s input. Midway had risen to prominence by licensing and distributing Taito’s *Space Invaders* in 1978 and Namco’s *Pac-Man* in 1980 and its unauthorized sequel *Ms. Pac-Man* in 1981. As an industry leader, Bally Midway understood the video game market intimately enough not merely to take a film about video games and turn it into a predictable hit but moreover to capitalize on the unique opportunity in the first film-to-game adaptation done in conjunction with a film in development. In a promotional flyer sent to arcade operators, the upcoming video game invited players to “Enter the world of TRON, the video game from Bally Midway, based on the

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108 According to Lisberger’s statements on the commentary track of the DVD, VistaVision was considered for the filming of *TRON*, but ultimately not used due to difficulty in obtaining the necessary cameras, so Super Panavision was used instead.
futuristic adventure motion picture from Walt Disney Productions” and showcased the translucent blue signature joystick that symbolized the interface into the gaming experience.109

Bally Midway built the experience into a media event, creating the first officially tabulated national competition, running a seven-week contest in the months before the film’s release, with more than 1.2 million players that culminated in a final playoff of the top 16 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Madison Square Garden (Zanke, 20).110 During the two days of the tournament, 06-07 July, Bally Midway also arranged for a celebrity competition – featuring Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Diana Ross, Doug McKeon, Robin Leach, and Barbara Eden with David Warner and Cindy Morgan from the film as well as visual effects supervisor Harrison Ellenshaw and producer Don Kushner – before the contestants’ final round. The top prize, a $4000 Commodore home computer setup and a TRON arcade game (valued at $2500), was eventually won by competitor Richard Ross. After the contest was over, all the participants were invited to a preview of the movie.

TRON was released on 09 July 1982. The summer of 1982 was a bumper one for science fiction films, including Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (04 June), E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (11 June), Blade Runner (25 June), and John Carpenter’s The Thing (25 June), and TRON underperformed at the box office, pulling in only a little over $33 million (against an estimated $17-20 million budget) by the time its theatrical run was done in September.111 In terms of dollars taken in upon initial release, TRON the arcade game easily outperformed the film, which

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109 Bally Midway held a celebrity release party for the video game. Interestingly, this was not the first time that a video game had been the subject of such an event: Milton Bradley’s hit electronic game Simon debuted at a celebrity party at Studio 54 in 1978.

110 TRON appeared on the cover of Electronic Games, the first video game magazine published (1981-85) in the United States, more than any other product (Kunkel, 162). The arcade game was also featured on debut issue of the short-lived Blip (1983) video game magazine produced by Marvel comics and appeared as the cover topic of numerous other publications, some put out especially to promote the film and/or game.

111 It is interesting to note that all of these films had some sort of video game associated with them, either that year (particularly with TRON, E.T., and Star Trek) or later adaptations.
had received disappointing reviews and only placed sixth in box office receipts.112 Disney was on the cusp of pulling the film from theatrical distribution when arcade gamers suddenly began attending the film in greater and greater numbers, adding to the film’s revenue (Herman, 73). Suddenly, the TRON theatrical poster was emblazoned with a new tagline: “SEE THE MOVIE. PLAY THE GAME.” Bally Midway would also adopt this slogan for their theatrical style posters promoting the game, pulling seven images from the film with the eighth being the blue TRON joystick. Purchasers of the soundtrack (vinyl or cassette) were given a coupon good for two free tokens at any Bally Family Entertainment Center.

While the film follows the adventures of Kevin Flynn, the human programmer (or user), as he is digitized by the Master Control Program (MCP) and drawn into the video game world he helped to create, the arcade game puts the player in the position of Tron, the security program created by Alan Bradley, another employee at the ENCOM computer company. Given that the film positions Tron as a type of video game warrior who fights on behalf of the users, basing the conflicts of the game on his action sequences made the best choice for creating an interesting play experience for the gamer. As Midway had done with Gorf, the action of the game is divided among subgames that each feature different mechanics and objectives, and this pattern is repeated across twelve different levels, distinguished by terms related to computing, until the final level of USER is reached. The initial play field is a circular labyrinth, evocative of the trace outlines of the digital cities in the film, divided into four quadrants. The subgames are randomized among the colored zones, and a timer counts down from nine to zero, at which point the player will be randomly sent to one of the areas if no choice has been made. Each subgame –

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112 Disney had high financial hopes for the film, including $400 million in predicted domestic sales of TRON merchandise. Perhaps TRON also fit into Disney’s larger scheme of changing its media offerings, as October 1982 saw the opening of the EPCOT Center, and March 1983 saw the launch of the $100 million Disney Channel on cable television. The premier issue of the Disney Channel magazine from December 1985 had a TRON board game as a centerfold.
Lightcycles, Tanks, Grid Bugs, and the MCP Cone – is linked to a particular sequence in the film, although their order is interchangeable in the game. Perhaps the most notable are those involving the Lightcycles and the Tanks, as these pull the most on the computer generated imagery from the film. With the Lightcycles, the player controls a stylized motorcycle, emitting a light trail in which enemies crash or become trapped, while in Tanks the player roams a maze, destroying other enemy tanks and, on special levels, Recognizers. Both of these subgames offered play most evocative of action in the film, as opposed to that of the Grid Bugs. This game requires the player to blast through a rapidly multiplying horde of cyber-spiders to reach the I/O Tower before a timer expires; sometimes the friendly Bit appears as a bonus object for the player to collect. The main problem with this subgame is not in its action, but in almost a complete loss of the film referent, as the grid bugs were relegated to a few seconds of animation by the final cut of the film. While it may seem like a minor issue, the retention of the Grid Bugs game illustrates one of the problems that frequently dogs film-to-game adaptations as the film can change throughout production and create points of significant divergence between the media. With longer production cycles for games, many developers try to avoid designing games that too closely follow the plot of a film, even though this category of adaptations is still used. The remaining subgame, the MCP Cone, is reminiscent of Breakout as the player must destroy the blocks that make up the MCP’s defensive wall in a continually advancing (both horizontally and vertically) play field. While the destruction of the MCP signaled the denouement of the film, in the game it is just another obstacle to be repeated along with all the other subgames until the player runs out of lives. Any narrative behind the arcade game was effectively removed, and viewing the film helped players understand what they were seeing; because the play was
enjoyable in itself, it was not necessary to watch the film, but it certainly helped boost interest in the source material.

This interest was further reinforced by the introduction of TRON games into the home console market. Produced by Mattel for several platforms, including their own Intellivision system and that of their rival at Atari, the series of games were not ports of the arcade game (and Bally Midway held the license to that), but a new group of play experiences that also drew on the source film. In rapid succession during 1982, Mattel released TRON: Deadly Discs, TRON: Maze-A-Tron, Adventures of TRON, and TRON: Solar Sailer. Both Deadly Discs and Maze-A-Tron started while the film was in production, and the programmers at Intellivision were able to see storyboards and production stills from the film. Deadly Discs capitalized on the very popular disc combat scenes from the film – and Bally Midway would revisit this in 1983 with Discs of TRON, an arcade game built around a subgame cut from the original TRON coin-op – as Tron fought wave after wave of video warriors in an arena setting. Maze-A-Tron was a combination of a puzzle game, resetting RAM chips in a circuit maze, and a shooter against the MCP. Adventures of TRON, originally begun as a port of Maze-A-Tron but altered so much that it became a unique game, became a platformer where Tron had to collect bits while avoiding grid bugs, tanks, and Recognizers. Solar Sailer was the most ambitious of the releases as it featured synthesized voices, through a peripheral for the Intellivision system, of characters from the film as the player worked to defeat the MCP. All of the Mattel games, much like the Bally Midway coin-ops, were recreations of certain sequences from the film. In this regard, they did not expand on anything in the TRON universe, despite the capability to do so within the virtual environment of game design.
It wasn’t until the release of *TRON 2.0* in 2003 that the world of *TRON* was revisited. Some of the merchandising from the original film had done well enough, but much fell far below their sales projections, and the property remained an unusual one within the Disney holdings.\(^{113}\) The film did find a following on home video and over the years built up a cult status.\(^{114}\) The intervening time also permitted some critical perspective to grow on the film, and its technical merits and cinematic influence were reevaluated. This convinced Disney to revisit the property under their Buena Vista Interactive imprint. Developed by Monolith Games, the action of *TRON 2.0* was set 20 years after the events of the film, approximately the same amount of time between the two releases, and follows the adventures of Alan Bradley’s son, Jet, inside the digitized game world. In this regard, it functions as a sequel to the original film, with Bruce Boxleitner reprising his role as Alan and Cindy Morgan providing the voice of the artificial intelligence program Ma3a. Due to the upgrades in gaming hardware, the look of the game was finally able to replicate the stylized look of the film. The visual treatment, along with the immersive game play, resulted in a game that was favorably received, particularly by the fans of *TRON*, even though it did not result in major sales.\(^{115}\) The renewed interest in the property, however, was strong enough to generate *TRON 2.0: Killer App* for Nintendo’s Game Boy Advance system.\(^{116}\) Released in 2004, this game is itself a prequel to *TRON 2.0* and explains how Alan Bradley came to his predicament at the beginning of *TRON 2.0*. The player is tasked with controlling Tron, who is reactivated after countless cycles of stasis, and investigating disturbances within the

\(^{113}\) To celebrate the film’s 20th anniversary, Disney released a special edition DVD, which begins with an ad for *TRON 2.0*, and features animated menus that are CGI renderings based on the arcade game, including the distinctive joystick as a visual representation for onscreen navigation through various menus. Disney also re-released the toy line from the film.

\(^{114}\) In 2006, Urban Outfitters released a $100 pair of limited-edition Stan Smith II sneakers decorated with images from *TRON* and retailer Hot Topic currently sells *TRON* t-shirts.

\(^{115}\) Like the original film, *TRON 2.0* spawned a line of action figures.

\(^{116}\) As an added bonus, the original *TRON* and Discs of *TRON* arcade games are included as bonus content, marking their first appearance on a home console.
computer system. Bruce Boxleitner again provides voice work as Alan and also is the voice of Tron. The character of Mercury, introduced in TRON 2.0 and voiced by Rebecca Romijn, returns in this game (as does Romijn) to help Tron. TRON 2.0 also had the interesting outcome of inspiring a comic book series. Tron 2.0: Derezzed was originally announced in 2003 by comic book publisher 88 MPH but was canceled. In 2007, Slave Labor Graphics released their six-issue miniseries TRON: Ghost in the Machine. Narratively set six months after TRON 2.0, it functions as a sequel to the game, and involves the return of Jet to the video game world. Unfortunately hampered by an irregular publishing schedule, the series took over two years for all six issues to be released.

It is an interesting case of transmedia storytelling that would find a film followed by a game, which was followed by another game narratively situated as a precursor and a comic book series as a sequel to the first game. While other film properties have seen a multiplicative franchise effect in video games – such as the Alien series, James Bond, and most notably Star Wars – and other derivative products, this is usually only the case where the film source has some sort of current production. Using video games to relaunch preexisting, but functionally defunct, film properties is an unusual synergy between the media, but one that can achieve some moderate level of success, particularly if enough economic leverage exists for the properties.

While video game sequels had worked well enough for TRON, rumors of a TRON film sequel had been floating around for years, and in 2009 Disney revealed that TRON: Legacy was in production. Released December 2010, in digital 3D and IMAX, the film is prefaced by both a video game, TRON: Evolution, and a graphic novel, TRON: The Betrayal. TRON: Evolution functions as a prequel that explains what happened narratively between the two films. Since Disney is also using a combination of the old games, including the original TRON arcade game with occasionally updated graphics, with new games in a complex promotional strategy for TRON: Legacy via the website for the film.
the *TRON 2.0* games and the *Ghost in the Machine* comic series did similar movements, the producers had to reconcile the disparity between two competing narratives, as all of the *TRON* texts, even the use of the levels in the *Kingdom Hearts* (2002) series, are regarded as canonical by Disney. To achieve this, the previous games and comics are now described as occurring in an alternate timeline, so that the entry into the *TRON* universe from the first film created a point where different realities were created.\(^{118}\) This appears to be a convoluted attempt to keep all products in the franchise legitimate in the eyes of the fan base, especially considering that *TRON 2.0* and *Ghost in the Machine* focused on Alan Bradley’s son, Jet, while *TRON: Legacy* and its derivative properties are about Kevin Flynn and his son, Sam. The science fiction conceit of the film that directly invokes virtual realities notwithstanding, the decision to disregard the preceding narrative extensions of the original film seems to reflect the attitude that the games and comics are subordinate to the films, despite what Graham Hopper, executive vice president and general manager of Disney Interactive Studios, told *GamePro* magazine. Hopper said that *Evolution* – along with the *Toy Story 3* game – represent the beginnings of a strategy to overthrow the movie game stigma as developers went to the filmmakers and said, “We don’t want to make a game of your movie, we want to make a game that honors the spirit of your movie” (Glasser, 3). Looking across the history of the medium, successful film-to-game adaptations have mostly been those that have taken creative inspiration and direction from their source films in order to take the fullest advantage of what video games can do, so Hopper’s comment is a rather obvious one, even if it is not always fully realized. For all the possibilities of the *TRON* films and games, Lisberger remarked, “The capability to generate reality, which was supposed to liberate us, has actually in some ways limited us.” With a better understanding

\(^{118}\) The abandoned arcade where Sam begins his search in *TRON: Legacy* seems a particularly apt visual metaphor for the treatment of older media texts.
of the origins of how the film and video game industries came to be linked, hopefully these limitations might be mitigated as the media technologies continue their transformation in a world of changing economic relationships.
CHAPTER II. VIDEO GAMES, 1985-1994

The majority of video game history texts tend to treat the short period between the video game crash and the release of the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in the US as a fallow market. The US market revenue for video games had hit $3 billion in 1983, but had dropped to a quarter of that by 1985 (Forster, 49). It might be perplexing now to think of the crash as the death stroke for video games that it was made out to be given how culturally ingrained video games have become, but the huge revenue losses underscored the idea that video games were nothing more than faddish toys, particularly for those companies that were based in other industries and had come to video games seeking to capitalize on the proceeds. For film-to-game adaptations, the output was practically nil compared to the years before: in terms of console games, there were none; arcade releases were miniscule with only Atari’s Empire Strikes Back conversion kit for their Star Wars: The Arcade Game and the new Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom; even computer releases had slowed to barely a trickle, accounting for half a dozen titles such as Back to the Future or The Neverending Story. Nevertheless, the forced hiatus for much video game development became a recuperative period that fostered the development of home computer gaming, which for the first decade of video gaming had been of minor importance economically compared to home consoles and arcade machines. Conversely, many home console manufacturers tried to market an educational or business aspect to their platforms, usually through add-on peripherals – Spectravideo’s Compumate for the Atari VCS, Mattel’s Keyboard Component for the Intellivision, and Coleco’s Adam for the Colecovision – that worked with the game architecture to increase functionality, although this rarely happened. Atari had more success with their 8-bit computers, first released in 1979, although these also doubled as gaming machines.

119 It should be noted that the 18 October 1985 release of the NES in the US came more than two full years after its release in Japan (15 July 1983) and the rest of the world would have to wait until 1986.

120 Conversely, many home console manufacturers tried to market an educational or business aspect to their platforms, usually through add-on peripherals – Spectravideo’s Compumate for the Atari VCS, Mattel’s Keyboard Component for the Intellivision, and Coleco’s Adam for the Colecovision – that worked with the game architecture to increase functionality, although this rarely happened. Atari had more success with their 8-bit computers, first released in 1979, although these also doubled as gaming machines.
technological innovation. The increasing power of computers gave them a technical advantage over the more fixed life of consoles that were tied to architecture revisions from generation to generation, a process which sometimes would take years. Whereas computer generations are marked in rather large epochs – vacuum tubes (1940-56), transistors (1956-63), integrated circuits (1964-71), the current dominion of microprocessors (1971-present), and the future direction of artificial intelligence – within these years were constant cycles of hardware and software development. While this rapid turnover in hardware can cause development headaches for programmers, as console hardware is fixed while computer architecture can be customized to a great degree, it also put a great deal of computing power at their disposal: “The crash had seen the demise of videogame consoles and in 1985 the scene consequently shifted towards real computers” (Forster, 96). The second generation of consoles, such as the Atari VCS or the Mattel Intellivision, had produced games that were enjoyable and innovative but visually lagged behind what gamers in arcades could experience, and once computers became more readily available in the home, they became more competitive with what consoles could do as well as offered a wider range of applications beyond games. For consumers in 1980s America, the economic situation of the recession, the mounting federal deficit, and serious trade issues made the non-hobbyist/computer enthusiast notice the appeal of a machine that offered functionality beyond that of solely playing games, and this versatility was often highlighted in marketing as a significant selling point for computer systems.

In the early 1980s, a large number of companies fought to become the leaders in the new and very attractive market of home computing. Consumers could choose Atari’s 1200XL, IBM’s PCjr, Apple’s Macintosh, the Tandy Corporation’s Tandy 1000, Commodore

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121 This is a trend that would grow increasingly prevalent as the home computer market developed to the point where now the technological innovations required by next-gen games drive almost the entire computer industry.
122 In 1981 IBM introduced its first home computer, and in 1984 Apple followed with the Macintosh.
International’s Commodore 64, and a horde of other systems.\textsuperscript{123} The proliferation of computers
gave rise to many new programming studios such as Infocom, Sierra On-Line, Electronic Arts,
Domark, and perhaps most importantly, Microsoft. These studios were able to capitalize on the
proliferation of the Disk Operating System (DOS) that was a commonality among the different
hardware, albeit with modifications by the different manufacturers. For example, Microsoft’s
DOS (MS-DOS) was the main OS for IBM PCs from the 1980s to the mid-1990s, while Tandy
Radio Shack had their own version (TRS-DOS), as did Atari, Amiga, Apple, and other computer
companies. Advances in processors, graphics, and storage formats were mirrored in games, as
new releases took advantage of what the hardware could do. Once the genre of the text-based
adventure had mostly been abandoned and the struggle with books as a competitive
entertainment format effectively removed, computer games primarily had to contend with
competition from their visual forerunners, film and television. Even in the early days of
computing, the drive to eventually attain a cinematic type of immersive experience for the gamer
– something akin to the entry into an alternate, or virtual, world – lurked in the background of
design. Although the hardware and software could only approximate it, each iteration of digital
technology moved the representative possibilities of video games closer to that of film. This is
not to erroneously suggest that all game designers wanted their games to look like movies, and
indeed many preferred, and still do, that their games should not be mistaken for anything other
than games, but that greater opportunities for narrative complexity, visual effects, image fidelity,
and the manipulation of more complicated objects in motion in real time were a significant factor
within certain sectors of the video game industry.

\textsuperscript{123} While consumers can still buy computers designed by companies such as Dell or Toshiba, the trend over time for
video gamers has been to build customized systems that are optimized for game play, thus the individual
components and their combinations became more important than a pre-packaged system.
One of the companies of this period to push game development into higher levels of graphics, stereo sound, and story sophistication was Cinemaware. Cinemaware was a computer game developer (and publisher for some time) that was founded in 1985 by Robert and Phyllis Jacob. As the title of the company suggests, Cinemaware was interested in creating games that were as close to movie-like quality, particularly in terms of graphics, given the available technology. To achieve this, Cinemaware developed the games first for the Commodore Amiga, a 16-bit home computer system that boasted two custom video chips, one of which enabled the system to display “digital pictures in near photo realistic quality”, and a sound chip that enabled audio processing unavailable on computer platforms for years (Forster, 107). Priced below the Apple Macintosh and the IBM PC, the Amiga’s technical advantages made it an attractive purchase for serious gamers and an advantageous system for programmers. Each of Cinemaware’s games was modeled after a particular genre of film, so that swashbucklers informed Defender of the Crown (1986), gangster pictures morphed into The King of Chicago (1987), Japanese samurai films informed Lords of the Rising Sun (1988), and 1950s atomic monster movies produced It Came from the Desert (1989). Cinemaware did release Sinbad and the Throne of the Falcon (1987) and The Three Stooges (1987), which seem most directly related to the cinematic characters that their titles reference, yet only The Three Stooges had any sort of licensing agreement with an entertainment company (in this case, Columbia Pictures). While only producing games in its original corporate configuration until 1991, Cinemaware is significant in its attempt to expand the definition of interactive entertainment through innovative programming and concentrate on higher quality graphics.

Other gaming companies were more explicit in their interest to work on licensed properties. Much like the time before the video game crash of 1983-84 had seen a glut of games,
many lacking in design and offering poor game play and graphics, from subsidiary developers working for all manner of parent companies, the revitalization of the home console market by Nintendo prompted a new wave of developers to emerge. Two of the more notable for their film-to-game translations are LJN and Ocean Software.

LJN was founded as an American toy company in 1970 by Jack Friedman. Many of their toy lines were based on films (Dune, E.T., Gremlins, and Indiana Jones) and television shows (Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, Magnum P.I., Thundercats, and Voltron). When LJN was acquired by MCA through their Universal subsidiary in 1986, the strength of their toy successes with licensed properties turned their attention to the video game market, releasing several titles for the NES. Two years later, Acclaim Entertainment acquired LJN from MCA/Universal. Under Acclaim, LJN’s toy division was jettisoned and the company became solely devoted to publishing video games. Essentially, LJN allowed Acclaim to get around the limited number of titles per company regulation that Nintendo imposed on its developers. LJN continued with publishing titles primarily related to film and television properties. In a short time, LJN produced quite a number of film-to-game titles, including A Nightmare on Elm Street, Back to the Future, Beetlejuice, Bill & Ted’s Excellent Video Game Adventure, Friday The 13th, Jaws, The Karate Kid, Terminator 2: Judgment Day, and Who Framed Roger Rabbit, to varying degrees of quality. As a publisher, LJN signed its developers to very stern non-disclosure agreements, so much so that most of the games that the company published still have never had their developers identified. In 1994, LJN, along with the Flying Edge and Arena Entertainment

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124 Ironically, this acquisition had been instigated by Sidney Sheinberg, MCA’s president who had earlier attempted to sue Nintendo over Donkey Kong. As reported in 11 May 1983 edition of The New York Times, MCA Video Games had formed a joint venture with Atari to create coin-operated and home games and computer software based on various MCA properties, including movies and television programs.
labels that Acclaim used in conjunction with Sega’s consoles, were completely absorbed into the Acclaim company.

Friedman would later go on to found other companies including THQ, a developer and publisher of video games that include many film-to-game titles, and Jakks Pacific, a company that specializes in plug’n’play units that visually are evocative of past gaming eras (such as a Pac-Man arcade controller or an Atari joystick or paddle), feature a pre-set number of built-in games, and run off of batteries so that they can easily be plugged into standard video and audio ports on a television for play. In keeping up with LJN’s tradition, most of these are adapted from existing film and television properties (including *Fantastic Four*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Shrek*, *Over the Hedge*, *Spider-Man*, and *Star Wars*). THQ is also worth noting because of its policy of corporate acquisition combined with establishment of its own production studios. Initially founded as Trinity Acquisition Corporation in 1989, Toy Headquarters (THQ) has really come to global prominence as an American developer and publisher of video games in the 21st century through aggressive establishment and acquisition of a large number of studios.125 This aggressive expansion has allowed THQ to make games in multiple genres across different hardware platforms and draw upon the connections of its member studios to further diversify its offerings. Blue Tongue, Heavy Iron, Helixe, Incinerator, Locomotive, Paradigm, Rainbow, and Sandblast have all worked on film-to-game projects, and THQ has released almost twenty titles based on films since 2002, skewing mostly toward kid-friendly CGI movies such as *Finding

125 The sixteen studios that operate under the THQ umbrella are: Heavy Iron Studios (founded in 1999), Locomotive Games (acquired in 1999), Helixe Games (founded in 2000), Volition (acquired in 2000), Rainbow Studios (acquired in 2001), Sandblast games (founded in 2002), THQ Studio Australia (founded in 2003), Blue Tongue Entertainment (acquired in 2004), Relic Entertainment (acquire in 2004), Incinerator Studios (founded in 2005), Kaos Studios (founded in 2005), Juice Games (acquired in 2006), Paradigm Entertainment (acquired in 2006), Vigil Games (acquired in 2006), Mass Media (acquired in 2007), and Big Huge Games (acquired in 2008).
Nemo and Barnyard (with the addition of a few Star Wars projects and the more adult-oriented Evil Dead: Regeneration).

Outside of the US, Ocean Software was one of the biggest European video game developers of the 1980s and 90s, developing dozens of original games in addition to producing some licensed ones. Their first licensing agreement was in 1984 with Konami to produce versions of their arcade games for home computers; Ocean would go on to partner with Taito in 1986. In 1985, Ocean managed to secure their first movie licenses for titles such as Rambo, Short Circuit, and Cobra. While their games based on Batman, RoboCop 3, and Hook were well-received, generally Ocean’s licensed titles fared extremely poorly compared to the original games they developed on their own, which is surprising given that their titles featured a mix of cult classics and significant box office performers. Additional titles produced by Ocean include Addams Family Values, Cool World, Darkman, Highlander, Jurassic Park, Lethal Weapon, Rambo 3, RoboCop, RoboCop 2, The Terminator, Total Recall, The Untouchables, and Waterworld. Part of the problem with Ocean originated in their overreliance on the platformer genre and the grafting of film concepts onto this particular game play. For the Jurassic Park license, Ocean developed three different games to take advantage of different gaming platforms. Additionally, since Ocean was also competing against BlueSky Software (who was developing Jurassic Park titles for Sega of America), the need to sell more copies of their versions was especially strong. Ocean’s Jurassic Park game released for the NES and Game Boy were isometric action adventure titles that loosely follow the plot of the film (as well as incorporate some plot elements from the novel). The Super NES version of Jurassic Park incorporated isometric gameplay for outside environments but went to a night vision style FPS for indoor environments. The version of the game released for Amiga and PC notably improved the visual
art by taking advantage of improved resolution while retaining the mixed isometric and FPS
game play.

The rebirth of the video game industry again attracted the attention of the film industry,
and while many film companies were willing to license their properties for development, few
were interested in a more direct role in video game development and publication. One of those
that chose to take a more immersive approach was Disney Interactive Studios. Initially founded
in 1988 as Walt Disney Computer Software, later becoming Disney Interactive, then Buena Vista
Games, Inc. before settling on its current name, Disney Interactive is another example of a film
studio setting up its own video game division to publish and distribute a broad portfolio of multi-
platform games programmed by other developers. In its early period, Disney Interactive often
worked as a developer rather than a publisher, using a group of “software development
specialists” that had been spun off from Walt Disney Educational Productions. As it took more
control in marketing its games, Disney Interactive moved to establish strategic development
alliances with major gaming industry companies such as Sony, Nintendo, Activision, Eidos,
Konami, Square Enix, and Ubisoft because, as Brian Leake, then Vice President of Technology
at Disney Interactive, stated “games have often been considered totally secondary and ancillary”
and so working more closely with developers would hopefully produce better games in terms of
player satisfaction and sales (Gray, 215). In addition to the Disney films, its game studio also
has access to films produced under the Touchstone and Pixar labels. The power of the Disney
brand is a compelling force in film-to-game properties, although not as financially lucrative as
one might think; with most of their titles based on movies aimed at the children’s market, their
games tend to require an ease of understanding and play that works with a narrow age range of

126 Mickey Mouse was one of the first licensed characters for the Sega Genesis in 1990 with Castle of Illusion
(Forster, 123).
youngsters, so they never get to the older audience where the majority of games are sold. Nevertheless, Disney Interactive maintains a potent position through their proliferation as a major franchise source, with over seventy game titles released based on Disney properties.

Film + Games = Art: Lucasfilm and the Evolution of LucasArts

Perhaps the most notable movie studio joining the ranks of companies looking to expand their properties through video games was Lucasfilm. With the financial success of *Star Wars*, notably fueled by the sale of licensed merchandise, Lucasfilm had the fiscal power to function independently throughout much of the media landscape. With the video game industry in full swing, Lucasfilm began to make the first cautious steps into the industry. Its Games Group was founded in May 1982 within Lucasfilm Ltd.’s Computer Division. By cushioning the Games Group within several levels of its corporate structure, Lucasfilm created a sort of contained design environment in what is now referred to as a “game incubator”. George Lucas had wanted his company to branch out into other entertainment media, and so he signed a joint cooperative agreement with Atari (Ciraolo, 40). Atari then invested $1 million into the Games Group (DeMaria, 198). Ed Catmull, who was running the Computer Division, hired Peter Langston to head up the Games Group. In 1971, Langston had begun designing a popular game called *Empire*, inspired by strategy board games, while at Reed College that appeared on mainframes through the mid-1970s (DeMaria, 51).

According to Robert Doris, Vice President of Lucasfilm and general manager of the Computer Division, the movement into the video game business was a calculated result of the perception of “video games becoming more and more cinematic” (Greer, G1). While this was an advantageous deal for both parties, Lucasfilm would use Atari as a sort of testing bed for video

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127 While a few properties, such as *TRON*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, and *The Pirates of the Caribbean*, appeal to an older demographic, the upcoming *Epic Mickey* (2010) for the Nintendo Wii is an interesting attempt to appeal to the mature gaming audience.
game development, taking several years to release the first two games – *Rescue on Fractalus!* and *Ballblazer* for the 5200 and the 7800 game systems – as “[a]mid this convergence of technology and entertainment, it was apparent that the core target audiences of special-effects movies and the Atari game platform had significant similarities” (Smith, 11). Development on the games had actually begun in 1982 with the signing of a licensing agreement between Lucasfilm and Atari, and the Games Group showed a profit by the end of the year (perhaps the only part of the Computer Division to do so) (Langston, 1). Since the backgrounds and skill levels of members in the Games Group differed, they began by creating some very basic 3D, point-of-view (POV) routines as an experiment and then turned to studying the dedicated chips and microprocessor of Atari’s computer (Langston et al., 34). Doing this gave the group a very thorough understanding of not only what the architecture was designed to do but also where the technology could be pushed or “how the form might evolve – ultimately, maybe, to meld with movies themselves” (*Access*, 12).

In 1983 two early versions of the first games – known at that point as *BallBlaster* and *Rebel Rescue* – were shown to Atari, only to appear in pirated form later in the year on various computer networks. Final version of the games were delivered in May 1984 and announced at

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128 Since 3D computer modeling was barely in its infancy, the Games Group had Industrial Light & Magic create scale models of the ships in *Ballblazer* and *Rescue on Fractalus!* in the same process used with the *Star Wars* films.

129 During playtesting of *Rebel Rescue*, Lucas looked for a fire button on the controls. In the game’s fiction, it was explained that the weapons had been removed to make more room for the marooned pilots to be rescued. Lucas asked Fox if that was a part of the game design or a moral choice (Smith, 16). This is an important question to raise, and the introduction of moral choices as part of the play mechanics usually took the form of alternate endings based on what actions the player had or had not done. Offering different narrative outcomes was initially far easier to do on computers and helped to distinguish them from other gaming platforms. The idea of increased interactivity was notable in *Dragon’s Lair* (1983), a coin-op game that used animated sequences stored on a laserdisc. Produced by Cinematronics, one of the early proponents of vector graphic arcade games, in conjunction with Don Bluth Productions, the high quality imagery spurred a craze of laserdisc video games, which many saw as a way to create interactive movies. Some console companies explored the option of creating a laserdisc peripheral, but laserdiscs were still considered a high-end home entertainment device. The VCR was much more common, and some companies tried to exploit that technology. Interactive Productions, developing a VHS tape-based game using a signal divided into four channels to provide user-selected jumps between filmed scenes, tried to sell their technology to Lucasfilm Games, who passed. Eventually the filmed footage was picked up by Digital Pictures to create the
a press conference which began with the opening sequence from *Star Wars* (Greer, G1). Atari delayed the home computer version for their Atari 800 ostensibly to market the title as a 5200 exclusive (eventually these would be released by Epyx, not Atari, in 1985), although Atari’s management had changed in the years when the projects were begun and may have wanted to change the terms of the agreement (DeMaria, 199). This time in development enabled Lucasfilm to experience the operations of the video game industry while only committing a small amount of its resources (initially the Games Group was only six men) while working simultaneously on a major film production like *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984). Conversely, the Games Group borrowed heavily from development procedures in the film production division, including drawing models, making costumes, and writing extensive story lines to more fully develop a narrative underpinning for the games. As Langston explained, “My charter was to figure out where in the entertainment industry to apply the kind of high-tech approaches that were proving so revolutionary in graphics, sound, and editing for movies…It took very little time to settle on pursuing games” (Smith, 12-13). The richness in game detail, according to game designers David Levine and David Fox, was meant “to immerse the player in a complete fantasy world” (Greer, G1). In an internal memo that Fox wrote in 1982, he listed some thoughts on game development, in particular what films do well – such as special effects modeling new realities and creating narrative engagement – and where video games lag behind, noting that they were not taking full advantage of the hardware, including video and audio (remarking that the game based on *TRON* was an exception), sometimes seemed constrained in game mechanics due

infamous *Night Trap* (1992) game for the Sega CD. This game was criticized for the perceived violence of its full-motion video scenes, instigated a Senate investigation, and was briefly pulled from distribution. Eventually concerns with *Night Trap* and other video games would lead the industry to create the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB), a rating system similar to that of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).
to genre, and did not offer a high level of escapism.\footnote{130} Given that \textit{Rescue on Fractalus!} and \textit{Ballblazer} were released during the video game crash, there was a lot of expectation that the new games “may do for the ailing video game industry what “Star Wars” did for the movies in 1977 – bring back consumers” (Greer, G1).\footnote{131} At this point, having lost approximately $500 million in 1983, Atari was also linking its corporate licenses by linking the Lucasfilm releases into a new game advertising campaign that coincided with its sponsor role in the 1984 Olympics. Although Lucasfilm Games did not single-handedly repair the video game industry, both \textit{Rescue on Fractalus!} and \textit{Ballblazer} were noted for their technical innovation and engaging game play, proved to be financial successes, and demonstrated that it was possible for a film studio to make a fruitful transition to video game design and production through a calculated application of their assets. As Arnie Katz, editor of \textit{Electronic Games} magazine, noted in 1984, “The key to what Lucasfilm has done is to bring to video games the Lucasfilm approach to making movies.”

For many years, Lucasfilm Games would eschew developing their own \textit{Star Wars} games, preferring to license out the franchise.\footnote{132} By George Lucas’s own admission, “I wanted to have a really creative, independent shop. It’s not a coincidence that our early video games were \textit{not} based on the \textit{Star Wars} or \textit{Indiana Jones} films” (Smith, 7). Parker Bros. had been very successful with \textit{Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back} for the Atari 2600 and Intellivision systems, and Atari had produced a notable arcade hit with \textit{Star Wars} in 1983. Atari again adapted another Lucasfilm property, \textit{Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom}, for the arcade in 1985, and one year later, in conjunction with Activision, Lucasfilm Games released \textit{Labyrinth}, a game finally based

\footnote{130} Fox also raised a question regarding the licensing agreement of \textit{Star Wars}, as the title of \textit{Rebel Rescue} had to be changed because of its loose connection to the \textit{Star Wars} universe, wondering if games might be set in the world of the films that reference places, vehicles, and weapons, but provide new characters and stories (Smith, 15).

\footnote{131} At the same time, Atari Chairman James Morgan (who had assumed his position in September 1983) was paradoxically looking at the type of quality Lucasfilm games as a way “to maintain a competitive edge for our industry against movies, books, roller skating rinks and miniature golf courses” (Greer, G1).

\footnote{132} The license to Broderbund, for example, did not expire until 1992 (DeMaria, 203).
on a title in their own film library, for the Commodore 64. Before the film was released, the Games Group was invited to create a game based on the movie, but because the movie would have already played in theaters by the time the game shipped, the decision was made to have the game focus on a new story while fleshing out additional areas from the film. Author Douglas Adams was brought in as a creative consultant, and the game included more focus on puzzle-solving than combat, including beginning as a traditional text adventure before switching to a graphic interface (Smith, 27). In this meta-textual film-to-game adaptation, the player begins as a character going to the movies to see *Labyrinth*, and during the film the Goblin King Jareth (a digitized David Bowie) issues a challenge to the player that forms the bulk of the game play.

According to Games Group programmer David Fox, *Labyrinth* “was in some ways a better game than a film” (DeMaria, 199). Only a few parts of the world of *Labyrinth* were seen in the film, but the game expanded on these and strengthened the verisimilitude of the fantasy realm.

The moderate success of the *Labyrinth* game bolstered the confidence of the Games Group, and for the third film in the *Indiana Jones* trilogy, Lucasfilm decided to develop the game themselves after several years of licensing out the rights to the first two films. Lucas and Spielberg met with programmer Noah Falstein (who had been an arcade designer for Williams before joining the Games Group) in late 1988 and charged Falstein with developing a game for the film which was set for release in May 1989, giving him eight months to work when most games would have a twelve month cycle. By using two other experienced programmers, David Fox and Ron Gilbert, and a scripting language developed by the Games Group for adventure titles, Falstein’s team completed the game in record time. Because they had come in ahead of schedule, however, there was some discussion between Falstein and Gilbert as to the ending of the game. Falstein favored a serious ending, while Gilbert wanted a humorous one, and both
tones had worked well within the context of the *Indiana Jones* films. Eventually three different endings and a variety of ways to get to each would “make the game compelling and the challenges engaging for players who had seen the movie” (Smith, 42).\(^{133}\) Fox suggested implementing a random number generator in the program code that would present different combinations of drama and comedy, thereby creating several permutations of the game’s ending for a player (DeMaria, 201). The concept of replay value in a game, which has a strong narrative line and an identifiable conclusion, by introducing various degrees of random elements is a design consideration that is still a debated issue in video games today.\(^{134}\) Many companies want potential buyers to feel that they will be getting a generous amount of content for their purchase, yet not too much content that it impacts the purchase of other games. Many contemporary game developers aim for an eight hour experience for console titles, although games that take tens or hundreds of hours to play are not uncommon. Immediately, one can see that devoting this many hours to playing a game is a significant time investment beyond what event the most epic movies require. Creating a richly textured gaming experience based in the filmic world often means significant expansion of imagery, themes, plot, and action into game types that are further modified by the technology at hand. Because a richly textured mythology had evolved around the *Star Wars* property, and gaming platforms had seen recent innovation in their architecture, the time had come for Lucasfilm to mine the richest vein in their holdings.

**Tapping the Movies: *Star Wars, Star Wars: Rebel Assault, and Star Wars: X-Wing***

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\(^{133}\) Because a copy of the film’s shooting script had been used by the development team, a number of scenes appear in the game that were cut from the film during the editing process (Smith, 43).

\(^{134}\) Replayability again became a key consideration with the next game in the series, *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* (1992), creating three separate paths through the game to appeal to different types of gamers: those who liked puzzles, those who worked cooperatively with a fellow player, and those who preferred a more violent approach to adventure (Smith, 69). The next two titles, *Indiana Jones and the Iron Phoenix* and *Indiana Jones and the Spear of Destiny*, both were cancelled because of increasing concerns about how to handle Nazi content in the European, and particularly German, video game market. Each game was well developed enough, however, to find adaptation into two mini-series by comic book publisher Dark Horse in 1994 and 1995.
In 1990, through a reorganization of the Lucas companies, the Games Group of Lucasfilm became part of the newly created LucasArts Entertainment Company, which included Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) and Skywalker Sound.\(^{135}\) Having achieved a respectable level of success with the *Indiana Jones* games, Lucasfilm Games finally moved to developing its own *Star Wars* game after several years of licensing the property out to other developers. That the publishing rights were still owned by JVC meant that the first Lucas-originated *Star Wars* games had some insulation against risk should something go awry, and to further add extra insurance, Lucasfilm Games did the game design and production but subcontracted the actual core technology programming to Beam Software, an outside studio based in Australia, with final approval over everything overseen by the main Lucas corporate entity (Smith, 72). The deal with JVC included six games to be developed for the Nintendo platform, with JVC advanced $1 million and each game budgeted at $80,000-100,000 for development, leaving a substantial financial cushion to handle any development issues. As production on *Star Wars* commenced with an eye on a September 1990 release date, one of the main development issues to arise involved the limited memory capacity of the NES, so the drive “to re-create every significant *Star Wars*-movie action scene was abandoned in favor of fitting key gameplay scenes into the 128K available on the NES” (Smith, 73). Similarly to the Parker Brothers version of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* that began the entire film franchise’s adaptation to video games, the game designers had to decide what contributed to the essential experience of the film, at least for a general audience, and then put that into some sort of playable system. As side-scrolling platformers were immensely popular at the time, the game was designed so that the player primarily controlled Luke Skywalker, but also had to play as Princess Leia and Han Solo for

\(^{135}\) Later ILM and Skywalker Sound were consolidated in Lucas Digital Ltd. and LucasArts became the official name of the former Games Division, although Lucasfilm Games continued to be used on games in development.
certain missions, and concentrated on distinct film locations such as the planet Tatooine, the Mos Eisley cantina, and the Death Star. To further diversify the play experience, a first-person asteroid belt mission and a top-down Death Star trench run sequence was added. Between the popularity of the NES and the recognition of the Star Wars brand, the game sold quite well and production on Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back began with Lucasfilm Games working with another subcontracted developer, Sculptured Software in Utah. This game would essentially follow the same formula as its predecessor and attempt to identify core cinematic referents (places like the planets Hoth, Dagobah, and Bespin and characters like Darth Vader, Boba Fett, and Yoda) while introducing some gameplay not seen in the film, such as fighting the twin-pod cloud cars of Cloud City and racing against Fett’s Firespray-interceptor Slave. The decision to include these extra-cinematic play elements opened the door to questions of authenticity and canon for this incarnation of the franchise with relation to the source films. This is an especially notable issue for this particular property in that the films are often seen, even by Lucas himself, as the primary narrative from which all other stories in the “Expanded Universe” are derived.\footnote{In particular, Timothy Zahn’s Heir to the Empire novel series (1991-93) renewed interest in the Star Wars brand, further enabling the video games to capitalize on the cultural appeal.}

If the metanarrative of Star Wars is contained within the films, then what is to be made of the novels, comic books, television shows, video games, and other media texts that contribute to the schema of its world? While Lucas has the final say over all Star Wars products, and the Expanded Universe tries to stay consistent with the elements of the films (from narrative to set design to character information), the offshoot media properties generally have to remain aligned with the overall canon yet offer experiences to their audiences that utilize the best aspects of each medium. Predominantly for video games, this means striking a balance between the narrative,
the look of the game, and what the player can do within the game.\textsuperscript{137} This issue becomes especially important for film-to-game adaptations that attempt to enlarge the world presented within the film, such as titles that function as prequels or sequels.\textsuperscript{138} In \textit{Show Sold Separately} (2010), Jonathan Gray refers to media that appears in other forms different from that of the original as paratexts, entities that “are a central part of media production and consumption processes” (16). Gray’s premise is that, in a mediatized culture, while a particular text might be the source of the originator narrative, paratexts “are filters through which we must pass on our way to the film or program, our first and formative encounters with the text” (2).\textsuperscript{139} Given the importance of release dates for associated media products with their films, what is released in advance of or in conjunction with a film (not only theatrically but also on home video) can move beyond mere promotion and a temporary revenue boost to something that encourages extended interaction with the source material and its associated works.

While \textit{Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back} was in development, Nintendo had released the Super NES (SNES), and the increased hardware potential piqued the attention of Lucasfilm Games, and the decision was made to develop most of the game in-house with Sculptured Software providing technical implementation for the console.\textsuperscript{140} Both \textit{Super Star Wars} (1992) and \textit{Super Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back} (1993) became highly praised examples of games that had taken advantage of the graphics capability at the time and were fun to play. Like \textit{Star Wars} fighting game, \textit{Masters of Teräs Käsi} (1997), goes to great narrative pains to explain why \textit{Star Wars} characters are pitted in arena-style combat, and for this reason, as well as bad game controls, it was widely regarded as a flop.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{138} The chronology of narratives have generated quite a rash of neologisms in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, no doubt related to the proliferation of media, so that prequels and sequels are joined by interquels (which join two completed works, functioning as sequel to one and prequel to the other), midquels (existing within chronology gaps within single, previously completed works), parallels (portraying existing works from alternate perspectives), distants (sequels with large chronological distances between themselves and their sources), and sidequels (different storylines within the same fictional universe).

\textsuperscript{139} Specifically with regard to \textit{Star Wars}, Gray concentrates primarily on the toys associated with the films, although his book looks at video games, comic books, DVDs, fan-produced videos, movie posters, trailers, and other advertising to expand his conception of narrative.

\textsuperscript{140} Due to the release of the SNES, the NES version of \textit{Return of the Jedi} was cancelled.
Wars: The Empire Strikes Back on the NES, Super Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back also veered away from what was canonical as far as the film showed, with part of the rationale being that the game’s “visual effects created a clear separation in the audience’s mind between a small-screen interactive game and a big-screen blockbuster” (Smith, 74). While this sounds somewhat plausible for the time, given that one of the main driving forces behind gaming technology has been to achieve a cinematic-level realism to the graphics, and coupled with ever-increasing screen sizes, that particular distinction between a game and a film has been disrupted with the most current capabilities of gaming technology. To take advantage of what video games offer, game designers might consider types of game play that lend themselves to certain mechanics and then need to construct a rationale for why the game is to be played in such a manner. In this regard, the narrative is being driven by the developers and their desire to show what the technology can do, and this resonates with the way that certain films are driven more by their special effects and less by a semblance of narrative.

The success of the NES and SNES Star Wars titles gave Lucasfilm Games the clout to restructure its distribution deals and eliminate the need for external publishers. For the newly rebranded LucasArts, issues of technology would again push their game design, specifically in the CD-ROM. While the ideas behind using compact discs as a medium for computer storage had been standardized by Sony and Philips in 1985, practical and affordable distribution to the home user took several more years, but by the time Star Wars: Rebel Assault was released in 1993, it became the primary reason why many home computer users decided to upgrade to the

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141 One of the advantages of the SNES was Mode 7, a texture mapping technique to change rotation and scale and thus provide a sense of 3D perspective, which allowed game designers to more closely emulate the look of a movie world. Although smaller screens, such as in cell phones and portable gaming devices, are in abundance, they also try to create more striking visuals, as evidenced by Nintendo’s past attempt (the Virtual Boy) and its upcoming one (the 3DS).

142 Prior to 1993, there was some investigation into a merger between Lucasfilm Games and Interplay, a game studio that also published titles, particularly since Interplay had an emerging relationship with Paramount Studios to produce Star Trek games, showing an understanding of film licenses. Ultimately the merger stalled.
new format, as most computers at the time were not equipped with a CD-ROM drive, essentially functioning as a killer app. The storage potential of the CD-ROM not only meant that game developers could create larger, more sophisticated programs that would offer improved graphics and longer play experiences but also incorporate live-action footage seen in full motion video (FMV) games like *Dragon’s Lair*, *Night Trap*, *The 7th Guest* (1992), and *Voyeur* (1993). The fact that the designers of *Rebel Assault* were planning on filming new live-action footage set in the *Star Wars* universe caught the attention of Lucas:

> if video was suddenly the primary visual production method, the games would start to encroach on the movie space. According to producer Hal Barwood, Lucas was concerned that if movie-like footage was shot, it could cause confusion with the film canon, and players would assume Lucas was somehow at the helm. (Smith, 78)

The live-action footage was combined with overlaid sprites that created a very sophisticated visual presentation yet still was removed from true cinematic photorealism. It also restricted the free movement and sense of exploration that players experienced in other games by necessitating that the action largely stays confined to a limited combination of interactions that made the game function like a rail shooter. Finally, the game design provided a play experience that lasted only a couple of hours, roughly equivalent to a *Star Wars* movie; by not shooting hours and hours of video, the developers were able to keep the costs lower. Despite its limitations, the look of *Rebel Assault* and the style of interactivity were enough to make the game a major success.

Before its release, CD-ROM games were selling an average of 10,000 copies, but the first

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143 These titles are also noticeable for using optical disc technology to create new potential for video games: *Dragon’s Lair* using laserdiscs for arcade machines, *Night Trap* requiring the Sega CD peripheral for the Sega Genesis, *The 7th Guest* being one of the first computer games to only appear on CD-ROM (no dual-release using magnetic disks), and *Voyeur* debuting as the flagship title for the short-lived Philips CD-i video game console.

144 Live-action scenes would be used again in *Rebel Assault II* (1995) and even more so – an entire hour’s worth – in *Star Wars: Jedi Knight – Dark Forces II* (1997).
day shipment of Rebel Assault moved 110,000 units, and the game would ultimately reach sales of 1 million copies. While the popularity certainly could be attributed partly to the Star Wars brand itself, the game play did suggest something more of a cinematic experience and indicated another direction for game design to pursue as the hardware continued to advance. As Lucas himself noted in a 03 March 1994 memo to the Rebel Assault development staff:

By taking “Star Wars” into the CD-ROM platform you’ve extended my original story ideas into a new and different form of entertainment. You seem to have set the standard for what this new medium can accomplish for interactive entertainment. It’s great that we can also set the standard for what sales can be as well. (Smith, 80)

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Lucasfilm Games developed a series of military simulation games. Beginning with Battlehawks 1942 (1988), a WWII trilogy was created by a team led by Lawrence Holland, a game designer who later founded the development company Totally Games. Holland would draw upon this experience for his next LucasArts project, the X-Wing series (1993-99). This series, set in the Star Wars Expanded Universe, attempts to faithfully simulate the film experience of starfighter combat, which itself was based on gun camera dogfight footage Lucas had studied while making Star Wars. In the early titles – X-Wing, Imperial Pursuit, and B-Wing – the player worked for the Rebel Alliance. These games begin narratively before the events in Star Wars and involve missions where allies must be located and the Death Star plans must be delivered to Princess Leia before intersecting with the film for the attack on the Death Star and then continuing on with the evacuation of Yavin IV and the arrival on Hoth, shortly before the events in The Empire Strikes Back. Despite initially not coming out on CD-ROM unlike Rebel Assault, the game was a striking commercial success and

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145 Before turning to game design, Holland spent two years on archaeological expeditions around the world using his degree in anthropology and prehistoric archeology from Cornell University.
sustained the game design of giving players the opportunity to fly spaceships within the Star Wars universe.\textsuperscript{146} The story was opened up to include the ability to fly for the Galactic Empire in TIE Fighter, a move which would highlight the conception of morality in the Star Wars milieu, which began as something fairly nuanced and became more dogmatic in the future Star Wars titles.\textsuperscript{147} According to Holland, “In most great works, the villain or evil side has a lot of intrigue, and we wanted to design with that in mind. We gave the Empire shades of gray, and gave the player a chance to achieve some nobility” (DeMaria, 203).\textsuperscript{148} Narratively the game begins after the routing of the Rebels on Hoth and continues through a series of missions where the player must not only fight the Rebels but help to quell civil wars, dispatch pirates and traitorous Imperials, complete secret objectives for the Emperor, and generally try to keep peace, albeit through heavily militaristic means, throughout the galaxy. The first and last games – Star Wars: X-Wing and X-Wing Alliance – that bookend the series paralleled certain events in the original Star Wars trilogy, including endgame missions that are recreations of the attacks on the first and second Death Star, despite the fact that Holland, with X-Wing, “didn’t want to do the movie over again, though, but put in the familiar elements in a similar story” (DeMaria, 203). Most of the games featured voice acting, which was somewhat unusual for the time, and animated cutscenes (supplemented with some occasional computer rendering) that advanced the storyline as well as featuring music from the original trilogy. This music changes in response to a player’s actions during the game through the Interactive Music Streaming Engine (iMUSE)

\textsuperscript{146} The series was so successful it was released as a Collector’s Edition CD-ROM in 1994 (with updated programming from the TIE Fighter engine), a special Gold Edition for original owners of the 1993 version, and a Collector’s Series edition in 1998 (again with updated programming, this time using 3D acceleration from X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter (1997)).

\textsuperscript{147} The ability to fly for either the Rebel Alliance or the Galactic Empire was proposed for X-Wing but dropped due to programming and time restraints.

\textsuperscript{148} Holland certainly derived the balanced approach for representing both sides of a conflict in his third WWII title, Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (1991), where a player could fly for the Americans or the Germans, widely considered a video game masterpiece not only because of well designed game mechanics but also because of its meticulously researched story and detailed instruction manual.
system, an idea that first appeared in the music for *Ballblazer* and would continue to be modified through several of the Lucasfilm/LucasArts releases.\(^{149}\) Like *X-Wing* before it, *TIE Fighter* was a huge commercial success, eventually outselling *X-Wing*, and benefited from improvements in the game’s programming.\(^{150}\) The triumvirate of critically and financially successful games released by Lucasfilm Games/LucasArts in 1993 demonstrated that it was possible for a film studio to flourish in the video game industry, draw upon and repurpose their own internal assets, and adapt films to games as appropriate to the medium, often while pushing the existing gaming technology.

With the success of its space simulations, LucasArts again returned to its formative days of game development as the genre of the first person shooter (FPS) would become popular in the 1990s and revisit the POV style of gaming it used in *Ballblazer* and *Rescue on Fractalus* for a FPS set in the *Star Wars* galaxy: *Dark Forces*.\(^{151}\) This title ushered in a series of titles under the *Jedi Knight* moniker, which added a third-person viewing mode (slightly behind and over the shoulder, also known as a chase mode) to the game (in time this would become the default mode; a player could switch to a first-person view to more closely examine an object in a type of eyeline match or better approximate physical proximity to a hazard). The proliferation of a large number of *Star Wars* titles year after year resulted in a perceived drop in quality by the gaming community, especially in the deluge of titles released around *Star Wars: Episode I – The*
LucasArts took this seriously and in 2002, after every single release that year was a *Star Wars* title, announced that 50% of all future releases would not be related to *Star Wars*, most likely in a bid to reignite some of the design innovation as their forays into other genres – strategic domination with *Star Wars: Rebellion* (1998) or real-time strategy with *Star Wars: Force Commander* (2000) – had performed well below expectations. The year 2003 saw the release of the extremely well-received and positively-reviewed *Knights of the Old Republic* as well as an entry into yet another game genre, namely the massively multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG) *Star Wars Galaxies*, followed by three expansion packs in two years. Although *Galaxies* has given players in “the absence of any more *Star Wars* movies...a means to immerse themselves regularly in the space fantasy galaxy”, it has steadily lost players over the years, leading to server consolidation and speculation as to its continuation beyond 2010 (Smith, 172). In 2003, LucasArts engineers attended an ILM Research and Development annual open-house event. Senior engineer Nick Porcino took great interest in one of the projects on display, Zeno, ILM’s proprietary toolset. Porcino felt that Zeno could be used to build cutting-edge, next-generation video games. In late 2003, Porcino and ILM’s director of research and development Steve Sullivan had a series of discussions that led to the plan to create the Virtual Studio, essentially integrating the assets of LucasArts and ILM into one multi-functional tool pipeline. In 2005, when ILM and LucasArts relocated to Letterman Digital Arts Center in San Francisco’s Presidio, the collaboration was finally realized, with ILM and LucasArts engineers sharing knowledge, techniques, and even office space in order to create the Zeno Editor (or Zed), a graphics renderer that could be shared across both companies, providing the same type of

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152 *The Phantom Menace* games began development as early as 1997.

153 Especially with *The Old Republic* MMORPG based on *Knights of the Old Republic* set for release in 2011.
effects for both films and games. In May 2005, LucasArts released a third-person action game based on the as yet unreleased *Revenge of the Sith*. Two weeks before the premiere of the film, players could buy a fully licensed product that allowed them to progress through the narrative of the film and additionally watch twelve minutes of footage interwoven throughout the game. This was a bold move for the usually secretive group of Lucas companies, especially as the decision had been made not to make a film-to-game adaptation of *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* as had been done with the other films. Typically fiercely protective of material, such as what footage appears in trailers and other commercials as well as film stills, before official theatrical releases, the *Revenge of the Sith* game represented an interesting marketing ploy. In order to see the footage, short of some hacking, the player had to go through the game, approximating the theatrical experience by explicitly referencing plot points and expanding on the same by augmenting eight different scenes from the film, such as Obi-Wan’s final confrontation with General Grievous or Anakin’s betrayal of Mace Windu, with additional action and narrative development. The game also omits certain events in the film, such as some battles or subplot points, to keep the game’s narrative more coherent with regard to the game play.

LucasArts began releasing many titles from its back catalog on the Steam distribution network, and mobile versions are in the works. After the 4th of July weekend in 2009, LucasArts announced a partnership with Valve to offer their greatest hits for direct download including: *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The*
Graphic Adventure, LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventure, Star Wars Battlefront II, Star Wars: Republic Commando, and Star Wars: Starfighter. A month later, LucasArts and Nintendo announced that the Super Star Wars trilogy (and many other classic LucasArts titles) would be coming to the Wii Virtual Console. Even as LucasArts continues to develop new film-to-game Star Wars titles, the older titles in its catalog continue to be profitable. In this regard, despite some occasional technical upgrades, the game play remains engaging even if the graphics have become dated by contemporary standards. Although its film-to-game properties are confined almost exclusively to Star Wars, LucasArts is a useful model for other film studios to consider in the ways to successfully manage franchise development in video games, not only for adaptations but also for original works. While The Clone Wars CGI television series is being produced, and a live-action Star Wars television show is being prepped, the lack of any cinematic Star Wars releases means a shift for Lucasfilm Limited as a company; in 2004, “an internal audit suggested that in the following years, the major growth area for the entire company could be games” (Smith, 176). The digital technology innovations that Lucas and his production crew used on the Star Wars films continue to have far-reaching implications for the company well past the boundaries of cinema.

Playing with Power: Nintendo

As potent as computer gaming had become in the decade following the video game crash – with the transition from raster to 3D graphics, the rise of genres like FPS, RTS, MMO, and survival horror, increased budgets, larger production teams, and collaborations with many licensors, including the motion picture industry – arcade games continued to perform well through the rest of the 1980s, even though porting of arcade titles to home consoles was done on an increasing basis. While the popularity of arcades would dip briefly, before resurfing twice –
once with the popularity of fighting games like *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter II* (1991), and again much later with rhythm games popularized by *Dance Dance Revolution* (1998) – based on the public and social aspects of gaming within the youth culture, the advancing technology of both home computers and consoles meant that the primary allure of the arcades, namely their advanced graphics, were seeing parity with the home market, which also offered more complex, and time-intensive, play. While computer gaming was increasing, the release of the NES single-handedly rejuvenated console gaming. The rebirth of the home console market, staggering briefly after the video game crash, reasserted the position of video games not only within US but also global culture.

The history of Nintendo – enough to fill several volumes – has been well covered in Sheff’s superlative *Game Over – Press Start to Continue* (1999) and Inoue’s *Nintendo Magic* (2010). Several key details about this company, however, are worth noting with regard to the video game industry and ultimately some intersections with or impacts on the film industry. An analysis of the film and video game industries during the rise of Nintendo would be remiss without noting one of the company’s earliest, but very influential, forays into the association between the businesses. That Nintendo’s history is full of lawsuits cannot be denied, but many companies in, or related to, the video game business were prone to suing each other as the medium was developing and ideas were being bandied about with all the innovation occurring. As a video game company, Nintendo’s forays into gaming included a number of titles that would be unlikely to sound familiar to any but the most dedicated of video game historians: Japan

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156 Much like US film companies had felt threatened by home video cassette rentals, before ultimately realizing them for a hugely profitable revenue stream, Nintendo also felt threatened by video game rentals. In trying to stop the burgeoning industry of video game rentals, Nintendo refused to sell games directly to video rental stores, and Nintendo even went so far as to take rental giant Blockbuster to court in 1989 (Sheff, 285). Ultimately, Blockbuster was given a preliminary injunction that prohibited it from copying manuals, but the rental of games was never deemed illegal.
exclusive titles *EVR Race* (1975), *Computer Othello* (1978), and *Space Fever* (1979); *Sheriff* (1979), released in the US by Exidy as *Bandido* (1980); and *Space Firebird* (1980), released by Gremlin/SEGA in the US.\(^{157}\) Another game, *Radar Scope* (1980), was a modest success in Japan and was exported to the US for the newly-formed Nintendo of America; however, several months had gone by and the game had lost a substantial amount of interest, so developer Shigeru Miyamoto was tasked with tweaking the game to make it appealing again. Rather than engaging in graphic embellishments, Miyamoto wound up creating an entirely new game to be installed in the *Radar Scope* arcade cabinets: *Donkey Kong*. Definitely an auteur of video game design, Miyamoto’s creation became a hit beyond anything Nintendo could have conceived, creating a global franchise and entering permanently into the popular consciousness of gamers and non-gamers alike. The video game about Jumpman (later renamed Mario) attempting to rescue his stolen girlfriend from a crazy, barrel-throwing gorilla was notable for being the first use of visual storytelling in a video game through the rudimentary cut scenes featured at the beginning or ending of some of the levels. Miyamoto himself has commented on the influence of films on him personally, citing *Raiders of the Lost Ark* as his favorite movie and George Lucas as his idol (Sheff, 53).

The success of *Donkey Kong* did not go unnoticed by the video game and film industries, particularly by MCA Universal. In *Universal City Studios, Inc. v. Nintendo Co., Ltd.*, MCA Universal sued Nintendo (and Coleco, which had included the home version of *Donkey Kong* as its flagship title for the Colecovision system) over copyright violations, claiming that *Donkey Kong* was derivative work of the film *King Kong* (1933). Nintendo’s lawyer, Howard Lincoln, who would go on to become a Senior Vice President of the company, discovered that Universal

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\(^{157}\) Nintendo’s *Laser Clay Shooting System* (1973) predates *EVR Race*, but Nintendo official company policy is that *EVR Race* is its first true video game.
didn’t actually own the copyright to *King Kong*, since MCA Universal had previously won a lawsuit declaring *King Kong* in the public domain. Lincoln not only won the lawsuit, but also got Universal to pay all of Nintendo’s legal costs and return the royalties it had earlier accepted from Coleco. Furthermore, it was ruled that Tigervision’s *King Kong* (1982), which the company had licensed from Universal, was too much of a clone of Nintendo’s *Donkey Kong* and Tiger Toys had to pay its royalties to Nintendo (Herman, 73). The case was an enormous victory for Nintendo, which was still a newcomer to the US video game market, gave them a notable economic boost, and established Nintendo as a major player in the industry able to compete with the giants of American media (Sheff, 127). Eventually, Universal Studios would partner with Nintendo to produce *The Wizard* (1989), a movie about a video game competition that concluded with the revelation of an unreleased Nintendo game, *Super Mario Bros. 3* (1990). While many saw this collusion between the film and video game industries as nothing more than a feature-length commercial, the film’s box office take of $14 million was greatly surpassed by that of the game, which grossed more than $500 million and was the best selling game at the time of its release. The event marketing would continue with the Nintendo World Championship, a thirty-city, eight-month nationwide video game competition, that concluded with a grand finale at Universal Studios in December 1990. Peter Main, who would eventually become vice-president at Nintendo of America (NoA), advised NoA’s first president, Minoru Arakawa, that he felt it wise “to market video games like movies – released cautiously, rationed so that demand outpaced availability, and then withdrawn from circulation as soon as interest began to wane” (Sheff, 193). It was this marketing strategy that came to define Nintendo’s policy of not filling

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158 In his decision, US District Court Judge Robert W. Sweet noted that, even if MCA had owned the rights to *King Kong*, the game was so completely different from the movie that there would be no infringement (Sheff, 125).

159 Nintendo would go on to hold Campus Challenge events in 1991 and 1992. Both the World Championship and the Campus Challenges had the unintended effect of creating what are known as some of the most collectible game cartridges in the world, with the special cartridges made for the competitions selling from $10,000 to $20,000.
all of retailers’ orders, no matter what projected sales indicated. It also kept interest in their games high; in a time when the average commercial viability of a video cassette was three to four months, some Nintendo games generated sales for a year or more (Sheff, 194). After the bloating of the market during Atari’s era, this tactic kept Nintendo amazingly profitable.

That Nintendo was able to make such serious advancement in the US in such a short time did not go unnoticed by game developers and industry observers alike. In 1986 new video game consoles entered 1.4 million American households; of this number, Nintendo’s share was 1.1 million; in 1987, 4.1 million more home consoles were sold as Nintendo depleted its entire stock of 3 million systems (with demand for another 200,000), and the remaining 1.1 million were sold by Atari and another Japanese company, Sega, generating $750 million for Nintendo and its licensees in the US alone; in 1988 Nintendo’s US sales almost doubled as they advanced to $1.2 billion (Stern, 93). Despite articles reigniting the concerns about this new generation of video games that had been sounded years earlier, NES game consoles were in “an estimated 21 percent of American homes by the end of 1989” (Stern, 92). When Nintendo had systems in 34 million American homes, only 24 million had computers. Worldwide the number was closer to 50-60 million each for Nintendo systems and computers, but while there were many computer manufacturers, there was only one Nintendo (Sheff, 6). The increase in revenue would continue to develop at a staggering pace: in 1992, worldwide sales of game cartridges alone netted $7 billion for Nintendo meaning that “the company profited more than all the American movie studios combined and the three television networks combined” (Sheff, 5). These robust sales

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160 “Parents Fear Games Turn Their Kids into Zombies” that appeared in the 08 March 1988 Wall Street Journal is typical of the type of alarmism that reappeared in the wake of Nintendo’s success.
convinced many companies, including Lucasfilm and Disney, to form licensing agreements with Nintendo (Sheff, 8). About

Much like in the early days of cinema when filmmakers controlled both the production and distribution side of the business, Nintendo operated under a similarly monopolized model through a combination of technology interventions and extremely demanding business contracts. One of the innovations that Nintendo developed to combat piracy and tighten control of content by prohibiting unlicensed third-party games, such as what happened with the Atari 2600, was the development of the 10NES, a lock-out computer chip within each NES console that waited for authentication from a companion microchip in each NES cartridge. As Nintendo was the sole manufacturer of cartridges, it was able to set a minimum order threshold for licensees – 10,000 cartridges at $20 each, about double the actual cost of production – that guaranteed Nintendo a profit even if the games failed to sell. To keep demand for games strong by limiting the number available and by forcing developers to produce quality games that players wanted to buy, licensees could only make five games per year and were prevented from releasing them for other rival systems for two years (Sheff, 215). Additionally, Nintendo had the full right to review

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161 Nintendo’s very first licensing agreement, when it was just in the business of manufacturing the first plastic-coated playing cards in Japan, was with Disney to place Mickey Mouse and other characters on the backs of the cards (Sheff, 19).
162 Companies producing unlicensed games used a variety of bypass methods for the 10NES, including voltage spikes and cartridge dongles, but the stealing of the 10NES code from the US Patent and Trademark Office by Tengen, Atari’s NES games subsidiary, provoked a protracted lawsuit between the two companies, which was eventually settled due to technical advancements related to the initial patent. Galoob was also able to release its Game Genie, a hardware peripheral which attached to a game cartridge and modified the binary code of games so that players could add extra lives and special abilities or continue the game from points not originally intended. Nintendo was initially outraged and sued Galoob, claiming that the alteration of the game code was violating copyright law about derivative works, but the courts ruled in favor of Galoob. Ironically, many players who had ceased playing NES games started playing them again with the options that the Game Genie offered.
163 Konami was the first company to circumvent this rule, with Nintendo’s permission, by creating a subsidiary, Ultra, to gain a second game license. Ultra was able to secure a license with Mirage Studios to publish video games based on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT) franchise, which had sold $1 billion in merchandise across 30 countries by the end of 1990. Although it would not be until 2007 that a TMNT game would be based directly on a film, the first TMNT game (1989) for the NES sold 4 million cartridges and generated $125 million in sales for Konami. The second TMNT game, a port of Konami’s 1990 arcade game, was used to promote the theatrical release
the game as well as its associated artwork, packaging, and any promotional materials such as commercials or print advertisements. Those that were approved were granted a Nintendo “Seal of Quality”. Initially, in 1985, Nintendo only had 17 licensees for its NES, but the extreme profitability of the system’s sales caused that number to increase to 30 in 1986 and jump to 50 by 1988 (Sheff, 62).

Game developers had to decide about what properties to adapt given that they had a limited number of title slots per year. The first and most prominent US partner for Nintendo was Acclaim Entertainment, formed in 1987 by former Activision International president Greg Fischbach, and Acclaim specialized in porting television and movie titles to the NES (Forster, 87). Acclaim also adapted comic book characters and arcade titles into home games. By working with an already established property, Acclaim was able to extend the franchise effect of recognized titles and quickly generated robust sales, but their game quality began to suffer after Nintendo rescinded the licensing restrictions for multiple system releases in 1990 for all of Nintendo’s licensees. The reputation of Acclaim began to drop once the exclusivity clause was no longer in effect as it began to produce poorly crafted games. By the time the *Batman Forever* (1996) game was released, Acclaim had been cited for producing some of the worst video games of all time and contributing to the negative impression that film-to-game translations are substandard video games.

The same year that Nintendo made their decision about multiple system releases also saw the debut of their SNES console. The SNES could generate 32,000 colors, an important

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of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze* (1991) by offering free pizza with the purchase of the *TMNT 2* game for the NES.

164 Fischbach served as CEO of Acclaim until its demise in 2004, but more importantly he was the co-founder of both the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) and the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). The ESA is the video game industry’s lobbying group, and the ESRB is the industry’s self-regulating rating group.

165 Along with the Sega Genesis, the SNES dominated the fourth generation of console hardware, also known as the 16-bit era, that had originally begun with the release of NEC’s TurboGrafx-16 in 1987. Near the end of the 16-bit
technological advance “when video games began to incorporate real film footage” (Sheff, 357). For Nintendo, the restriction was still the medium of game cartridges at 8-10MB of data, while the CD-ROMs that the home computer industry and rival console companies such as Sega and Sony would champion in a few years could hold 650MB. Although cartridges still allowed for more corporate control by Nintendo, cartridges were much more expensive to produce than optical discs, and furthermore Nintendo did not anticipate how the CD-ROMs offered “mass storage [that] could be filled with digitized full-motion video, so that games would feel more like movies” (Sheff, 369). While Nintendo was critically lauded, and had achieved great commercial appeal, by creating games that provided immersive experiences for gamers, such as in Super Mario Bros. or The Legend of Zelda, the CD-ROM format combined with real-time 3D “fashioned virtual worlds and fostered whole new gaming experiences” that would have further benefited Nintendo (Forster, 144). As early as 1992, “multimedia” became a buzzword in consumer electronics. The promise was that multimedia would evolve into interactive media, coming closer to delivering a cinematic experience “so that viewers could influence the outcome of films or television programs” (Sheff, 368). Because of the technical capabilities of the CD-ROM, developers gravitated toward inspiration of existing visual media. Sega released a CD peripheral at the end of 1991, and to encourage development for it, Sega struck a deal with Sony to produce games based on its entertainment companies, including Columbia and TriStar studios (Sheff, 384). Olaf Olafsson, chief of Sony Electronic Publishing, said, “With film and music, the games will be much more interesting…By owning a studio, we can get involved right from the era, many games flooded the market in a manner similar to what caused the video game crash in the second generation, but because the sixth generation of hardware was ready to go a second video game crash never happened.

166 FMV was initially coded using the Motion Picture Experts Group’s first phase for audio and video compression, known as MPEG-1, created in 1988. This was used as the standard for Video CDs (VCDs) beginning in 1993, with DVDs and digital video broadcasting (DVB) using MPEG-2 in 1995, and MPEG-4 being in use since 1998. MPEG-4 actually moves the efficient coding of video closer to computer graphics applications, essentially treating all of the data as the same for rendering purposes.
beginning, during the writing of the movie. We can get footage as it’s being filmed. We can say, ‘Can you film the backstage in a certain way, because we need it for a video game?’” (Perry, 165-66). With regard to the combination of the increased storage of the CD-ROM and developments in gaming hardware, the ability to approximate a more authentic cinematic aesthetic made the prospect of film-to-game translations even more attractive, particularly since the digital technologies were bringing the film and game industries into closer alignment. Tom Kalinske, then president and CEO of Sega of America, remarked that he had spoken to Columbia Pictures president Peter Gruber “about shooting footage for games at the same time as they’re filming” (Sheff, 384). The first film that this was done with was *Jurassic Park*, a film notable for its use of computers to generate its special effects.

The power of optical discs in turn drove much of console development from this point onwards, from peripherals for existing cartridge systems like the Sega Genesis and Atari Jaguar to new systems designed around CD-ROM (SNK Neo Geo CD, which also introduced the first memory card for game systems, Philips CD-I, Panasonic’s 3DO Interactive Multiplayer, Sega Saturn, and most significantly the Sony PlayStation) and DVD (Microsoft Xbox and, again most significantly, Sony PlayStation 2). Hom cinephiles were specifically targeted with Nuon enhanced DVD players released by Samsung and Toshiba. The Nuon chipset featured a 128-Bit processor that offered extra features for digital zooming, fast-forwarding, and frame scaling as well as the ability to play games, but only seven Nuon-enhanced films and eight games were released for the system. The technical prowess of the system was not enough of a draw to bring the film and video game industries even closer, highlighting the need for more careful consideration of the nature of their relationship. Forcing film and video game properties together

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167 The next generation of these consoles would split along the HD-DVD (Microsoft) and Blu-Ray (Sony) formats, and while Blu-Ray won out, the standard DVD still functions as a major format for games.
through technological commonalities was far from a guarantee of success. In the interim, Nintendo would continue to resist going to optical storage, opting to continue with the cartridge format for its next system in 1996, the N64, even though the N64 used Silicon Graphics (SGI) chips and SGI was involved in state-of-the-art computer special effects for movies, including *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator 2*. Finally in 2001, with the release of the Gamecube, which used a proprietary mini-DVD format developed by Matsushita that loaded faster than a normal DVD and provided an extra measure of copy protection as the disc was physically smaller at three inches than the regular five inch DVD, Nintendo created a system based around an optical disc. The Panasonic Q, released only in Japan, combined the Gamecube with a DVD movie player at double the price of the GC. Nintendo rival Sony had released its PlayStation2 system the year before, and its DVD-ROM drive doubled as a movie player, while the console’s architecture allowed it to handle enough processing power “to display particle effects and transparency at 600 frames per second, at the same time rendering cinematics and physics in real-time” (Forster, 181). Although the dominance of the optical disc format is now slowly being challenged by digital distribution methods through the internet, the rise of the discs that had come to dominate the mid-1990s gaming technologies created a brief spike in film-to-game translations followed by several years of declining licenses as the development cycles for games began to become longer through developers taking advantage of the possibilities of the new format. The next decade of development would bring more complexity to film-to-game translations with the introduction of progressively powerful gaming hardware augmented by

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168 Much like Atari passed on marketing Nintendo’s new game system under their label, Nintendo would similarly misfire with Sony’s new digital disc based system, and Sony would go on to independently release the PlayStation under their own brand.

169 Sega would try to compete in the home console market one final time with their Dreamcast console, which used a proprietary 1.2GB GD-ROM. Although networked gaming was an idea proposed in the era of the Atari 2600, the Dreamcast was also the first console to be designed with a built-in modem.
greater economic collusion through the creation of media conglomerates, industry deregulation, and media convergence.
For the video game industry, the fifth generation of console development that had begun in 1994 with the Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation, as well as the Nintendo N64 in 1996, was augmented by continued innovation in computer gaming technologies coupled with the presence of the internet. Computer gaming machines of this generation were now powerful enough to comfortably imitate the 8- and 16-bit systems of the previous generation, leading to a rise in emulation, again aided by distribution of older game code over the internet.\footnote{The interest in emulation, which continues in both legal and illegal ways, pointed to the continued alignment between home computers and home consoles, a distinction that points to the erasure of some of the boundaries between the two groups of systems.} With the public release of Mosaic 1.0 in 1993 by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois, the ability to graphically represent data via computer networks made the data sharing possibilities attractive and accessible to those outside of academic or technical areas, and just one year later growing public interest had moved the internet into the mainstream.\footnote{By 1996, the term “internet” had become commonplace, and both 1996 and 1997 saw astonishing growth in the networks and the data available on them.}

The internet also provided gamers with a way to share information about games outside of more traditional media pathways, which would grow to lag behind the reporting cycles of print and even broadcast journalism.\footnote{Aside from the occasional television special, very little of broadcast journalism attempted to cover video games, except to report on major sales or sensational events. The G4 cable channel, founded in 2002 by Comcast and Insight Communications, became the first television network devoted solely to video games. In 2004 it merged with the TechTV cable channel, which was founded in 1998 by Ziff Davis, a publisher of print and online media to report on computers, technology, and the internet.} For computer gamers, the very systems they were using to play games also became portals to reading about games, commenting on games, downloading games, and sharing modifications to games. Call centers and strategy guides for video game assistance
started to become redundant as gamers would provide their own walkthroughs, cheats, observations and other technical support about the games they were playing.\textsuperscript{173}

Given the technologies of the time, the media industry as a whole had to reevaluate its position with regard to how franchises would grow given the internet’s capability to put data into new configurations, many of which were outside of direct corporate control.\textsuperscript{174} Through its advertising, Sony pushed the idea of its PlayStation console as a lifestyle accessory for its target demographic, an idea that would continue to be developed through the release of the PlayStation 2 and finally find full realization in the PlayStation 3 as a system that not only plays games but also allows for web browsing, social networking, and accessing other media such as film and music. This idea is also seen in current (seventh) generation consoles from Microsoft and Nintendo as their consoles are also meant to be centerpieces of entertainment for the home user.\textsuperscript{175} The sixth generation consoles – Sega’s Dreamcast, Sony’s PlayStation 2, Nintendo’s GameCube, and Microsoft’s Xbox – saw a move towards more computer-like architectures in gaming consoles, helping the developers of console and computer software grow even closer with the added benefit of incorporating some of the same technologies that were being used by the film industry, particularly in the area of digital effects. The robust technology used by home gamers indicated the end of the arcade market as a significant venue for video game businesses,

\textsuperscript{173} While computer gamers were largely at the forefront of this development, home console users could also easily find information about their games online as well, and gamers who enjoyed older generations of games started to form internet communities based on their historical and collecting interests.

\textsuperscript{174} In particular, the rise of software piracy became particularly intense with the widespread use of the internet. Although piracy had always been an issue since the beginning of video games, the ease of distribution coupled with the ability to explain how to pirate the software as well as make it functional through cracks, hacks, or mods exacerbated the worry of many companies as many outside of the video game industry, particularly those in film, television, and music.

\textsuperscript{175} One can find earlier attempts at such configurations in video game history, but the technological power combined with internet distribution finally achieved this goal.
mainly as online gaming replaced much of the social function of arcades. Much like the fifth generation was aided by CD-ROM technology, the sixth generation used DVDs for game media, as well as both flash and hard drive storage for game data, allowing developers to produce games that were both longer and more visually appealing. For film-to-game translations, this meant that the gaming experience was typically longer than the movie going experience, with the typical console title in this era providing 8-10 hours of game play. This disparity between the time it takes to process a movie viewing experience and a game playing experience is a crucial element in understanding why film-to-game translations often fail but where they might also excel.

While the precedent had been set in the early days of gaming to isolate an essential action or limited set of actions to adapt from a film – such as in *James Bond 007* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark* – to suggest what the film had already established, as the technology progressed games could provide more narrative, spatial, and visual content. This meant that the abstraction, compared to the cinematic referent, that had defined early video game adaptations was slowly being replaced by more definition, both in the relationship of the video game and film images and the amount of content. The ability to explore beyond the world of the film became a major selling point for film-to-game translations:

> Video games do not open up spaces from within the storyworld with complete freedom, but they do at least allow players to dawdle in some spaces through which a film charges, and they often render these spaces with considerably more attention to detail than do the films. (Gray, 191)

Navigation and exploration of virtual space is often an essential part of many games, offering what Lev Manovich refers to as a “navigable space interface” or an intrinsic trait of the interface

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*176 Although arcades still exist – a few almost as museums for the history of video games, most others a mixture of video games and amusement park style skill games – in the US they have become a pale reflection of their past prominence.*
of video games.177 The earliest days of video gaming, in titles such as *Computer Space* or *Colossal Cave Adventure* (1976), certainly foregrounded the entire medium’s predilection with the exploration of virtual space. Because of the theoretically limitless capacity of each digital environment, putting parameters around each game projection is an important design consideration. For film-to-game translations, this sometimes manifests in a collision between the world of the film and the world of the game which is less than satisfactory for many gamers. As Jeff Nachbaur, a video game producer for Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, Inc. (WBIE) noted:

Movies and games, despite what many think, are incredibly different mediums…90% of all movie tie-in games are action-adventure, content-driven games that try to re-create the movie in some way. Some are good, many aren’t…[a game is] something fun that doesn’t try to replace the movie experience, but instead allows you to live in the same world as the movie and embrace what good games are about.

The invitation to enter other worlds through different media might appear to be especially rooted in narrative, and how each medium best engages with that, but the technical considerations that mark the distinctions between them are as equally important. The form and content of productions – be they theatrical plays, novels, films, video games, and so on – require that the methods of adaptation between them need more thoughtful consideration, despite whatever similarities they may share. Because of the inherent visually mediated nature of film and video games, comparisons, and ultimately influences, between the media seemed likely based on perceived resemblances; however, the similarities and differences in narrative, aesthetics, and economics meant that film

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177 The interface includes not only output devices (a screen, speakers, force-feedback controls) and input devices (a mouse, keyboard, joystick, microphone) and graphical onscreen elements such as buttons, sliders, scroll bars, HUDs, and any game design element used by the player, but also the sense-making apparatus that a player brings to a game that is informed by other texts such as film, literature, advertising, product reviews, online discussions, and so on.
studios interested in producing video games, either directly licensed on properties or developing new ones, might want to take a more active role in their creation.


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178 One executive for Warner Bros. Interactive proposed that royalty payments for game properties would be attached to reviews such that more positive reaction would increase payments and negative press would reduce payments to video game developers. This system was approved and used on *Batman Begins* (2005).
20th Century Fox, which had been the first film studio to get directly involved with video game production, returned to video games with Fox Interactive, founded in 1996 as the interactive entertainment branch of 20th Century Fox, a division of News Corporation. Although it does develop some original properties, the company largely concentrates on creating games based on its movie and television entertainment brands. In its first year of operation, Fox Interactive released four titles based on popular Fox licenses: *The Simpsons Cartoon Studio*, *Die Hard Trilogy*, *Independence Day*, and *Virtual Springfield*. Today, the company continues to mine Fox titles to create video games such as *Aliens versus Predator*, *Aliens Vs. Predator 2 Primal Hunt*, *Alien Resurrection*, *Die Hard Trilogy 2: Viva Las Vegas*, *Die Hard: Vendetta*, *Die Hard 64*, *Pagemaster*, *Titan A.E.*, and *Planet of the Apes*. Founded in 1995 as a subsidiary of DreamWorks SKG, DreamWorks Interactive developed a few *Jurassic Park* titles as well as the Spielberg-created *Medal of Honor* (1999) series, one of the most highly regarded titles. In 2000, Electronic Arts acquired DreamWorks Interactive from DreamWorks and merged it with EA Pacific and Westwood Studios to form EA Los Angeles (EALA). As EALA, the developer was responsible for other film-to-game titles such as *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* and *The Lord of the Rings: Battle for Middle-Earth* series.

Much like THQ had done before, Activision has actively been involved in acquiring other game developers, although since Activision is an older company, it has been doing this longer, albeit much more aggressively in recent years, which is why it is worth noting here. Activision was founded in 1979 and bears the important distinction of being the first independent developer and distributor of video games for gaming consoles, beginning with the Atari VCS.179 In its

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179 Prior to the formation of Activision, software for video game consoles was published exclusively by the makers of the systems. The programmers received no credit for the games they created nor were they given financial rewards for games that sold well. After watching a number of games turn into multi-million-dollar hits, a number of Atari programmers decided to quit the company and form Activision. In addition to producing some of the best
early days, Activision was almost solely concerned with creating original games, although they did obtain the license for games based *Ghostbusters* and *Ghostbusters II*. Activision had a series of successes and setbacks over the years, but it has grown to become one of the largest third party video game publishers in the world, becoming the number one US publisher of 2007 according to the NPD Group (Radd, 1). While part of this success is related to the performance of franchises such as *Guitar Hero*, *Tony Hawk*, and *Call of Duty*, much of revenue generated in 2007 was the direct result of film-to-game titles like *Spider-Man 3*, *Shrek the Third*, and *Transformers*. In December 2007, Activision announced that it would merge with Vivendi Games to create a new company called Activision Blizzard, which will further entrench its position in the top tier of game publishing.

Notably, Activision has made a policy of pursuing film licenses in recent years. In 2001, Activision acquired rights to Columbia Pictures’ feature film *Spider-Man*. In 2003, Activision and DreamWorks SKG inked a multi-year, multi-property publishing agreement. Perhaps the biggest acquisition for Activision happened in 2006, when it secured the video game license to make games based on the world of James Bond from MGM Interactive, upsetting rival publisher Electronic Arts who had long held the video game rights to the James Bond franchise. An exclusive agreement between Activision and MGM Interactive began in September 2007 with Activision’s first game to be released in 2008 to promote the new Bond film, *Quantum of Solace*. Following the closely watched acquisition of BioWare Pandemic by Electronic Arts near the end of 2007 for $800 million, Activision and Vivendi Games merged in early 2008 to create Activision Blizzard, with a combined net worth of $18.9 billion (to EA’s $3.8 billion). This put several high profile film-to-game licenses in one company, including ones for James Bond,
Marvel Studios, DreamWorks, *Scarface: The World Is Yours*, and *Ghostbusters*, among many more extremely lucrative original properties.

Despite the plethora of film-to-game titles released in this period, the most definitive are typically original properties that incorporated cinematic qualities while still being innovative in their design. Many significant gaming titles like *Super Mario 64* (1996), *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (1998), *Grand Theft Auto III* (2001) and its sequels, and *Halo: Combat Evolved* (2001), and these “more complex games hinted that interactive imagery might someday match films in simulating movement through three-dimensional space” (Thompson, 229). Some of these that had interesting intersections with the film industry were released in this period including: *Alien vs. Predator* (1994), which adapted the two 20th Century Fox Studios properties that had been explored in films and comic books; *Tomb Raider* (1996), which created a video game icon and spawned an incredibly lucrative franchise, including the highest grossing game-to-film adaptation; both *Resident Evil* (1996) and *Silent Hill* (1999), which popularized the survival horror genre and created their own film-to-game adaptations; *GoldenEye 007* (1997), which helped popularize the FPS genre on home consoles and became a very successful film-to-game adaptation example; and *Metal Gear Solid* (1998), notable for its use of complex storyline, voice acting, and cinematic presentation.

**Adaptation and Sequel: The Thing**

Since it was first published by John Campbell in 1938, “Who Goes There?” has endured notoriety primarily for being the inspiration for two film adaptations: *The Thing from Another World* (1951) and *John Carpenter’s The Thing* (1982). While the former is now regarded more as exemplary of Cold War science fiction and less as a faithful version of the original story,  

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180 The story was also done in comic book form as part of the *Questar Illustrated Science Fiction Classics* collection (1979) by Golden Press (a minor player in the comics industry whose only other titles were *The Amazing Exploits of Jeremy Bear* and an adaptation of the 1981 film *Clash of the Titans*).
the latter is a highly lauded offering from Carpenter’s collected body of work, notable not only for its special effects and dark ending but also for its revisitation to Campbell’s story.\footnote{Carpenter’s film substitutes an organic fluidity that evokes an almost Lovecraftian madness to The Thing as suggested by Campbell’s continued description of the creature. There has also been much speculation that Campbell’s novella was inspired by H.P. Lovecraft’s 1931 short story “At the Mountains of Madness” and its gruesome creatures, the shoggoths.}

Although minor theatrical successes, both films have received much critical attention over the years and have reached a broader audience thanks to television and video rental. In particular, 2004 saw both films released on DVD, with \textit{John Carpenter’s The Thing} updating a 1998 release thanks to Universal investing in a restored and remastered source print.

As both film and video game production have become increasingly dependent on technological developments in the computer industry; this commonality has begun to blur the defined margins of each media, particularly when one considers the idea of narrative. This feeds into the ways in which narrative may be expanded, fractured, or otherwise altered as it moves between, or is shared among, film and video games. Video games that are both adaptations and narrative extensions (as prequels, sequels, and so on) are neither traditional narratives nor completely different aesthetic species from other formats of storytelling. Instead, video games share traits with narrative structures from other media, often using well-known stories, genres, and tropes as their foundation. In particular, the treatment of narrative with film-to-game adaptations moves into further considerations of transmedia expectancy. Throughout the development of video games, narrative has progressed from a paragraph of text setting up the parameters of game play to increasingly complex stories that may take many hours, days, or even longer to process. Even though digital media have the ability to change narrative construction, most products are concerned with producing a comprehensible story: “Narrative is still important, then, but games allow players a different entry point into that narrative, and in so
doing…illustrate how varied viewers’ uses for and pleasures from narrative are” (Gray, 191).

Exploration of narrative within a virtual culture makes connections between various media by combining written, visual, and auditory information. A player may find the level of interactivity related to how open or closed the narrative structure of the game is in relation to the source film. Using existing interest to continue product development aids sales, often with less expense than making another film.

*The Thing* was released in 2002 as a computer game by Black Label Games under license from Universal Interactive, a division of Universal Pictures. The *Thing* mixes elements from Campbell’s story and Carpenter’s film to create a “sequel” to Carpenter’s film, an idea that Carpenter has continually rebuffed over the years despite the success of his film, offers from studios, and even a few prospective scripts. In deciding not to duplicate either plot, then CEO of Universal Interactive Jim Wilson, articulated the decision in these terms: “I don’t want to do ‘See the movie, play the game,’ because we know how the movie ends…It’s absolutely to build the franchises, to extend the franchises. Consumers don’t want a rehash of a movie” (Thompson, 232). Carpenter joins other directors, such as Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*) and Sam Raimi (*Evil Dead*), who have had video game adaptations of their films that function as narrative extensions outside of their original cinematic constructs. A quote from Carpenter himself is featured prominently on the box for the game: “This is one intense action/horror game. It is faithful to my 1982 movie and includes an incredibly cool and handsome character in Dr. Faraday. You

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182 Vivendi Universal is also responsible for other studio to game properties such as *Jurassic Park III, The Hulk, The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, The Chronicles of Riddick™: Escape from Butcher Bay - Developer's Cut, Van Helsing, Fight Club, and Robots.*

gotta play this one, man – it’ll blast you against the wall.” This endorsement not only helps to legitimize the transference of narrative from one medium to another but also aids sales potential.

The game itself is very conscious of its cinematic roots, offering the player a third person perspective for character control and incorporating many cut scenes to enhance its story. Unlike the dominant FPS genre, many games built from a film source use a third-person perspective; rather than occupying the point of view of the main character (i.e., seeing through a character’s eyes), a user instead directs that character. This adds to the cinematic aesthetic of the game through the illusion of control with the actions by and on the principle character. Since players of these games are typically viewers of the source films, this creates an atmosphere of familiarity for users who know the film, but it is a teasing familiarity. The game’s narrative is based both on audience knowledge of the film and what the film does not show; it plays in the interstices left by the film, and this mix of material from two quite divergent texts creates a kind of suturing between the two, resulting in a text that is not entirely in the realm of either. This possibility for divergent readings, however, does not damage or confuse either the cinematic or video game text, but exemplifies narrative strategies in the refusal to authorize one particular reading (despite any sort of authorial sanctioning, by director or film studio). While many video games based on films also adhere to a linearity of plot (such as many films do), others take advantage of multithreaded stories to generate divergent readings, generating several possibilities of interpretation that is not possible (or is extremely hard to do) in cinema.

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184 In commenting on horror games, the tension between what can be controlled in the game and what is scripted to happen is something that Tanya Krzywinska cites as an experience that might exceed the terror of horror films, namely in the way that interactivity, or player choice, can be selectively denied and create a greater sense of loss of agency (216).

185 Arguably, this is also done as a marketing ploy not only to offer players a chance to explore, and thus flesh out, a cinematic world but also to preserve story continuity should a film studio later decide to produce more sequels (theatrical or home video).
The Thing video game picks up shortly after the end of the events in the 1982 film. The gamer plays Captain Blake, a character sent in as part of a military rescue team to investigate the loss of communication with the outpost. During this process, the player is split off from the main group and has to lead a smaller squad – comprised of soldiers, medics, and engineers – through various missions, effectively capturing “the sense of paranoia, horror, and confusion that pervades the film by putting the player’s avatar in charge of a group who may or may not become ‘infected’” (Gray, 189). This is problematized in the game through the introduction of a Trust/Fear meter for each character encountered throughout the adventure. The player can positively and negatively influence each character through actions such as giving weapons and ammunition, exposing infected personnel, performing blood tests, and administering medical supplies (healing and adrenaline). The non-player characters continue to be influenced by the game environment around them, so leading them through or leaving them in a place that is unsafe or shows signs of disturbance can affect their levels of Fear and Trust. Having the player be both responsible for and somewhat suspicious of all NPCs that are encountered helps to heighten the sense of paranoia from Carpenter’s film in addition to the sense of isolation.

Black Label’s The Thing moves from the familiar environs of the 1982 film’s locations – such as the American and Norwegian camps – into a more sinister, and classically clichéd, secret scientific outpost run by the military, who are very interested in developing The Thing into a bio- weapon. Campbell’s story originally ended with a pensive MacReady looking at a departing albatross and wondering if The Thing had indeed somehow escaped, only to be rebuked by Norris, who invokes “the grace of God” and favoritism for humanity. Looking into a more ambiguous future appeared in the 1951 film as the reporter Scotty encouraged everyone to “Keep watching the skies!” and Carpenter’s film ends with MacReady and Childs sharing a final drink,
both too tired to spring any surprises on each other as they await the coming cold, and with it, death. The video game features the discovery of only one corpse – Childs – and Captain Blake is rescued after his final confrontation with the experiment gone awry by MacReady, flying a helicopter. It remains unclear, however, if this is really the human MacReady or an assimilated version.

The various adaptations of “Who Goes There?” contribute to or conflict with the narrative elements of the original print story. The function of narrative is especially important as it illustrates many questions about the structure of possible hybrids between print, film, comic books, and video games to produce a type of transmedia storytelling that is satisfactory for the user at any level of familiarity with which a text is approached. In other words, each (franchise) entry needs to be self-contained enough to enable autonomous consumption while sustaining a depth of experience that motivates more reading across the media. Offering new levels of experience and insight refreshes the narrative. Such a multilayered approach to “Who Goes There?” has the potential to enable a more complex, more sophisticated, more rewarding mode of narrative to emerge within the constraints of commercial entertainment.

**Narrative Play in Blade Runner**

With the increased power of technology available to developers, video games have increasingly come to resemble films, not only in the ways publishers market games but also in an increased concern with story and character in addition to game play as players looking for a more immersive experience will likely make connections beyond the action to the world and its characters. Westwood Studios took this trend another step further with the multilinear *Blade Runner*, a recreation and revision of the world created by Ridley Scott in his 1982 film of the
same title.\textsuperscript{186} Westwood’s \textit{Blade Runner} is essentially a point-and-click adventure. This means that the player uses a mouse to manipulate and examine items or other characters on screen. Unlike the dominant mode of first-person action that drives one of the most popular genres of computer games, \textit{Blade Runner} uses a third-person perspective: rather than occupying the position of the main character, a user instead directs that character, adding to the cinematic feel of the game.\textsuperscript{187} All of the characters in \textit{Blade Runner} were rendered as realistically as possible with the technology at the time by using texture-mapped polygons based on what the actors looked like and animated in part through actors wearing special motion capture suits. As the first adventure game to use real-time 3D models for the game characters, the move towards a more cinematic level of realism was particularly important in this film-to-game treatment.\textsuperscript{188}

The \textit{Blade Runner} game focuses its story on Ray McCoy, a Los Angeles police detective bumped up to the blade runner unit, who is working on a case at the same time as the film’s Deckard. While this fosters a familiarity for players who know the film, the game world of \textit{Blade Runner} elaborates upon the cinematic world of \textit{Blade Runner} in such a way that while the game’s narrative is rooted in player knowledge of the film, it plays in the suggestions left by the cinematic world with a sprinkling of elements from \textit{Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?} by Philip K. Dick.\textsuperscript{189} In this sense, it privileges a certain type of literacy for those players who are familiar with both the film and the source novel. This style of plot interlacing might encourage a

\textsuperscript{186} Interestingly, a \textit{Blade Runner} game had been released in 1985, but due to licensing restrictions, only the film’s score was available to the developers, which created some strange changes to the game.

\textsuperscript{187} The only first person perspective moments in the game occur during investigative sequences when using the esper unit to analyze photographs and the Voight-Kampff machine to test subjects for their empathy levels (and associated human or replicant status).

\textsuperscript{188} To get around the need for 3D hardware acceleration, and thus expand the market for the game to players who had not upgraded their technology, Westwood Studios developed a software solution to bypass a hardware requirement.

\textsuperscript{189} K. W. Jeter attempts something similar in his novels \textit{Blade Runner 2: The Edge of Human} and \textit{Blade Runner 3: Replicant Night}. Jeter’s proclaimed intention in writing the so-called sequels to Scott’s film is to try to resolve the differences between Dick’s novel and the film. Whether or not such a resolution was ever needed remains debatable.
franchise effect of textual acquisition in a consumer audience, or what is known in media economics as synergy, depending on how closely or distantly each product is related. This is a delicate balancing act because products that are too close are too reliant on each other to give a satisfactory sense of comprehension individually, while products that are too distant do not encourage users to seek out the other related works.\textsuperscript{190}

On the subject of cinema, Ridley Scott has said (to mixed criticism), “The background can be as important as the actor.” The developers at Westwood Studios apparently agree: they recreated Scott’s Los Angeles 2019 in meticulous detail. The game’s first sequence almost perfectly mirrors the film’s opening, except for the extreme eye close-ups. The opening crawl is exactly the same, right down to the red, italicized “Replicants” and the digitally reproduced Dantesque cityscape. Other sets from the film receive similar treatment: the police precinct, Chew’s workshop, the Bradbury Hotel, Taffy Lewis’s place, and Howie Lee’s sushi bar, complete with the buzzing neon dragon sign.\textsuperscript{191} After the opening city shots, rather than panning down to our protagonist, the game puts the user squarely inside Runciter’s animal shop. Two replicants, Clovis and Zuben, appear and ransack the business, massacring all the animals. Early in the scene, Runciter cradles a white dove in his hand, a dove which takes flight when Clovis breaks that hand. The arc of the dove’s flight, though indoors, is exactly the same as that of the dove at the film’s climax, which flies into a patch of blue sky after Roy Batty dies. Much has been made of this dove. Sharon Gravett, in her essay, “The Sacred and the Profane,” writes “Batty mimics Christ in [putting a nail through his hand] as well as in his salvation of Deckard, 

\textsuperscript{190} Perhaps the most recent example of this gone awry is with the film-to-game title \textit{Enter the Matrix} (2003), which along with \textit{The Animatrix} collection of nine animated short films and \textit{The Matrix} internet comics were necessary to understand the film \textit{The Matrix Reloaded} (2003), a promotional endeavor that ultimately proved unsuccessful. \textsuperscript{191} As another example, Ray McCoy looks and acts very much like the film’s Deckard. McCoy gives periodic voice-over narration, much as Deckard does in the film’s theatrical release and the initial video release. The matter-of-fact voice-over provides clues about the nature of his story and the position of his character.
accompanied symbolically by his release of a dove at his death.” David Desser notes in “The New Eve” that “the dove, of course, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit” and Rachela Morrison similarly notes that “the dove or holy spirit which flies from Roy’s hands as he dies suggests that Roy’s humanity triumphs over the domination of his nonhumanity.” When the dove takes flight, Clovis snatches it out of the air with the quickness and grace that only a Nexus-6 replicant could possess and then breaks the bird in two. This amounts to the game sending a message: this might look like the film, but many things in do not invite a one-to-one correspondence and the developers are breaking with the established elements of the film even as the reference them. For players familiar with the source film, this break allows the companion narrative of the game to function next to that of the film and accept the game play as designed by the programmers.

Even before its adaptation into a multilinear computer game, *Blade Runner* was a fairly open text for interpretation, which probably contributed to its appeal. Gravett discusses the ambiguity of *Blade Runner* that leads to opposing readings: “This possibility for divergent readings, however, does not damage or confuse the text of *Blade Runner* as some critics suggest, but actually exemplifies one of its central strategies: a doubleness, a refusal to authorize one particular reading.” This appears to be a direct response to William Kolb’s assertion that “the film’s many contradictions and frequent thwarting of expectations, results in an uneven, muddled feel.” Westwood’s game operates even more fully in these ambiguities not only because each potential plot contain its own divergent readings but also because there are twelve possible endings within the game. Rather than being muddled, the play experience offers many combinations of actions that lead to different results because as the player is moving through the game, so too are the game’s NPCs, and their actions combine with those of the player to produce permutations on the outcomes. This programming move certainly adds to the replayability of the
game. Although replay value is often discussed in relation to video games, the concept of an audience finding entertainment value in repeated exposure to a media text has ramifications for cinema, theater, music, and so on; these are most immediately expressed economically, while more lasting impact might be expressed in aesthetic or emotional responses.192

As one might expect of a game based on a movie based on a Dick novel, the plot becomes rife with questions of identity and the nature of what is real as many of his fictions involve shifting identities and their convergent realities. While exploring problems with shifting identities in printed text and film have been undertaken a fair amount, particularly in the twentieth century, this sort of movement is very enticing in a computer game as many games offer a chance to explore alternate realities and try different identities. The most successful film-to-game adaptations are those that take what is familiar from the source film and repackage it into an experience that utilizes the best qualities of the video game medium. This requires an understanding of narrative possibilities as suggested by the film and then the extrapolation of one or more of those into a design model that is a satisfying play experience on its own, which is then further enhanced by the transmedia resonance with the source film.

Reflections in a *GoldenEye*

For many gamers, the apex of film-to-game translations would be *GoldenEye 007*. Much of its success stemmed from its ability to successfully replicate what computer gamers had been enjoying for years; not only did the game offer an outstanding FPS experience for home console players, but also it offered the ability to play against, and with, other gamers and have the experience of competition as well as community. Also, with the lowered expectations that are

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192 The old adage “easy to learn, difficult to master” was at the core of many early video game design philosophies and is often seen in what appear to be simple games, such as *Pong* or *Tetris*. Replayability drives a number of other design considerations like unlockable content, alternate play modes, and multiple endings. Perhaps the genre of video games that relies most on replayability is the MMORPG, primarily through the human-to-human interactions necessitated by the game itself.
attached to film-to-game translations, the fact that this attempt was a well-designed game and a reasonably thoughtful adaptation, of the film and much of the Bond canon, surprised many players and enhanced the overall favoritism towards the title.

Beginning with the earliest adaptations for the home console market and moving through the rise of home computer gaming in the 1980s to modern console releases beginning in the 1990s including *GoldenEye 007, James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing*, a digital return to *From Russia with Love*, and most recently *Quantum of Solace*, over 20 video game titles feature Bond. Over their shared history, the Bond franchise and the video game industry have intersected in many ways, sometimes fruitfully and at other times unevenly. Translating Bond as “a trademark which, having established a certain degree of brand loyalty among certain sections of the cinema-going public, remains a viable investment” to the medium of video games has met with a great deal of success and occasional disappointment (Bennett and Woollacott, 294). In the April 2007 issue of *Game Informer*, James Bond was ranked fifteenth in a listing of the top 20 best selling video game properties, moving 30 million units in the life of the franchise, and ninth on a list of the top 10 intellectual properties derived from a non-gaming source (selling 7 million units during the last console generation alone). In a field dominated by gaming icons such as Mario and Pokémon, successful series like *Grand Theft Auto* and *The Sims*, and lucrative film franchises from *Star Wars* and *Spider-Man*, James Bond has managed to hold his own over the past quarter century.

The Bond aesthetic in video games must negotiate the influence of its visual presentation in cinema, and its derivations from that of its literary source, as well as the technical capabilities of the hardware and genre styles in the video game industry. The drive for visual spectacle in the Bond films is replicated in the video games; the cinema of attraction is mirrored in the attract
modes of the games themselves. As a mixture of action, adventure, and stealth, the Bond films offer lucrative gaming potential in terms of genre adaptation. This chase at first to suggest and then to wholly replicate a cinematic aesthetic within the construct of the games is a move which parallels greater trends in the video game industry to achieve a sense of immersion, photorealism (as defined by cinema, which itself is already an approximation of non-filmic reality), and verisimilitude. Bond undergoes numerous transformations in his move to video games as both he and the industry change over time.

Even with eleven titles, across ten different hardware platforms, produced over a decade beginning in 1983, the popularity of the James Bond video games had yet to reach the level of success of the films on which they were based. After a run in the early 1990s, the game industry followed the hiatus of the films, waiting to see what was next. With the arrival of GoldenEye in 1995, the smash success of the film ($353,400,000 total box office against a $60,000,000 budget) reawakened the franchise potential for Bond video games. Unlike the handful of titles in the 1980s that had been released in the same year as the films from which they were derived, the GoldenEye 007 game was not released until 25 August 1997, well after the original release of the film, but in advance of Tomorrow Never Dies (released 12 December 1997). Designed by the British company Rare, Ltd. for the Nintendo 64 (N64) system, GoldenEye 007 is a first-person shooter that not only includes explicit elements from the film (characters, locations, narrative) but also expands on what was originally seen in the film. In a few different guises, Rare had been around since 1982, and since 1985 had formed a close relationship with Nintendo, first designing well-received titles (such as RC Pro-Am and Battletoads) for the NES and then producing the smash hit Donkey Kong Country (1994) for the SNES. This prompted Nintendo to purchase 25% of Rare’s stock and make it a strongly allied second-party developer, which put
Rare in both an advantageous and a demanding situation to deliver a strong title for the upcoming Nintendo 64 (N64) system to be released in 1996. Since *GoldenEye 007* was originally announced for the SNES, transitioning the title to the greater processing power of the N64 meant that the developers would have more opportunity, and more pressure, to showcase the features of the system. The long development cycle also gave the designers time to adjust much of the game engine and visual representation as well as to improve the enemy artificial intelligence (AI) and give the player more sophisticated adversaries worthy of a character with Bond’s reputation. Finally, even though Bond is a global phenomenon, his roots are thoroughly British, and allocating the project to a British company helped to validate the line of succession for the publisher, Nintendo of America, itself a subsidiary of Nintendo Co., Ltd. in Japan.

In the same manner that *GoldenEye* was to (re)present Bond for the 1990s – “the new Bond was to be technological rather than physical” – the game was considered to be a crucial development for consoles, which had been lagging behind home computer systems in gaming prowess (Willis, 169). For several years prior to *GoldenEye 007*, primarily computer gamers had been enjoying the first-person shooter genre, which merges first-person action with cinematic sequences, first done as cut scenes and then later rendered in-game using the game engine, further erasing the line between scripted scenes and player agency. Titles such as *Doom* (1993) and *Quake* (1996) not only demonstrated the processing power of home computers over home consoles but moreover showcased an increased interrelation between game story and game

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193 Eventually, five of the top 20 all-time-best-selling N64 titles were developed by Rare, including *GoldenEye 007*, which became the second-best-selling game in North America and eventually moved over 8 million units in worldwide sales. Between 1996-2001, Rare produced some exceptional jump & runs, driving games, and shoot ‘em ups for the N64, “but none of these titles could ever match the cult status of the 007 first person shooter” (Forster, 165). In a move to further legitimize its Xbox system, Microsoft eventually acquired complete rights to Rare in 2002 at a total cost of $377 million.

194 Rare would be awarded the Best UK Developer Award by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) during the 1998 Interactive Entertainment Awards, while *GoldenEye 007* earned the Best Game award in the same year.
design. Initially, the design for *GoldenEye 007* was to be a rail shooter similar to Sega’s *Virtua Cop* (1994). While a rail shooter does provide a first-person perspective on the action, the player has little or no control over the character’s movement and instead only directs the targeting reticle of a weapon, typically a light gun controller used by the game player, in dispatching enemies, destroying the game environment, and sometimes rescuing hostages and other non-lethal targets. While the idea of stopping hostile forces and saving innocents seems completely in line with the Bond ethos, the limited style of interaction was not a radical departure when compared to the shoot-em-ups of previous games. Only after several months of development was the initial design modified to turn the game into an FPS. The success of replicating this genre of game on the N64, and advancing the gaming possibilities inherent in the world and narrative, established *GoldenEye 007* as an important title in the widespread acceptance of the overall FPS genre. Moreover, as it was an exclusive title for the N64 system, the popularity of the game – both in terms of critical praise and entertainment value – caused many consumers to buy the N64 system solely to play *GoldenEye 007* resulting in it becoming the first killer application for the console and giving it a solid foundation in the gaming market.

While *GoldenEye 007* was the first title where actors from the film were visually recognizable secondary characters within the game, since the game is an FPS, all the action takes place from Bond’s perspective, so his “body” is strangely absent. For such an iconic character, it is particularly striking that the Bond body – which has received considerable attention over its cinematic history – instead becomes an interface upon which several associations may be written. Accepting Bond’s “body as an instrument of perception,” then in the case of *GoldenEye 007* this perceiving apparatus becomes quite literal in the way it stands in as the means by which the game is played or enacted (Gibson, 59). The description of Bond, in *Casino Royale*, to be
both “an actor and a spectator…in other men’s dramas and decisions” seems especially prescient
given how he functions in the game (Fleming, 48). Players feel engagement with the game while
simultaneously forming an identification with the character they are playing much greater than
with the earlier game adaptations. With *GoldenEye 007*, for the first time in the history of the
Bond franchise, the game player actually had the chance to finally be Bond, a desire Kingsley
Amis had identified long before in *The Bond Dossier* (1965). Players of the game system,
particularly younger ones who had little knowledge of Bond aside from his status as a cultural
reference, did not fall into the target demographic of the established Bond fan, and thus might
have had difficulty knowing “the purpose of an object with which [they] have no familiarity.
Philosophers of technology refer to this phenomenon as ‘technological embodiment.’”
(McKinney, 189). One of the main objectives of *GoldenEye 007*, aside from delivering a fun
and marketable game, was in some way to reconfigure the franchise for an inexperienced
audience. Even though the “modern world knows James Bond through the films, not the
novels…it is this very plasticity of the Bond persona that has permitted his adaptation to
different contexts,” and thus the game provided a reference point for exposing a new generation
to Bond, first to cinema and then hopefully to print (Black, 91). Conversely, this plasticity
worked in the other direction, as more mature Bond devotees could see the game as an access
point to the entire world of video gaming, and certainly the association with Bond and
technology makes the premise of video gaming a much more acceptable pastime. For Nintendo,
the addition of *GoldenEye 007* to its roster of games definitely expanded its appeal. While being
famous for Mario and other whimsical characters set in bright, cartoon-like settings, the
Nintendo aesthetic definitely skewed towards the young player, and so *GoldenEye 007* gave
Nintendo a level of credibility with the older demographic in the video gaming market in such of more serious play.

Interestingly, the game was based upon both the *GoldenEye* film and the novelization of the screenplay by John Gardner, who had previously turned the *License to Kill* screenplay into a book. The combination of both texts allowed the game designers to extend or modify many of the mission sequences, which enables the game player, as Bond, to participate in an expanded capacity both in terms of narrative role and virtual environment. The original sets created for the film were first replicated within the game world as playable environments easily identifiable for users who had seen the film. As the gaming technology developed over time, the capacity to manufacture greater and greater recreations of films became possible, including expansions of the cinematic worlds, thus extending the narrative past the original boundaries of its presentation. Much in the same way that the films had to negotiate the translation of their sources from print to cinema, the video games based on Bond constantly had to figure out ways to approximate the visual referents and refine this approach as gaming technology improved in what it could actually represent on the screen.

After the basic mise-en-scène was established, the weapons and tools that were to be used by Bond were then added. The player’s initial weapon is typically the PP7, functionally equivalent to Bond’s Walther PPK. The game mixes real-life firearms with the fictional and sometimes fantastic ones seen in the Bond films. Players have to decide when to use certain armaments, as some may be more tactically advantageous in stealth environments, such as those with silencers or sniper weapons that kill from a distance, while others may be useful for armored targets or large groups of opponents. Some of Q’s gadgets as seen in the films are

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195 Several references to Bond films are prevalent in the game, including the titles of the various multiplayer modes and the names of certain Bond Girls for defining the input configurations for the game controller. A surveillance tape found in the game bears the cover for the *GoldenEye* VHS release.
featured in the game and are often used to complete particular mission objectives. Bond’s watch
features both the laser from Moonraker and the electromagnet from Live and Let Die. The watch
for GoldenEye 007 offered a rather ingenious permutation on the marketing of Bond
paraphernalia. Bond has used a variety of watches in the films, generally favoring a Rolex
Submariner or Omega Seamaster, and these brands and models of watches are often advertised
for sale to the general public as part of reciprocal publicity and promotion campaigns.
Purchasing one of Q’s specialty watches may seem like an unobtainable dream to some, but as a
special promotion for the N64 game, software specialty stores like Babbage’s, FuncoLand, and
Software Etc. sold an exclusive GoldenEye 007 watch designed to look like the watch featured in
the game, complete with the blue and orange “life” and “armor” meters from the game’s HUD
and sporting a holographic image.

Returning to the construction of the game, designers then added characters linked the
various game elements to objectives for the gamer. Not all of the missions were based on
overt tactical offence. Many harkened back to Bond’s role as a spy and incorporated stealth
components. Others had variable goals that might change as the player progressed through the
missions or became increasingly complex as the player selected harder difficulty levels, moving
from “Agent” to “Secret Agent” to “00-Agent.” To further enhance the feel of being an agent
on assignment, the game’s menu system is represented onscreen as an MI6 dossier, with M, Q,
and Miss Moneypenny providing background information on the mission and its objectives,
increasing the realness of Bond “primarily in the relation between the individual subject and the
 technological bodies that surround and interpenetrate him” within the game world (O’Donnell,

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196 The concept of variable objectives, including primary and secondary divisions, for each level of the game was
inspired by a similar design for each stage of Super Mario 64.
197 After fully completing the game on the 00-Agent difficulty level, the player can then access a new, previously
hidden “007” setting that allows for the customization of any mission.
Once a mission is completed, the player may continue to the next one, in essence advancing the narrative, or choose to replay a previously completed level. The incentive here is not to foster a greater understanding of the story but to complete missions within particular target times and unlock bonus options which can be used to modify various game elements such as graphics and action. Becoming adept at the mechanics of play, “the self-reflective prostheses of [Bond’s] profession, signifies mastery itself” over the game as much as Bond himself for the game player (Roof, 71).

Like its cinematic counterpart, *GoldenEye 007* begins in the same time and place, the mid-1980s in the Soviet city of Arkhangelsk. MI6 has uncovered a secret chemical weapons facility at the Byelomorye Dam, prompting the insertion of James Bond to infiltrate the facility and then rendezvous with friend and fellow 00-agent Alec Trevelyan. During the mission to destroy the factory, Trevelyan is apparently killed by Colonel Arkady Ourumov, while Bond escapes in a commandeered airplane. Following the opening sequence, *GoldenEye 007* deviates from the narrative of the film, first by having Bond journey to the satellite control station in Severnaya where both Natalya Simonova and Boris Grishenko work and then investigating an unscheduled test firing of a missile in Kirghizstan, ostensibly a cover story for the deployment of the GoldenEye satellite. Following these missions, the game’s narrative returns to that of the film, with Bond traveling to Monte Carlo to investigate the frigate La Fayette and the Eurocopter Tiger. While these were featured in the film, in the game these episodes are greatly expanded. For example, Bond has to rescue several hostages inside the ship and plant a tracking device on the helicopter before it is stolen by the Janus organization. Bond has to return to Severnaya, but this time he is captured and imprisoned along with Natalya Simonova. While this event does

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198 Pierce Brosnan’s image appears on the four single-player save file dossiers, providing visual identification between the player and the character being played.
happen in the film, it happens much earlier in the game, yet it makes sense given what rewriting of the narrative has already transpired. For players with no familiarity with the film, these changes are undetectable. For those who have seen the film and/or read the novelization, this expansion of the narrative boundaries can be both confusing and enticing in that playing the game creates another read of the narrative, and so competing versions can engage in a sort of textual competition, while at the same time providing something unexpected. Furthermore, the surprising quality of the narrative can be changed several times by selecting the various difficulty levels, essentially creating new permutations on a previously played and understood part of the game. Of course, multiple versions of a text open up questions of authenticity, an issue which has continually underscored the entire Bond franchise, from fidelity to the Bond canon by authors writing after Fleming’s death to legal issues over ownership of film rights to the much-debated topic of which actor is the “true” Bond.

In an age of mediatized multiplicity, the adherence to and deviation from the film version of *GoldenEye* is worth describing. After the escape from the Severnaya complex before its destruction, Bond and Simonova then travel to St. Petersburg as they do in the film. There Bond arranges to meet the head of Janus, who turns out to be Alec Trevelyan. Bond and Simonova escape from Trevelyan only to be arrested by the Russian police and taken to the military archives for interrogation. Here the player is presented with an intriguing gaming scenario as Bond must escape the interrogation room, rescue Simonova, and contact Defense Minister Mishkin to verify Ouromov’s treachery. Simonova is captured by Ourumov, and Bond commandeers a tank for a chase sequence through the streets of St. Petersburg. This section is notable as it features many departures from the film, as Bond only enters the train after stopping it with the tank. In the game, Bond reaches a Janus arms depot and must destroy its stockpile,
after which he boards Trevelyan’s missile train, fighting his way through until he kills Ouromov and rescues Simonova. Trevelyan and Xenia Onatopp escape to their Cuban secret base. Simonova accompanies Bond to Cuba, and during a reconnaissance mission their aircraft is shot down. After crash landing, Bond and Simonova search the heavily guarded jungle and are ambushed by Xenia, who must be killed by Bond. Bond sneaks Simonova into the control center to destroy the GoldenEye in the Earth’s atmosphere. Here the game again deviates from the original film and inserts a mission where Bond must trail Trevelyan through a series of flooded caverns before arriving at the control center’s radio telescope antenna. Bond has to destroy the antenna before Trevelyan can restore contact with the GoldenEye. Once this goal is achieved, Bond and Trevelyan engage in a gun battle high above the dish, leading to the end of the narrative as established in the film once the player successfully completes the mission.

After completing the single-player story, two additional scenarios – almost like Bond short stories – are made available to the game player as rewards for completing the game under the higher difficulty modes. Completing the game on “Secret Agent” difficulty unlocks the “Aztec Complex,” a mission based on an extension of narrative elements from Moonraker. Although Drax was dispatched and his plans thwarted, fragments of his corporation still exist and are attempting to carry out his grand design. To investigate the Drax Corporation’s unlicensed space exploration and possible theft at least one NASA space shuttle, Bond is sent to an Aztec complex in Teotihuacán. Fearing hostile action, MI6 orders Bond to reprogram the shuttle’s guidance computer so that MI6 can remotely control the craft once it reaches orbit. Jaws returns to stop Bond from completing his mission. Much like with the adaptation of GoldenEye, the level design of “Aztec Complex” draws directly from the locations in Moonraker, while expanding on what the film suggested, so the Moonraker shuttle launch room
is added as an explorable area for example. Completing the game on “00-Agent” difficulty unlocks the “Egyptian Tempe” mission, a mélange of elements from *The Man with the Golden Gun, The Spy Who Loved Me,* and *Live and Let Die.* In the briefing to the mission, M informs Bond that someone claiming to be Baron Samedi now possesses Francisco Scaramanga’s legendary Golden Gun pistol. Knowing Samedi is motivated by revenge, M nevertheless sends Bond into a trap, and so he sets off for the El-Saghira temple in the Valley of the Kings to eliminate Baron Samedi and retrieve the Golden Gun. Bond must kill Samedi three times during the mission, as Samedi appears to cheat death each time, before the Golden Gun can finally be claimed. Samedi’s ultimate fate, however, remains uncertain as he can be seen laughing, during a cut scene at the conclusion of the mission, that references a similar move in the ending of *Live and Let Die.*

While the single-player story and engaging action was a strong selling point of the game, another possibility opened up by the FPS genre was that of multiplayer action, specifically of the competitive, deathmatch type where up to four live players could compete in various game arenas to kill each other, individually or in teams. Although not initially designed with a multiplayer component in mind, the game programmers delayed its release until this feature was added. The venues in which the multiplayer action commences are adapted from levels designed for the single-player story, so while they look graphically similar, some restrictions and alterations have taken place as there is no plot driving the game play other than to eliminate one’s opponents. While the normal setting of the deathmatch mode is an every man for himself scenario, other settings change the game play. In “You Only Live Twice,” instead of unlimited lives, players only have two before being completely eliminated from the game. “The Living Daylights” requires a player to hold onto a flag to score points over time and evade pursuers as
the flag bearer cannot use weapons while in possession of the flag. Selecting “The Man with the Golden Gun” option causes a powerful one shot, one kill Golden Gun to be randomly placed on the map, and in the “License to Kill” mode all attacks, even hand-to-hand, become instantly lethal.

Players can select from any of the characters in the game (some of which must be unlocked through game progress) for their onscreen avatars, i.e., what they look like to their opponents. This includes Bond as well as his enemies (such as Oddjob or Jaws) and civilian allies. While *GoldenEye 007* was still in production, a special multiplayer feature was announced. Known as the “All Bonds” option, this would have allowed players to choose four of the five actors – Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton, and Pierce Brosnan (George Lazenby was not included) – who had portrayed Bond cinematically. For unexplained reasons, possibly due to legal problems with the various production companies or licensing issues involving the aforementioned actors, the “All Bonds” option was disabled before the game was released. Using a GameShark peripheral, players could see that the four Bond likenesses were still coded into the game, but they remained inaccessible to the user. Eight years after the release of *GoldenEye 007*, two programmers cracked the game’s code and discovered that the textures for all four Bonds still existed in the game, albeit in incomplete format since their body mapping remained unfinished. While residual code dates back to some of the earliest games, the recovery of the missing Bond bodies such a long time after the game’s initial release only underscores the long-standing interest in the game.

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199 In the multiplayer mode, inputting a special code via the game controller adds additional character models to the available character selection. These likenesses are directly based on the game programmers themselves, essentially allowing them to write themselves parts to play in this particular Bond environment.

200 A device that would please even Q himself, a GameShark was a third-party commercially sold device that interfaced with a game system and enabled players to cheat by modifying saved memory data. Now it functions solely as a back-up and restore system for saved game files.
Following the success of *GoldenEye 007*, many publishers aggressively lobbied for the rights to the franchise, and in 1999 the James Bond game license was acquired by Electronic Arts, reportedly at a cost exceeding $10 million (Thompson, 228). Electronic Arts tried to capitalize on the renewed interest in both the films and video games, releasing the adaptation for *Tomorrow Never Dies* in 1999 and *The World Is Not Enough* in 2000. *Tomorrow Never Dies* abandoned the FPS style of *GoldenEye 007* in favor of a third-person, or chase, perspective, but the game failed to achieve the same measure of success as *GoldenEye 007*. Electronic Arts decided to return back to the FPS format with *007: The World Is Not Enough*. Electronic Arts made the odd decision of farming out the game to two different developers: Eurocom, who would work on the N64 version, and Black Ops, who would code for the Sony PlayStation (PS). This strategy resulted in two games that, while similar in game play, were programmed at different levels of quality. The N64 version sold well, although still not up to *GoldenEye 007* level, while the PS version noticeably underperformed.

With *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent*, Electronic Arts hoped to cash in on the popularity of the original *GoldenEye 007* release and offer a chance for gamers to engage in a little anti-hero identification. Returning to the FPS format, instead of Bond, a player controlled Jonathan Hunter, a 00-agent who was severely wounded in an encounter with Dr. No. Having lost his right eye, Hunter grew increasingly racked with vengeance and his performance as an operative began to suffer. The opening level of the game is actually a holographic training mission, which serves to both acquaint the player with the mechanics of the game as well as advance the narrative, in which Hunter is paired with 007 to stop Auric Goldfinger from detonating a suitcase nuke inside of Fort Knox. Hunter fails the test, which also results in the mission “death” of

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201 Interestingly, MGM discovered through exit polls that younger audience members had first been introduced to James Bond “via the EA games and started going to the new films” (Thompson, 232).
Bond, is summarily charged with reckless brutality, and is dismissed from MI6 service by M. As Hunter leaves headquarters, he receives a job offer from Auric Goldfinger. Goldfinger’s plans are being jeopardized by Dr. No, as there is infighting in the SPECTRE organization. As an incentive, Hunter is given a gold-hued cybernetic eye, created by Francisco Scaramanga (voiced by Christopher Lee, reprising his role from *The Man with the Golden Gun*), that gives him various technical powers.

Rechristened “GoldenEye” by Goldfinger, Hunter is sent to thwart various operations of Dr. No around the world; many of these settings are taken directly from the Bond films and novels. Eventually GoldenEye journeys to Crab Key to confront Dr. No. Using his cybernetic eye to sabotage the island’s nuclear reactor, GoldenEye electrocutes Dr. No. Having also started a nuclear meltdown, Goldfinger informs GoldenEye that he is too dangerous to be left alive and will die in the explosion. Escaping from the island, GoldenEye returns to SPECTRE headquarters to confront Goldfinger. Aided by Pussy Galore and Scaramanga, GoldenEye fights through the compound, eventually killing Goldfinger. As GoldenEye and Galore leave on her helicopter, Scaramanga and Ernst Stavro Blofeld discuss what to do with GoldenEye and decide to keep him under observation before making any decisions, a move that set up sequel potential for the game. Unfortunately, *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* suffered from both mediocre reception and outright derision for attempting to exploit the *GoldenEye* name. Coming after *007: Everything or Nothing*, *Rogue Agent* appeared to be lacking in many areas of what made the preceding title a solid game. Perhaps it was true that “the very dependence of this cyborg subject-formation upon technology” revealed a vulnerability in that the “right stuff” for a Bond game only really worked “when it is properly connected to the right technological stuff”
The ability to play an augmented super-agent somehow violated the humanity that underlies Bond no matter what the trappings of his role.

For many video game players, *GoldenEye 007* not only remains the definitive Bond experience but also is a highly respected title, even more so given that it is a film-to-game adaptation. Despite the celluloid promise that “James Bond Will Return”, the future of the film franchise remains uncertain due to the status of MGM, the owner of the Bond film license, which has been up for sale since November 2009; in April 2010 the twenty-third film in the series was put on hold and was finally greenlit in January 2011 (for a 2012 release) after MGM restructured itself the preceding December. Much in the same way that the future of the *Star Wars* franchise might lie in small screens, the same might be true for James Bond. With the release of the *Quantum of Solace* game by Activision, the company has been working on two new James Bond video games. The first, *Blood Stone*, features the voice and likeness of current Bond actor Daniel Craig and is an original story by Bond screenwriter Bruce Feirstein. The second is a remake of *GoldenEye 007* with the voice and likeness of Daniel Craig replacing that of Pierce Brosnan. According to Activision Producer Julian Widdows, this was a very conscious decision:

> It was really early on when we decided to put Daniel Craig in the game…When you talk to the guys…about the time and effort they took in creating this very contemporary Bond, you learn that the character needs to be of its time. Bond’s moved on, and so have the games. […] the key thing in all of this is that we’re creating an up-to-date *GoldenEye* experience that draws primarily from the film (Burt, 26)

Additional narrative material was supplied by Feirstein who cowrote the original *GoldenEye* script.\(^{202}\) As Craig functioned to reboot the role for 21st century cinema audiences, he will do a similar move for the video games, particularly Nintendo since the new version of *GoldenEye 007*

\(^{202}\) Feirstein has changed the locations and chronology of some of the events to make them more contemporary, and the developers liken the mobsters in the game not to those in the original film but to those in the far more hard-edged film *Eastern Promises* (2007).
will be exclusive to its Wii console. To further legitimize the Bond legacy connections, the new *GoldenEye 007* will feature an original score from David Arnold, the composer for the last five Bond movies. In addition to the single-player campaign, in which “the game’s overall tone has changed to reflect the grit and physicality [Craig] brings to the role”, the multiplayer modes that attracted many fans will return, allowing players to choose from more than 40 different Bond characters, with additional modifications to enhance the online experience, such as team affiliation and an online experience system that unlocks exclusive content (Thomason, 74). With the future of the films in doubt, fans of 007 may well expect to see a new tagline for his adventures – “James Bond Will Reload” – as the games keep the franchise alive.

Much like movies are remade, games also get repackaged for new hardware releases as much as for new generations of gamers. Sometimes these are done merely through the updating the graphics and retaining the same basic game play, while other times these reimaginings are more complex, as is the case with *GoldenEye 007*. As an FPS, the sense of immersion can be intense in terms of action, but the importance of all of the other elements that contribute to a gaming experience need to be acknowledged. As Randy Pitchford, CEO of Gearbox Software explained:

> First-person, basically, is the videogame virtual reality. You are the character… We’re in the 1930s of filmmaking, and we’re so far from *Citizen Kane*. But I think we’re going to get there first in first-person. … Obviously, we have a lot to work on with respect to storytelling. But the big hurdle is that videogames started entirely as a skill test. Our roots are things like *Pac-Man* and *Space Invaders*, where it is 100 percent a reaction-time test. … But we’re also playing for an experience, for fantasy fulfillment. A lot of people play *Brothers in Arms* because they’re interested in what it would be like to be one of the *Band of Brothers*, to be in *Saving Private Ryan*, not just to watch it. (Ashley, 48-50)

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203 Although the Wii is notable because of its motion controllers, the game is also compatible with the console’s Classic Controller, and a special bundle will include the game and an exclusive gold Classic Controller Pro as a purchasing incentive.
By the end of this era of game development, with the arrival of seventh generation systems such as the Xbox 360 in 2005 and both the PlayStation 3 and Wii in 2006, the financial attractiveness of film-to-game adaptations for studios translated into significant revenue; by 2005, “a hit title’s license and royalties could generate around $40 million for a studio” (Thompson, 228). The need to think more complexly about extending film franchises into video games had been matched by the amount of development time and work it takes to produce a well-designed game that encourages sales robust enough to cover development costs and still make a profit. The relationship between the film and video game industries had grown even more intricate, particularly with the inclusion of other media, as they continued to share resources of talent, technology, and money.
CONCLUSION

With the release of the seventh, and latest, generation of home consoles in the PlayStation 3, Wii, and Xbox 360 in 2005 and 2006, the number of film-to-game titles released per year spiked to its highest levels ever as the processing power behind gaming technology grew ever closer between consoles and gaming computers (see Figure 1). Even systems of the previous generation, such as the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, saw continued support with current-gen titles ported to the now older systems. Yet despite such a broadly installed user base, less than two years after the release of the newest systems, the number of film-to-game titles had steadily dropped off to levels not seen since the beginning of these games appearing in arcades and homes. Over the past six months of sales data (for January-June 2010) reported by The NPD Group, only one game directly tied to a simultaneously-released movie has landed in the top 20 for any month, when the Nintendo DS and Wii versions of Toy Story 3 were June’s seventh and nineteenth ranked sellers, respectively. For Activision, June’s video game based on the movie Shrek Forever After was also a flop, moving just 54,000 units. While film-to-game releases of two major titles – TRON: Evolution and GoldenEye 007 – appeared in the fourth quarter of 2010, both of these relied on the past strengths of their franchise forebears to boost sales, especially GoldenEye 007 as TRON: Evolution had the theatrical release of TRON: Legacy to provide licensing synergy. Clearly, both the film and video game industries are reevaluating what the nature of collaboration might mean, so it becomes important to consider why this decline in film-to-game titles is happening at a time when economic and technology considerations have brought the two businesses closer than ever before.

One reason lies with the desire for developers to develop original intellectual properties that can be wholly owned by the developers and franchised to their benefit. Another reason that
is also primarily economic has to do with the cost to acquire a license based on a film, as the more popular films are able to command higher and higher fees. A third possibility lies with the very technology that makes it possible to produce a game that looks almost as visually convincing as a film. Whereas in the early days of video games, “a game based on a movie license might involve only two people, one to write the code and one to do the graphics, and their work might occupy a few weeks”, the development of a major, or AAA, title takes much more time and money, to the point where production can last as long as the film’s cycle or even longer (Thompson, 228). The current economics of the video game industry, which took much longer to feel the impact of the financial crisis of the first decade of the twenty-first century, means that, for many publishers, monetary success is no longer guaranteed by having one hit title.\footnote{For example, Walt Disney’s Interactive Division (which includes Disney Interactive and Disney Online) showed a decrease in revenues of 29\% to $221 million. Operating results, however, were better than with the total loss dropping from $45 million to $10 million. Disney credits the improvement to a boost in online activity and to lower marketing expenses, inventory costs, and bad debt charges that all offset the depressed sales of video games. One week after the Walt Disney Company acquired Marvel Entertainment for $4 billion, Disney Interactive Studios purchased independent developer Wideload Games in an attempt to gain a wider audience for its games.} If a publisher releases ten titles in one year, at a conservative cost of $10 million per title for a total of $100 million, that figure is typically adjusted upwards by 25\% for marketing plus another $1 million per title for licensing and business expenses such as manufacturing, distribution, and taxes, for a total of $135 million. One hit title, defined as selling 1 million copies at $59 retail, covers the production cost with not much left for additional development. Proven developers, known for either a successful record or staffed with well known talent, will get more attention from their publishers, so supporting the developer suddenly becomes more important than it was in the past.\footnote{In January 2008, the Writers Guild of America announced the creation of a new award category for video game writing.}

Finally, if a film-to-game title is based on a $100 million motion picture, the drive to create a compelling game and avoid the lackluster adaptations of the past means that the
developer must spend more time and money developing the game, which is contrary to the typical franchise mentality that “too many game companies have rushed the design process to capitalize on a film or television show’s buzz before it dies down, and as a result, too many licensed games rely on the presence of film or television characters and voiceovers to rescue what is basically an uninspired offering with tepid gameplay” (Gray, 188). Although many of the games were routinely derided by players and critics alike for their poor quality, since they were cheap to produce and were incorporated into a film’s marketing budget, the business remained lucrative for film and video game companies until recently. According to Graham Hopper, executive vice president of Disney Interactive Studios, “There was a business model for some time of low-cost, lower-quality games based on movies that sold enough to earn a return.” Some major studios, such as Disney and Warner Bros., have their own divisions to produce and distribute games, which maximizes rewards from successes and minimizes losses on flops as they more tightly control the number of titles available to license. “The movie-based games business the way we have known it is broken,” said Martin Tremblay, president of Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment. “Quality is king now and quality is expensive, so it makes more sense than ever to own your intellectual property instead of paying for a license.”

At least nine movie-based games for 2010 are tied to family films, including *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Toy Story 3*, and *The Last Airbender*. Genre expansion has not occurred among films licensed for game development, meaning that the titles pursued are generally in speculative fiction (science fiction, fantasy, and sometimes horror) and children’s fare (especially animation). “Younger audiences really like licensed properties they’re familiar with, and they don’t have to be built with the most cutting-edge technology,” said Brian Farrell, chief executive of THQ Inc., whose company recently signed a multiyear deal with DreamWorks
Animation SKG. While many video games are produced in these genres, there are many that are not, and these genres tend to skew toward certain demographics in the gaming population, making it hard to build a mature consumer base that has a broader narrative interest as well as the capital to spend on games. To that end, Universal Pictures recently signed deals for games based on *Jurassic Park* and *Back to the Future* that don’t fit in the narrow band of genres popular on consoles and might tap into the nostalgia for older gamers that remember these films as part of their youth.206 “All of these new platforms are really exciting because we can work on our properties that lend themselves to other types of game play,” said Bill Kispert, vice president of interactive for Universal.

One of the strategies of a number of film-to-game titles since 2005 has been to resurrect dormant film franchises that still retain a high level of consumer recognition, such as releases of *Scarface: The World Is Yours*, *The Godfather*, *Ghostbusters*, and *Aliens*.207 *Ghostbusters*, for example, shows the amount of concern that film studios now have with video game adaptations of their lucrative properties. Sony Pictures met with developer Terminal Reality and publisher Sierra to discuss the licensing, having been very protective of the property while searching for several years to find a video game partner. Sierra had a good reputation for film-to-game properties with successes like *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* and *Scarface: The World Is Yours*. Sierra did market research concerning the recognizability of old

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206 Casey Hudson, Bioware Project Director on *Mass Effect*, put it in these terms: “a lot of what we were trying to do was capture the really memorable science fiction experiences that we had when we were younger; for us, that would be in the late seventies and early eighties. Maybe it was because we were younger and more impressionable, but those movies like *Aliens, Blade Runner, Star Wars* and some other movies from that period – *Wrath of Khan* – if you watch those they have a great cinematic quality, great cinematography…You feel like you are immersed inside those movies instead of watching them from the outside.”

207 While films have had to deal with issues of technological obsolescence – from changes in film stocks to different media used in home video – the concern is a very real one for video games as the hardware used to play them is frequently upgraded and replaced, meaning that older games often become inaccessible over time. To think about this another way, one could take an original print of *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) and watch it using a projector, but a video game that is only ten years old might be unplayable without legacy hardware that has been abandoned in support by the manufacturer.
film titles, finding that Ghostbusters scored number one (even over such well-known fare as The Godfather) and that the Ghostbusters logo is the second most recognized corporate symbol in the world with Coca-Cola being first. The storyline for the game is set in 1991, two years after the end of the second film. Some discussions involved whether or not to name the game Ghostbusters 3 as it narratively functions as the next sequel in the franchise. Co-writer and actor Dan Akroyd commented, “If you have an appetite for the third movie, then the video game is it.” In addition to the principal actors returning to their roles (with the character models for Akroyd and Harold Ramis based on their 1984 likenesses), supporting actors such as Ernie Hudson, William Atherton, and Annie Potts return as well as familiar ghostly characters like Slimer, the Librarian, and the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man. The player is introduced into the Ghostbusters crew as an experimental weapons technician hired to help Ghostbusters after renewed success of their company. The Ghostbusters directly address the player and comment on the game play, aiding the immersion of the experience. According to executive producer John Melchior, “We want you to play the game but feel like you’re watching the movie.”

Some publishers are abandoning the idea that a licensed game has to be released concurrently with a movie in theaters. Although there was no game to go with 2008’s The Dark Knight, 2009’s well-received Batman game Arkham Asylum by Eidos Interactive sold a respectable 3.2 million units. In 2010, Warner Bros. released a new Lord of the Rings title and Activision Blizzard released new games based on Transformers and Spider-Man even though there are no new films based on those properties. The economics of the franchise can count on the name recognition to enliven a consumer market, and an added effect may be that potential audiences retain an awareness of a particular property between film releases.

Gaming companies are thinking about other ways to enhance their cinematic connections
outside of the standard film-to-game routine. In October 2009, Sony used PlayStation3 consoles attached to their cinema CineAlta 4K digital projectors (already in 500 theaters) to theatrically exhibit the game *Uncharted 2* (2009). For $15 a ticket, up to 10 players could engage in a multiplayer session in the theater itself. Sony issued a statement where they hope to “build this into a standard element in the movie-going experience.” This would give Sony, as a developer of AAA titles, a new revenue stream for their properties. Like Hollywood, game companies are also turning to 3-D as an added attraction to boost sales. *TRON: Evolution* will be among the first games produced in digital 3-D on the PlayStation 3 version.

As both film and video game production have become increasingly dependent on technological developments in the computer industry, a further area of development for a future version of this project should look at the tools of digital media, particularly how the technology used to construct films and video games impacts the aesthetics of the product. This technology consideration bears careful study in terms of the influence that the hardware and software have on design choices. For example, how might the design of the graphic user interface (GUI) of an editing program, such as Final Cut Pro or the game design module in *Neverwinter Nights* (2000), in turn influence a user’s creative choices? Although there are some popular off the shelf products that are used to develop game content, such as 3D Studio Max and Microsoft Visual Studio, and there are “all in one” packages floating around for game development (*Neverwinter Nights* could fall into that category), as a general rule, the higher the production value of the game, the less likely the use of off the shelf solutions by the development team.

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208 In a recent interview in *Nintendo Power*, Dragon Quest creator Yuji Horii mused, “I wonder if there will be a day when games are no longer played on TV screens or monitors. But then it would be like we were in the world of *The Matrix* or *Total Recall*, wouldn’t it?”

209 Although this study is more concerned with mainstream releases, another possibility offered through digital technology is the ability for individually authored media by a user outside of any of the normal and/or dominant modes of production, prompting an alternative possibility for independent productions.

210 “The task of the designer is not to create a better button, but to determine if buttons are required in the first place” (Brody, 140).
More titles are taking advantage of existing 3D engines and physics engines such as the *Unreal* or the *Doom 3* engine. These solutions are not cheap (licensing the *Unreal* technology ran roughly $300,000 at the height of its popularity); however, even at these price points, they are still relative bargains compared to what a game studio might spend trying to develop their own equivalent technology from scratch. Warren Spector, Creative Director and President of Junction Point Studios, expresses another aspect of this area of game design: “I’d create a game engine as generally useful, as easy to use, and as readily accessible as the equipment required to make a movie. The fact that we have to basically reinvent the camera every time we make a game [and] have to rework our A.I., user interface, physics, and gameplay tools with each and every game is crazy” (Elliott and Ashley, 61). While virtual cultures around player modification of existing game engines are quite strong, independent companies developing their own titles takes a considerable outlay of investment. How have refinements in virtual camera placement and lighting in computer generated productions led to an ability to replicate the look of a film shot on celluloid with physical light sources as well as a camera? Why do many video games incorporate the same set of editing choices or styles as film? These questions are meant to suggest deeper resonances for digital technologies as their use begins to cut across as well as suture different media (i.e., aesthetic considerations through incorporation of in-game cinematics or other cut scenes and releasing “director’s cuts” of successful game titles).

Additional work on this project would certainly benefit from incorporating writers who are familiar with computer programming and technology (a desire for an interdisciplinarity beyond a humanities façade). More precisely, a detailed look at game algorithms would open up a whole new area of analysis.\(^\text{211}\) Some computer scientists are integrating more of a humanities

\[^{211}\text{A game algorithm is “the program containing the set of procedures controlling the game’s graphics and sound, the input and output engaging the players, and the behavior of the computer-controlled characters within the game.”}^\]
component as they move from creating product to analyzing content (several universities are adding positions for a cultural theorist in their technical departments, particularly in those involving studies in new media). MIT’s program in Comparative Media Studies – in addition to producing *Game Studies*, the international journal of computer game research – offers an interdisciplinary collaboration of faculty, staff, and students across the humanities, sciences, and engineering that will develop a series of conceptual prototypes for “games-to-teach” subjects at the advanced high school and introductory college level. The Games-to-Teach Project intends to explore best practices in game design and production, current educational theory, and emerging technological platforms and to apply such understanding to new models for presenting and exploring educational content in video games. While this project has looked exclusively at commercial products, thinking generally about the educational aspect and content of opens up greater possibilities for cultural observation and examination.

Many researchers of video games find it particularly interesting to compare related works from two different media and examine how narrative is used and adapted, with the game sometimes regarded as derivative of the source material and other times regarded as transformative (the latter tending to have more of a positive connotation than the former). Often closely related to this is the question of how the game functions compare to a film’s (or novel’s) artistic devices and narrative technique since genre fiction in film (and literature) has been and continues to be one of the major sources of inspiration for the computer game industry. The almost constant presence of narrative here must be acknowledged, for while digitization is changing the culture of narrative construction, from traditional print to films to video games to other texts in the mediascape, most products are concerned with producing a comprehensible

Dividing up its tasks, we could say that the algorithm is responsible for the *representation, responses, rules* and *randomness* that make up a game*” (Wolf and Perron, 15-16).
story. Media migration – which involves the movement of fictional worlds, characters, and plots from one media form to another – is becoming more common, particularly in recent years with the positioning of video games as one aspect of a media hub around which many American consumers are oriented.212

Still another area of inquiry for this project in the future would focus more specifically on digital actors and their relation to video game characters. Characters are certainly part of the spectacle of both films and video games. Viewer and player identification functions not only in terms of product recognition but also on a more personal connection. How might viewing a character in a particular film create expectations for a video game version? This is a particularly important question when one considers that certain popular film properties – including ones by Ridley Scott, John Carpenter, and Sam Raimi – have continued development that exist only as games. As computer technology has progressed, there is an increasing level of expectation with regard to the visual rendering of a character, so that the simplistic rendering of Indiana Jones in the Atari 2600 adaptation of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1982) has given way to a much more identifiable Harrison Ford model in *Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine* (1999).

Additionally, a distinctive mode of dialogue and delivery may be expected, such as the Scottish burr of Shrek (voiced by Mike Meyers) or the snappy one-liners attributed to Ash (voiced by Bruce Campbell). Certain attributes or abilities possessed by characters – Spider-Man’s ability to climb walls or Neo’s ability to enter bullet time – might be expected to create a more authentic play experience in relation to the parameters established by the film. If a character functions in a certain way within the narrative, such as being an international spy like James Bond or an

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212 Based on research conducted on season 2 of Xbox Live’s *1 vs. 100* series, the Nielsen Company concluded that, like television, there is a video game “prime time” that runs from 7-11pm. With so many media options available, yet all aiming for roughly the same allotted hours in the day, video game consoles in particular are marketed as home entertainment portals through which games, movies, television, music, and the internet may all be accessed.
unstoppable killing machine like The Terminator, this will have a significant impact on the interactive possibilities that are scripted for the player. While certain actors (such as Mark Hamill, Elizabeth Daily, Clancy Brown, and Wendy Hoopes) known for their voice work in animation have been used for some time to provide dialogue in video games, the increasing cultural prominence of video games has created a certain cachet around “appearing” in a game, with studios encouraging actors of all types (including Sarah Michelle Gellar, Christopher Walken, Julie Strain, and Marlon Brando) to seek participation in video game voice acting as well as licensing of their likenesses. With regard to acting in a game, the treatment of a digital performance in terms of acting is a complicated issue. One example could be seen in the debate in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences over the classification of Andy Serkis and his performance as Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Is it a human performance or just a computer pattern? Director Peter Jackson insists it was a job of acting by Andy Serkis, who provided Gollum’s voice and the motion capture for his movements, as relevant as John Hurt’s performance under prosthetics for *The Elephant Man* (1980). The Oscar nomination panel determined that much of Gollum’s impact came from the work by computer animators and thus did not allow for Serkis to be nominated as a Best Supporting Actor. While this ruling privileges a certain type of authenticity of performance over another, the extrapolated argument does not address the collaborative effort of filmmaking by many individuals that contributes to an actor crafting a convincing performance. After working on *King Kong*, Serkis noted that the movie’s digital effects are becoming an integral part of filmmaking:

I think that more motion capture is [being] used in film, and it’s becoming part of the mainstream and used in a mainstream way. It is ... especially [true] with video games and the convergence of video games and film. It’s actually a really

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213 This issue increases in complexity when thinking more about digital construction and recent productions such as *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004) and *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* where real humans are composited into almost completely virtual (computer generated) environments around them.
interesting time for actors. Robert Zemeckis has just made *Beowulf* with Anthony Hopkins and John Malkovich, Ray Winstone and all kinds of high-profile and serious actors creating these characters. They are creating the movements. They are creating the personalities, and it’s the manifestation of those characters which is being handed over. I do believe that in five or 10 years’ time that actors will come out of drama school, and they will do theater, and they’ll do film, and they’ll do TV, and then they’ll be doing video games. I believe that it'll be considered a much, much more dramatic art. Playing characters in video games and [motion-capture] stories will be received through video games more than they are now. I mean, I’ve never ever drawn a distinction in the process of creating a character in a CG role and in a conventional role. For me there is no difference. (Szymanski, 1)

In 2010, AMPAS did rule that motion capture films are ineligible to be considered as animated productions for award category purposes, but has yet to settle the issue when it comes to acting.

Given the recognition that many film stars have, how might an actor’s participation in a game be thought of also in terms of celebrity endorsement of a product? For example, when actors such as James Caan and Robert Duvall provide their voices and likenesses and return to their roles in *The Godfather: The Game*, it helps to strengthen the game’s ties to its film origin for the developers, the licensing studio, and the actors themselves, yet this type of cinematic legitimizing might have little impact on gamers who just want to play yet another gangster genre title. The decision to involve human actors – through voice, likeness, motion capture, and even into marketing – while done to a great degree in the video game industry, still remains an area of more considered development.

**“Play the Game, See the Movie” – Games to Films**

With games like *Super Mario Bros.*, *Mortal Kombat*, and *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* among many others, the process of adaptation has been reversed, producing films based on games. Indeed, the course of research on this project has indicated that most people, when thinking about the intersection of cinema and video games, tend to make an association with films based on games, which is a much smaller number compared to the amount of film-to-game
translations that have been released. Why might this mistaken perception exist? At first, this view seems to be related to the fact that some of the more noticeable titles are big-budget productions based on games that have already made a notable impact in culture beyond video games.\textsuperscript{214} Also, much in the same way that film-to-game translations are plagued with the association of being horrible games, so too are many game-to-film adaptations seen as being low-budget attempts to cash in by studios who do not understand the video game property, mishandling it from inception through advertising.\textsuperscript{215} Game-to-film productions continue to appear, in low but steady frequency, with greater expectations each time for a notable director (with a commensurate budget) and star actors to finally produce a blockbuster that legitimizes the entire allegiance between the industries. Much like video game developers have encountered a number of challenges during the adaptation process, filmmakers are finding that – despite the existence of cinematic elements such as visual design, camera angles, and narrative – what is done in a video game does not easily lend itself to film. Despite these problems, however, a number of projects are in various states of pre-production all in an attempt to become the film that finally dispels the game-to-film curse:

- \textit{Return to Castle Wolfenstein} is being scripted by Roger Avary (who worked on the \textit{Silent Hill} adaptation). Avary played the game and watched a lot of WWII movies, going through the game and then replaying different chapters to inform the writing process.

\textsuperscript{214} It should also be noted that game-to-movie adaptations are not solely an American subject as other countries, most notably Japan (with productions such as \textit{Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children} (2005) and \textit{Higurashi no Naku Koro ni} (2008)), have begun to adapt game properties into animated and live-action movies.

\textsuperscript{215} German director, writer, and producer Uwe Boll is (in)famously known for almost single-handedly ruining this type of film by specializing almost exclusively in game-to-film adaptations. He directed \textit{House of the Dead} (2003), \textit{Alone in the Dark} (2005) (and served as producer on the 2008 straight-to-DVD sequel), \textit{BloodRayne} (2005), \textit{BloodRayne II: Deliverance} (2007), \textit{Postal} (2007), \textit{In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale} (2007), and \textit{Far Cry} (2008). \textit{Postal} suffered from theater distributors pulling out of their deals, resulting in only 21 screens of exhibition in the US instead of 1,500.
Avary said he will strive to bring elements from the game into the film, especially the sounds of guns being fired, the props, and the costumes.

- *Kane & Lynch* currently has Bruce Willis and Jamie Foxx attached to play the violently psychopathic duo.

- *Halo*, the juggernaut franchise most obviously geared towards adaptation, has had a number of problems plaguing its development. Universal and Fox pulled out of a deal with Microsoft, leaving the project stuck in pre-production. The current version of the script was written by D.B. Weiss and reportedly puts Master Chief, despite being the hero of the first three games, in a supporting role in favor of a new character to whom the audience can supposedly more easily relate as Weiss apparently sees non-gaming audiences being unable to identify with a seven foot augmented human who never removes his battle armor. Director Neill Blomkamp created a live-action short of a Warthog assembly line to demonstrate that this is a translatable property. Given the financial success of the games, a film is still highly probably despite many years of likely development. *Halo Chronicles*, an episodic, interactive series set within the Halo universe, is supposedly under the direction of Peter Jackson, who promises to blur the lines between the game and the movie. His Wingnut Interactive division has been working with Microsoft Game Studios and Bungie on the title, which was originally announced in 2006. Unfortunately, funding fell through, and Jackson instead went on to produce *District 9*, which was directed by Neil Blomkamp (who was set to direct the *Halo* feature).  

216 As recently as August 2009, Steven Spielberg was reportedly in talks to

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216 In an interview conducted during filming, Blomkamp remarked, “I play a lot of video games. The idea of *District 9* as a video game stresses me out a little bit because games based on movies rarely work. And movies based on games don’t work – I don’t know what’s up with that.”
produce *Halo: The Fall of Reach*, an adaptation of the Eric Nylund novel by screenwriter Stuart Beattie.\(^{217}\)

- *BioShock* was originally slated for a 2010 release and to be directed by Gore Verbinski, now to be directed by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo (*28 Weeks Later*) with Verbinski as producer.

- *Gears of War* – director Len Wiseman is envisioning a trilogy of films that are “a harder edged *Lord Of The Rings*.” According to the *LA Times*, budget reductions and a smaller narrative scope announced in April have Wiseman considering another project.

- *Metal Gear Solid* was confirmed for film adaptation in 2008 by series creator Hideo Kojima. Kurt Wimmer is attached as director. In January 2010, film producer Mike De Luca said that the project was in hiatus:

> I don’t think it’s going to move forward because I got the sense that there may not be enough of a coordinated will at this point on the side of certain parties to see a movie get made. And I get it because the problem with a lot of these adaptations is it’s such a huge franchise for the video game company. A movie can only hurt. If the movie’s great, you’re probably not going to sell more games. It’s such a separate thing. The franchise being as big as it kind of helps the movie…I’m not sure the movie does the same thing for the game.

as Kojima Productions and Konami balked at the $40-80 million budget set by Sony Pictures, feeling that the cost to create a proper cinematic version of the game would be much more.

- *World of Warcraft* has Sam Raimi attached as director (with the cancellation of *Spider-Man 4*). Raimi has played the game, so his experience as a gamer is considered very

\(^{217}\) The novelization of video games is a practice that has been happening for at least 20 years, including games like *Zork, Baldur’s Gate, Gabriel Knight II: The Beast Within, Myst, Warcraft*, and *Halo*, which has also had its universe expanded through comic books. This area of genre fiction has recently begun to receive some attention primarily from scholars in the field of speculative fiction.
favorably. As a fantasy film set completely within the Warcraft milieu, many in both industries are watching to see if this film will succeed where *Prince of Persia* did not.

- *Castlevania* currently has James Wan (*Saw*) as director.
- *inFAMOUS* is being scripted by Sheldon Turner.
- *Resident Evil*, with four movies so far, is slated for a quasi-reboot, with a return to the first film and closer narrative ties to the video games. *Resident Evil: Degeneration* (2008), an entirely CG film set in the world of the video games and separate from the live-action series, is set one year after the events in *Resident Evil 4* (2005).
- *Call of Duty* had a trademark filed by Activision on 21 September 2009 protecting the use of *Call of Duty* in “Pre-recorded movies featuring comedy, drama, action, adventure, music, theatrical performances and/or animation.”
- *Mafia Wars*, the wildly popular Facebook game by Zynga, is being prepped for film adaptation through a deal involving Ted Field and Radar Pictures.
- *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* attracted François Alaux and Hervé de Crécy, the directors of *Logorama* (the 2010 Academy Award winner for best animated short), who agreed to create a short film that will serve as a prequel to the upcoming Ubisoft shooter *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier*. Tim Sexton, who received an Oscar nomination for helping pen the adaptation of *Children of Men*, will serve as a writer on the project.
- *Red Faction: Origins* has developer THQ teaming with cable network SyFy (owned by NBC Universal) to create a two-hour movie – that would lead to a possible television series if it performs well – based on the publisher’s popular *Red Faction* franchise. The deal also includes the network’s involvement in the next game under its SyFy Games unit. The network is also developing THQ’s *de Blob* for television and the internet under
its SyFy Kids banner. Several years ago, SyFy Network had announced a partnership with Trion games to develop an MMORPG that would run in conjunction with a television series, but that project is still in development. Release of the film is set for March 2011.

- **Tomb Raider**, despite the popularity of Angelina Jolie, is being prepped with a new film that will be a reboot of the series, showcasing a younger Lara Croft in an origin story, and replacing Jolie.

- **Spy Hunter**, based on a 1983 arcade game, was reported in development at Warner Bros. by *Variety*. The studio acquired the rights to the video game from Midway in bankruptcy court, along with the rights to *Mortal Kombat* and a handful of other games.²¹⁸ Dan Lin and Roy Lee were identified as the producers on the film along with Doug Davison as executive producer and Stephen Gilchrist as co-producer. Chad St. John was slated to write the screenplay. Previously, a *Spy Hunter* movie was in development at Universal. Back then, John Woo, Paul W.S. Anderson, and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson all had their names attached to the project, and a game prequel to the film was actually released in 2006.

- **Dark Void** was announced in a 19 November 2009 press release by Capcom. Film rights to the game had been purchased by Brad Pitt’s Plan B Entertainment, under its Creative Partnership with Reliance BIG Entertainment. Capcom is notable for having several of its game properties adapted into films, including *Resident Evil: Degeneration* (2008) and *Resident Evil: Afterlife* (2010) as well as *Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li* (2009), with reasonable financial success. Reliance BIG Entertainment, the media and

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²¹⁸ Warner Bros. is expanding the media landscape of the *Mortal Kombat* franchise into a ten episode webseries after Kevin Tancharoen produced an unlicensed, fan-made trailer in the hopes of being allowed to make a new *Mortal Kombat* feature film.
entertainment arm of Indian conglomerate Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (R-ADAG), first introduced its development/production financing deal with Plan B Entertainment at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival. According to The Hollywood Reporter in January 2007, the company hired Germaine Gioia to serve in the newly created post of senior vice president of licensing in its Los Angeles office. Gioia spent 13 years at THQ, where she secured strong children’s licenses from Nickelodeon, 20th Century Fox/MGA, and Disney/Pixar (Cars, Finding Nemo, The Incredibles) and (Bratz). Gioia said that given Capcom’s strong internal development studios, working with strong Hollywood properties backed by solid marketing support should bode well for the company.

- **Silent Hill 2**, with the financial success of the first film, the original writer, Roger Avary, and original producer, Samuel Hadida, have signed on to do a sequel.

- **Asteroids** is part of a movement to reach into the earliest days of video gaming and transform games with simple concepts into major film productions. According to The Hollywood Reporter, after a brutal bidding war Universal Studios secured the property, with producers Lorenzo di Bonaventura (G.I. Joe: Rise of the Cobra) and Jeff Kirschenbaum (Wanted, Scott Pilgrim vs. the World) attached to the product. The script is to be penned by Matthew Lopez, who wrote the recent Race to Witch Mountain starring Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson.

Releases like Lara Croft: Tomb Raider or Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time nevertheless represent an important intersection between cinema and video games. As virtual reality has improved with successive generations of improved technology, the ability of animators to create games with the look and feel of cinema has been greatly enhanced. Some writers do look at the idea of aesthetics, not only in games but also in other media, with film arguably being the

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219 In 2008, Universal and Hasbro announced a partnership to produce four films based on popular board games.
strongest influence on game design, but the influence of game design on film production would be a very interesting area to explore through continued research in this project.

Product Placement in Games

Given that film-to-game titles are often regarded, by their creators as well as their consumers, as promotional tools for the movies, the games themselves might be considered as extended advertisements for the films. Even the more respected film-to-game titles still have to contend with their economic relationship to their source films no matter how original, immersive, or impressive the adaptation. If one considers that the characters from films are themselves commercial properties, then placing them into video games inherently brings to mind issues of product placement. Video games have had a long relationship with various types of licenses, and some of the earliest games from the classic era were essentially interactive commercials, such as Ralston-Purina’s Chase the Chuckwagon and Kool-Aid’s Kool-Aid Man. Throughout gaming history, properties involving corporate mascots have continued to pop up, including The California Raisins (1988); Domino’s Pizza’s The Noid in Avoid the Noid (1989); the Seven-Up Spot in Spot (1990), Cool Spot (1993), and the appropriately named Spot Goes to Hollywood (1995); and even Burger King’s The King in a trio of Xbox 360 games released in 2006. Games built around sports franchises, television shows, comic books, cartoons and comic strips, toys, and other intellectual properties flood the gaming landscape.

As the complexity of game properties has developed, the franchise possibilities of product placement has become two-fold, one in that a licensed game ostensibly functions as

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220 The King appeared earlier in 2006 in Fight Night: Round 3, by EA Sports, as a boxing trainer. While this game featured sports-related product placement, such as Everlast and Under Armour, it also featured advertising from Dodge and Burger King, and became noted for its highly intrusive product placement. The Burger King games sold a combined total of 3.2 million copies; the company posted a 40 percent profit increase for Q4 2006.

221 M Network, responsible not only for Kool-Aid Man but also for the home console games based on TRON, was a division of Mattel Electronics, itself a division of Mattel, Inc., who has developed a wide range of their properties into video games, including Barbie, Hot Wheels, Othello, and even Rock’em Sock’em Robots.
advertising for an existing property, and two in that any game can include advertising for other products. This has become more sophisticated than in the early days of gaming, where a player of Namco’s *Pole Position* (1982) might notice billboards advertising other Namco video games while steering the race car around the track or in the *FIFA Soccer* series (1993-2007) where Electronic Arts incorporated advertising around the walls of the soccer arena that are routinely seen in live-action soccer venues. In this regard, the games that featured advertising often used products that existed outside of the gaming world; while this was not always the case (some games did not seek external licensing or created products that spoofed real world referents), the incorporation of licensed products into game properties is linked to two major factors: enhancing the verisimilitude of the gaming experience and offsetting the increased production costs of game development, marketing, and distribution.

As the gaming technology has increased in sophistication, so have the ways in which advertisers are able to promote their brands within the gaming world. While virtual billboards and posters still populate the mise-en-scène, players find that they can watch commercials playing on televisions as well as listen to commercials on radio while driving vehicles in games and buy and use devices ranging from cell phones to cars to handguns that can be purchased in regular life. Because corporate branding is ubiquitous in American consumer culture, this insertion into games blends into the background – in marketing parlance, this is known as awareness advertising (i.e., it does not actively interact with the consumer but passively waits for recognition) – and becomes an unassuming part of the visual design of the game. If a player in a game enters a New York subway, special photographic filters are applied to an advertising poster...

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222 In 2008, US senator Barack Obama became the first presidential candidate to buy ad space inside a video game, appearing in nine different EA games connected to the internet, including *Madden NFL 09* (2008) and *Burnout Paradise* (2008), in an effort to appeal to the hard-to-reach 18 to 34 year-old male demographic. The ads ran through Election Day 2008.
along the wall to make it appear dirty or worn as it would in a typical subway setting, making them fit into the environment and look more realistic as defined by the game’s aesthetic. In the middle of an intense firefight, would a player focus on the fact that a Dodge Durango is providing cover from bullets? Maybe not, but the correctly rendered, and named, model exists as part of the game’s landscape, serving as a subtle marker for brand affinity. In an example that shows how product placement can be more integral to a gaming experience, in the game Splinter Cell (2002) a player must use a Sony Ericsson cell phone to take pictures during a mission; since this model of the phone is designed with camera features, the player is ostensibly trying a product within a game that is available for purchase outside of the game. In situations where a major company, such as Sony, holds a diverse portfolio of products that also includes video games, the ability to insert an existing product into an upcoming game is especially easy. Companies such as Ubisoft or Microsoft have entire Digital Advertising Sales divisions to facilitate the marketing possibilities of their games. Other companies that specialize in in-game advertising have started to appear. One such company is IGA Worldwide, and it has run advertising campaigns for British clothing company Ben Sherman in Test Drive Unlimited (2006) and Intel’s Core 2 Duo and The Discovery Channel’s “Future Weapons” television series in the game Battlefield 2142 (2006), even developing a custom map for the game that was optimized for the Intel processor.

With regard to production costs, this is perhaps more the motivating factor than crafting a convincing game world, and one that more closely aligns the video game and film industries in

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Product owners are made aware of what genre of game the advertising is being placed, as some of the game types feature destructible environment, which might result in their advertisements being destroyed by gunfire, alien invaders, or rampaging monsters. This is not necessarily a negative, however, as being able to alter the game environment, through violence or some other means, again enhances the sense of verisimilitude. It also shows a bit of goodwill on the part of the product owners in the willingness to let their advertising be subjected to the same effects as other materials in the game.
that both rely heavily on massive marketing campaigns for their major releases and seek to
exploit franchise synergy. In the case of film-to-game adaptations, product placement becomes a
particularly complex issue that might be best thought of as product replacement, in that the
licensed game is serving as a surrogate experience for its filmic referent. Although it has been
touched on in various parts of this project, a fruitful area for further research would be to closely
look at the way that film-to-game titles are marketed, both as independent products and as
components of a media franchise. In particular, the history of this marketing – including print
ads, television commercials, gaming reviews, convention demonstrations, promotional
campaigns, and other sorts of advertising – could provide an interesting companion piece to
other video game histories and address the cultural impact of the games within America and
around the world.

“Press Start to Continue”

While a number of international developers are involved in creating games based on
films, for the most part the film-to-game niche is dominated by the United States, particularly in
terms of what films get optioned for adaptation. While there are a few foreign films that have
been made into games, the number is miniscule compared to US productions. It would be
interesting in a later iteration of this project to look at the ways that games based on American
movies are received by a global audience.

The increasing proliferation of digital technologies impacts American culture not merely
as modes for entertainment or communication but moreover as a rising force for socialization. In
the current “Information Age,” the means of production have shifted what industrial products are
coded as having some sort of value. Throughout the landscape of virtual culture, media texts are
produced and reproduced, spreading throughout society; regardless of their medium of origin,
they emanate from printed pages, stages, screens, and speakers. Each medium has its own characteristics that determine what kinds of texts it can store and/or present; one cannot watch a film in a book or read from a digital video disc. All media have their limitations and possibilities that affect the works they carry in one way or another, from textual elements to organization to artistic sensibility. Looking at adaptations reveals devices and techniques not only in the media structure and narrative but also epistemology and methodology. How contemporary American consumers utilize a particular media artifact embodies a wide range of choices, from information acquisition to entertainment, and performance within a multimediatized society (particularly one where visual texts are of increasing importance) grows in its cultural influence through the constant and multifarious interchange of mediated content.

Film-to-game titles represent an area of technological intersection between economics, aesthetics, and narrative:

a video game adaptation – or at least a good one – is not merely an attempt to rehash or to copy; it moves the story, the world, and its audience to a different narrative mode, wherein the audience can step into (parts of) the storyworld…the better licensed games may be enjoyed by audiences whose appreciation of the game is based wholly on its superior design…and to enjoy a different relationship to them than the film or program allows. (Gray, 192)

The larger issue of adaptation could go beyond mere entertainment and possibly address ideas of cultural legitimacy, communication styles, and attitudes toward media that are not initially perceived when observing just the film or video game industries separately. As Marshall McLuhan noted in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, “Games are popular art, collective, social reactions to the main drive or action of any culture…They incorporate both the action and the reaction of whole populations in a single dynamic image” (235). With the digital media currently at hand, and with what it might be in the future, one might wonder what that image could be that is derived from games to represent an entire culture. Perhaps it would lie not
in any particular game, or film, or other media, but in the accrual and interaction of all of them, producing something that speaks uniquely to the individual but has the capacity to be read by all. Literacy in this type of media reading seems to indicate that studies of American virtual culture would benefit from being configured as spaces for play. As the influence, and indeed the very nature, of video games continues to evolve in both familiar and unexpected ways, the invitation to play will remain an alluring possibility for the convergence of media as well as its consumers and producers.
APPENDIX: LIST OF GAMES

A8 = Atari 8-bit computers
2600 = Atari 2600
5200 = Atari 5200
7800 = Atari 7800
3DO = 3DO system
ADAM = ColecoVision Adam computer
AMI = Amiga
APL = Apple line of computers (ex., Apple II, Macintosh)
ARC = Arcade
C64 = Commodore 64 personal computer
COCO = TRS-80 Color Computers
CV = ColecoVision
DC = Sega Dreamcast
DS = Nintendo DS (all versions)
DVD = games playable on DVD, such as the Scene It? series or mini-games of theatrical films
on home video
GB = Nintendo Game Boy
GBA = Nintendo Game Boy Advance
GBC = Nintendo Game Boy Color
GC = Nintendo GameCube
GCOM = Game.Com
GEN = Sega Genesis
GG = Sega Game Gear
HAND = Handheld (usually a dedicated device)
INTV = Intellivision
JAG = Atari Jaguar
LYNX = Atari Lynx
MOBILE = mobile (cell) phone, includes downloadable content (Apps)
MSX = standardized home computer architecture of the 1980s (sponsored by Microsoft)
MV = Microvision
N64 = Nintendo 64
NES = Nintendo Entertainment System
NG = Neo Geo
NGE = Nokia N-Gage
PBL = Pinball
PC = Personal Computer (generally running DOS or Windows on an Intel or similar processor)
PS = Sony PlayStation
PS2 = Sony PlayStation 2
PS3 = Sony PlayStation 3
PSP = Sony PlayStation Portable (all models)
S32X = Sega 32X
SAT = Sega Saturn
SCD = Sega CD
SMS = Sega Master System
007 Racing (PS; EA Canada and Eutechnyx Ltd. for Electronic Arts; 11/20/2000) – complete missions using a weaponized car. Similar to Spy Hunter. Multiplayer modes including “Pass the Bomb”.

007: Tomorrow Never Dies (PS; Black Ops for Electronic Arts; 11/16/1999) – Third person shooter. Ten levels of play, including one driving mission and one skiing mission. Follows plot of film with in-game cinematics and digitized movie footage.

101 Dalmatians: Escape from DeVil Manor (PC; DreamForge for Disney Interactive; 1997) – Third person play as Patches to solve puzzles with hints from a companion, Wizzer. First person perspective referred to as “Puppyvision”.

2010: The Graphic Action Game (CV; Coleco; 1984) – instruction manual underscores the narrative structure as a series of technical transmissions to mission control. Player must solve a series of puzzle games to restart critical systems (engines, reactor, life support, comm, and even the HAL 9000) aboard the Discovery and boost the ship to a safe orbit above Io. Sense of isolation evocative of the film eerily present during game play. Included overlay for controller.

2010: The Text Adventure (ADAM; Coleco; 1984) – introductory graphics show 2010 logo with rendering of the Star Child while theme of film plays. A text adventure indicative of the popularity of the genre at the time. Technically, a more complicated game than The Graphic Action version, while the basic objective (board the space ship Discovery, find out what is wrong, fix everything, and send the ship back to Earth) is the same. Verbose descriptions rely on
player’s imagination and seem closer to the novel’s imagery than that of the film, although having seen the film makes visualizing some of the “action” easier.

2Fast 2Furious (Mobile; B-Rush Entertainment for J2ME; 2002) – racing game on one track with three levels. Taking too much damage or losing all fuel ends game.

3 Ninjas Kick Back (GEN, SNES; Malibu Interactive for Sony ImageSoft; 1994) – Third person side-scrolling platformer. Each ninja has unique abilities and weapons used on the quest to retrieve a samurai’s special dagger.


300: Vengeance & Valor (7/31/2007) – a tactical strategy game exclusively included on the HD-DVD release of the film. Lead more Spartans into battle.

48 Hours (2600; Sega; 1983) – announced only

50 Cent: Bulletproof (XB, PS2; Vivendi Universal; 2005) – Universally panned by both gamers and critics. G-Unit Edition released for PSP in 2006; uses same story and cutscenes as console versions, but switches third-person perspective game play to a top-down, isometric view. Despite negative reviews, it still sold quite well, enough to merit another 50 Cent game, 50 Cent: Blood on the Sand (PS3, X360), featuring an original story by Kamran Pasha and more music by the rap artist.

9 to 5 (Atari 2600; Twentieth Century Fox; 1982) – proposed, never developed, although reportedly shown at the Winter 1983 Consumer Electronics Show. According to 20th Century Fox’s press kit, “A secretary’s work is never done: dictation, typing letters, filing, and it all has to be done on time. Now, the boss wants coffee, and time is running short. Can she keep up with the pace?” Also mentioned in press kit for CV. According to a memo, this was to be a “secretary-boss fight-out” and Creative Computing (April 1983) described it as a “secretary-boss shoot-out”.

Ace Ventura (PC; 7th Level for Bomico; 1996) – based on the cartoon show based on the film. Third person puzzle-solving point-and-click adventure. Double entendres of the humor are skewed towards adults.

Ace Ventura: Pet Detective – The Case of the Serial Shaver (PC; Brilliant Digital for Brilliant Digital; 1998) – Ace and his pet monkey Spike must explore a dozen locations worldwide in this Third person adventure. Despite pictures of Jim Carey as Ace on the box, the graphics are purposefully done in a cartoon style. Billed as a “Multipath Movie” with different narrative choices and outcomes.

The Addams Family (PBL; Bally; 1992) – based on the 1991 movie, using the signature “Addams Family” theme song and digitized audio (mostly from Raul Julia). The game was designed by Pat Lawlor, considered one of the best designers in pinball history. Lawlor had a copy of the screenplay nine months before the film’s release, and production on the game commenced while principal photography on the film was underway. The design team attended the film’s Hollywood premiere. This title is widely considered the most successful pinball game ever created, selling approximately 21,270 units (including 1,000 of a special limited edition The Addams Family Special Collector’s Edition (AKA the “Gold Edition”), released in 1993, featuring gold accents and brass plaques featuring serial numbers).

The Addams Family (C64, GB, NES, SNES; Ocean; 1992 / GG, GEN, TGCD; Flying Edge; 1993) – Platform. The game is situated narratively near the end of the movie. Player controls Gomez, who is searching the Addams mansion after the family has been evicted looking for Morticia, Pugsley, Wednesday, Granny, and Lurch while contending with the evil attorney Tully Alford.

Addams Family Values (GEN, SNES; Ocean Software for Ocean Software; 1994) – Action adventure with some RPG elements and occasional puzzle-solving. Player controls Uncle Fester in the search for missing Baby Pubert.

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension (A8, C64, PC; Adventure International; 1984) – packaging featured “Educational” or “Adventure” versions.

The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland (PC; Children’s Television Workshop for Mattel; 1999)

The Adventures of Pinocchio (PC; Powerhouse Entertainment for IBM; 1996) – based on live-action Jim Henson production

Adventures of TRON (Atari 2600; M Network; 1982) – According to the manual, “Game suggested by TRON, the futuristic adventure Motion Picture from Walt Disney Productions.” Originally meant to be an Atari 2600 version of the Intellivision game TRON: Maze-A-Tron, but by the time the game was completed it had changed so much that Mattel altered the name. Special edition paired with TRON: Deadly Discs and sold with a special blue TRON joystick slightly reminiscent of arcade controller; customers who bought both games separately could also complete a mail-in certificate for the joystick. Single-screen platformer where the player has to guide Tron in collecting bits while avoiding tanks, Recognizers, and grid bugs sent by the Master Control Program (MCP). Tron can hitch a ride on the Solar Sailer and use elevators and the Input/Output (I/O) Beam to move between floors. Once the Disney license expired, this game was re-released by Telegames in Europe as Adventures on GX-12 (1989) many years after the original release.

Aeon Flux (PS2, XB; Majesco; 2005) – based on live action film derived from animated show on MTV.
Airplane! (2600; Sega; 1983) – announced at the 1983 Winter Consumer Electronics Show and mentioned in Creative Computing (April 1983) and Video Games Player (August/September 1983).

Akira (NES; Taito; 1988) – based on anime film of same title. Billed as an adventure/interactive movie. After watching a cut scene or scrolling through a dialogue, the player is presented with several options to choose from that change depending on the screen (i.e., there is no menu of set commands); in many situations, some options will lead to the player character’s death or imprisonment, ending the game.

Akira (Amiga; developed and published by ICE; 1994)

Aladdin in Nasira’s Revenge (PC, PS; Disney Interactive; 2000)

Alexander (PC; Ubisoft; 2004)

Alien (Atari 2600; Fox Video Games for Twentieth Century Fox; 1982) – see Chapter 1 for a discussion of Twentieth Century Fox. Reportedly Milton Bradley was also working on a licensed game, but the title was switched to The Attack (1981) once Texas Instruments took over Milton Bradley’s MB-1 Game System, most likely to avoid licensing fees (if true, this might mark the first instance of a film to game licensing agreement, albeit one that was not used). A prototype of the Alien game by Milton Bradley is in the possession of former employee Anthony Cote. This game is maze-based (and basically a reworking of Pac-Man). The player guides a human around the maze, crushing alien eggs and repulsing them with a short-term flamethrower. Collecting a “pulsar” enables the human to temporarily destroy the aliens before they respawn. Bonus items (including one that looks like the USS Enterprise from Star Trek) can be collected in the maze for additional points. Instruction manual contains hint section from Dallas North (the captain of the Nostromo in the film).

Alien (C64, PC; Argus Press, 1984)

Alien vs. Predator (GB, SNES; Activision; 1993) – FPS. The crossover between the two franchises was first established in a comic book series by Dark Horse. GameBoy version is a more limited scrolling shooter.

Aliens (C64, PC; Software Studios for Electric Dreams; 1987)

Aliens (ARC; Konami; 1990) – scrolling fighter with moments of rail shooter (featuring the APC). Player’s character uses smart gun and character design resembles Ripley.

Aliens (Gearbox; 2008) – Gearbox CEO Randy Pitchford describes companies as generally doing work-for-hire “owned by investors, and their goal is to sign the big new movie license” or creating original titles, but Gearbox does both: “The licensed games tend to be about things that we think are really cool, not necessarily, ‘What’s a movie that’s coming out?’ Aliens came out a long time ago, but that doesn’t change the fact that it’s a huge fantasy for us to be in that world.” Although the release of this game was questioned, it appears it will be released by Sega.
**Aliens: Alien 2** (MSX; developed and published by Square Co.; 1987) – Japanese only release

**Aliens: Colonial Marines** (DS, PC, PS3, X360; Gearbox; 20??) – On 11 December 2006, Sega announced they had purchased the electronic rights to the *Alien* franchise from 20th Century Fox; issues at Gearbox have drawn out this game’s development and release, and Sega promoted the *Aliens vs. Predator* game. Squad-based FPS where the player oversees a team of four Colonial Marines, controlling one at a time and swapping between the members. Game play spans three acts that contain a varying number of levels. The events of the game take place after *Alien 3*. A Colonial Marine search and rescue team investigates the USS Sulaco in search of Ellen Ripley, Corporal Dwayne Hicks, and the rest of the missing squad sent to LV-426 in *Aliens*. The clues from their disappearance on the Sulaco leads the rescue team to the planet Fiorina to uncover the fate of the missing characters. Game environments include the derelict alien spacecraft from *Alien*, the Sulaco and LV-426 from *Aliens*, and the Fiorina “Fury” 161 prison facility from *Alien 3*. Concept artist Syd Mead, who worked on *Aliens*, was hired to design game areas of the Sulaco that did not appear in the film. The game’s story is being written by “Battlestar Galactica” contributors Bradley Thompson and David Weddle.

Announced with this game also was an Aliens RPG, but neither Obsidian Entertainment nor Sega has made any public movement on the title. Support by Sega appears questionable as the company recently announced a new Aliens vs. Predator game being developed by Rebellion Entertainment and announced for 2010 ahead of the two other Alien titles. A previous FPS titled *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, for the PS2, was being developed by Check Six Games for Fox Interactive and Electronic Arts in 2001, but was cancelled before its release.

**Aliens: The Computer Game** (APL, C64; Activision; 1986) – “Here’s your chance to relive all the excitement and adventure from the motion picture ‘Aliens’.” (box blurb) Several scenes from the film are copied, including Ripley’s address to the assembled marines before arrival at LV-426, the choppy flight down to LV-426, fighting hordes of aliens, the search for Newt, and the final power loader confrontation with the alien queen.

**Aliens Online** (PC; Mythic; 1998)

**Alien vs. Predator** (ARC; Capcom; 1994) – fighting horizontal platformer. Choose either a marine or a predator as you fight your way through the various stages, wiping out the aliens as you go. The game is a graphically altered version of *Final Fight*. The game has four selectable player characters: Predator Hunter, Lt. Linn Kurosawa, Predator Warrior, and Major Dutch Schaefer. The game combines enemies from the two Twentieth Century Fox film properties and is the first entry in the long line of *AvP* titles, which properly began as a comic book series (1989-90) from Dark Horse. Atari might have been considering this title for the 7800 before Capcom as it did appear on a master part number listing, but that would have been extremely late in the development cycle for the system.

**Alien vs. Predator** (JAG; Rebellion for Atari; 1994) – FPS where player can choose to be Colonial Marine, Predator, or Alien; each has a different narrative depending on which one chosen. The game uses the visual designs created for the respective films (from the design of the
Alien and Predator to signature audio sounds to equipment like the smart gun and motion tracker). A prototype version as a port of the Jaguar title was created for the Lynx but not finished.

**Aliens vs. Predator** (APL, PC; Rebellion for Sierra; 1999)

**Aliens vs. Predator** (PC, PS3, X360; Rebellion; 2010) – same development studio from previous AvP PC game. The game takes place 30 years after the events of the second film in the Alien series. Play as Alien, Human, or Predator. Lance Henriksen reprises his role as Karl Bishop Weyland. Multiplayer modes include deathmatch, Predator Tag, and Infestation.

**Aliens vs. Predator 2** (PC; Monolith Productions for Sierra Entertainment; 2001) – released through Fox Interactive. FPS where the player has a choice of three characters/species, each with their own distinct set of weapons and abilities.

**Aliens vs. Predator: Extinction** (PS2, XB; EA; 2003) – all the sounds from both the Alien and Predator universe. Pulse rifle sounds and Alien death screams are straight from the movies.

**Aliens versus Predator 2: Primal Hunt** (PC; Third Law Entertainment for Sierra; 2002) – The expansion takes place in two time periods: about five hundred years before the events in AVP2 and about five weeks before the beginning of the Alien’s storyline in AvP2. In both time periods, the game takes place on the planet LV-1201, the site of AvP2. The expansion revisits the Forward Observation Pods, a group of elevated habitation modules which comprise one of two main human facilities on the planet. Specifically, the player visits Pod 5, which was destroyed prior to the events in AvP2. The cause of its destruction is revealed in the expansion.

**Alien3** (Amiga, C64, GB, GEN, GG, NES, SMS, SNES; Acclaim; 1992)

Relation to Film: Uses the same basic setup as the film, with the Sulaco experiencing a malfunction and ejecting the cryotubes carrying Ripley, Newt, Hicks, and Bishop. The escape pod containing the cryotubes crashes on Fiorina 161, a penal colony, killing all but Ripley. From here, the game’s plot diverges completely from the film’s, but it retains many basic elements from the film series, including the titular aliens and Colonial Marine weaponry.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box and manual both use the image of an alien queen in its chest burster stage, curled up in a fetal position, as featured on many promotional posters. The inside of the manual has no images from the film, but the very end of the manual encourages readers to go forth and defeat the alien menace, exhorting us to “Do it for Newt!”

Summary: As noted above, the basic setup for the game’s plot is the same as the film’s, but according to the manual, after Ripley is revived and learns of the Company’s plans, she also learns that she has brought aliens with her to the planet. In the film, there was only one alien threatening the prisoners on Fiorina 161 (not counting the queen inside Ripley), but in the game, there are many aliens, and they have captured and cocooned the prisoners. As Ripley, the player’s job is to free the prisoners from their cocoons before the alien eggs hatch and the facehuggers “impregnate” the men. Each level, therefore, has a time limit, and Ripley must free
all prisoners within that time limit, avoiding or killing aliens along the way. The enemies Ripley faces are typical warrior aliens (as seen in the films), eggs, facehuggers, and Guardians. The latter are not from the films, but appear as huge versions of the standard aliens; these are the bosses Ripley must periodically fight to advance in the game. In another change from the film, where the inmates make it quite clear that they have no weapons of any kind on Fiorina, Ripley can find a variety of weapons and ammunition scattered across the game’s levels. These include Colonial Marine mainstays such as pulse rifles and flame units, the former having two kinds of ammunition, bullets and grenades (the smart gun is notably absent). Ripley may also use hand grenades, which are separate from the grenades used in the pulse rifle's grenade launcher.

Curiously, the manual refers to the pulse rifle as “machine gun” and pictures it as an M-16, with the grenade launcher appearing as the under-the-barrel type used on an M-16. In the game, the weapon looks like a pulse rifle, as seen in the film and its precursor, *Aliens*.

**Alien3: The Gun** (ARC; Sega; 1993) – rail shooter; guns have recoil; Weyland-Yutani logo on machine

**Alien Resurrection** (PS; Fox Interactive; 2000) – released three years after source film. FPS (started development as a third-person title). While good atmospherics evoke the distant future of the film, slow play mechanics and bothersome save points ruin the enjoyable ambiance of the game.

**Aliens: Thanatos Encounter** (GBC; Crawfish Interactive for THQ; 3/30/2001)

**Aliens: Unleashed** (MOBILE; Sorrent; 2003) – FPS. Training mission goes wrong, and the player must combat the aliens using a variety of weaponry including smart guns, shotguns, scoped rifles, RPGs, and bazookas.

**Aliens in the Attic** (WEB; 2010) – Alien Attic Attack

**Alien Trilogy** (PS, SAT; Acclaim; 1996)

**All Dogs Go to Heaven** (AMI, PC; Merit Software; 1989)

**Alligator People** (Atari 2600; Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – unreleased prototype based on 1959 film

**Alvin and the Chipmunks – The Squeakquel** (WEB; 2010) – Munk Yourself, Munk Mic, Munk to the Beat

**An American Tail: Fievel Goes West** (PC; Captson; 1993) – point-and-click adventure. Film produced by Spielberg.

Anastasia: Adventures with Pooka and Bartok (PC; developed and published by Fox Interactive; 1999)

The Ant Bully (GC, PC, PS2, Wii; Midway; 2006) – released the same week as the film. Players control Lucas Nickle in a linear mission system structured on the film’s plot.

PopCap, makers of Bejeweled (2000), reskinned their game (one of the rare times they have done so) as a promotional tie-in with the film.

Antz (GBA, GBC; Infogrames; 1999)

Antz Racing (GBC; Acclaim; 2001)

Antz Extreme Racing (GBA, PC, PS2, XB; Empire Interactive; 2002)

Apocalypse Now (Killspace Entertainment) – In 2010, a game studio based in Hollywood reportedly began adapting the Coppola film.

Apollo 13 (PBL; Sega; 1995)

Arachnophobia (AMI, C64, PC; BlueSky Software for Walt Disney Computer Software; 1991) – based on film Spielberg exec produced

Arctic Tale (DS, GBA, Wii; Destination Software; 2007) – based on National Geographic documentary

The Arrival (PC; Live Interactive; 1997) – set 10 years after film


Asterix and Obelix Take on Caesar (PC, PS; Tek 5 for Cryo Interactive; 1999) – based on live-action film

Asterix and the Vikings (Mobile; Mobile Interactions for In-Fusio; 2006) – tie-in with 2006 animated film

Astro Boy: The Video Game (PSP, Wii; D3Publisher; 2009) – 2.5D action platformer, to be released at the same time as film

Attack of the Killer Tomatoes! (GB, NES; THQ; 1992)

Attack of the Movies 3-D (Wii, X360; Majesco; 2010) – loosely inspired by movie foes. Comes with 3D glasses.

Austin Powers (PBL; Stern; 2001)
Austin Powers: Oh Behave (GBC; Take-Two Interactive; 2000)

Austin Powers: Operation Trivia (PC; Sierra On-Line; 1999)


Austin Powers: Welcome to My Underground Lair (GBC; Take-Two Interactive; 2000)

Babe and Friends (GBC; Crave; 1999)

Babes in Toyland (PC; MGM Interactive; 1997) – based on 1997 animated film

Baby’s Day Out (GEN; Hi-Tech Expressions; 1994)

Back to the Future (C64, NES; developed and published by Electric Dreams; 1986)

Back to the Future (PBL; Data East; 1990)

Back to the Future II (AMI, C64, PC, SMS; Konami; 1990)

Back to the Future III (AMI, C64, GEN, PC, SMS; Arena Entertainment; 1991)

Back to the Future III (HAND; Systema; 1990)

Back to the Future II & III (NES; LJN; 1990)

Back to the Future (APL, PC, PS3, Wii, X360; Telltale Games; 2010) – Having had success with episodic games based on Aardman Animations’ Oscar-winning animated film series Wallace and Gromit, as well as other episodic titles, Telltale is planning on producing episodic games based on this film franchise to tell new stories based in the lore of the series. “The games are going to exist within these worlds,” said Dan Connors, CEO of Telltale. “I wouldn’t call these games sequels per se but a new interpretation of their worlds for a new medium. For one generation, it’s an introduction to these series. For another generation, it’s a thing they can look back on and something they can share warmly with their family and friends.”

Bad Boys: Miami Takedown (GC, PS2, XB; Empire Interactive; 2004)

Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever 2 (GBA; BAM!; 9/14/2002) – SF FPS. The first Ecks vs. Sever game is not related to any film and predates the theatrical film.

Balls of Fury (DS, Wii; Destination Software; 2007)

Barnyard (GC, PC, PS2, Wii; THQ; 2006)

Batman (HAND; Grandstand; 1989)
**Batman** (HAND; Tiger; 1997) – built as Batwing cockpit

**Batman** (ARC; Atari Games; 1990) – side scrolling fighter based on first Burton film.

**Batman** (PBL; Data East; 1991)

**Batman: The Movie** (AMI, C64, MSX, PC; Ocean Software for Data East; 1989)

**Batman: The Video Game** (GB, GEN, NES, TG16; Sunsoft; 6/20/1990) – port of the arcade game.

Relation to Film: The game recreates the film’s plot, point by point, using key locations and characters from the film. Before each level, a sequence with scenes from the movie is played. The Genesis version has 6 levels while the NES version has 5.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box front cover and manual cover feature the basic Batman insignia and font used on film posters. The box’s back cover has a promotional still of Michael Keaton in the Batman suit, standing in front of the Batmobile. No images from the film are used in the manual.

Summary: Starting on the streets of Gotham City and moving through other important locales such as the Axis Chemical Company, the Flugelheim museum, and the Gotham Cathedral, the player must defeat various enemies using simple punch, kick, jump commands augmented by more powerful ranged attacks with a limited number of uses (batarangs for most levels and missiles for vehicle levels). Each level has an end boss, and most of these are characters from the film such as Jack Napier, Bob the Goon, and the Joker. Two shooter levels have Batman driving the Batmobile or piloting the Batwing. The goal is to rescue Vicki Vale from the Joker by defeating him atop Gotham Cathedral. Somewhat strangely, the game’s opening sequence gives a thorough summary of Burton’s film up to Batman departing the Batcave for his final confrontation with the Joker, but then gameplay begins at the film’s beginning, with Batman fighting simple punks and thugs on the Gotham streets.

**Batman Begins** (GBA, GC, PS2, XB; Electronic Arts; 2005)

**Batman Begins** (Mobile; Warner Bros. Online; 2005)

**Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker** (GBC, N64, PS; Ubisoft; 2000) – based on the film created from the **Batman Beyond** television series (an early television show, **Batman: The Animated Series**, was adapted for the Game Boy in 1993).

**Batman Forever** (PBL; Sega, 1995)

**Batman Forever** (GB, GEN, GG, PC, SNES; Acclaim; 1995) – Action; Side-Scrolling Platformer.
Relation to Film: The game recreates the film’s plot, point by point, using key locations and characters from the film, although it is possible to play as Robin, even before the Robin origin scene at the circus. While the game uses digitized voices, very few are taken directly from the film (a notable exception is Two-Face saying, “If the Bat wants to play, we'll play!” when the user starts a new game).

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The front cover of the box and manual both use the same image as many of the film’s promotional posters. Also, in the manual, descriptions of each main character (Batman, Robin, Two-Face, The Riddler, Chase Meridian, Sugar, and Spice) are accompanied by production stills of the actors in costume.

Summary: The player controls either Batman or Robin (or both in two-player cooperative mode) through levels modeled after locations from the film, including the Circus, Claw Island, Two-Face’s warehouse hideout, Wayne Manor, and Arkham Asylum. The goal is to track down and defeat Two-Face and The Riddler. Besides operating as a side-scrolling brawler akin to Double Dragon, Batman Forever also features fighting game elements – such as multiple button combinations to execute more powerful attacks – and different weapon and equipment loadouts. Each player begins with character-specific default equipment and weapons and has the option of swapping some of these items out for optional ones in the character’s possession (also character-specific), such as flash pellets, slippery goo, or bat-bola. This introduces a certain degree of strategy to the game, as users must decide which equipment to use to overcome specific obstacles.

**Batman Forever** (ARC; Acclaim; 1996) - A player controls either Batman or Robin who advances through various stages that are taken from the 1995 film. Stages include battling Two-Face and The Riddler. The intermission features digitized voices from the actors, and photos from the film. The monitor bezel shows some photo stills from the film. Game regarded as problematic due to control issues.

**Batman Forever: The Arcade Game** (PC, PS, SAT; Acclaim; 1996)

**Batman Returns** (AMI, GEN, GG, Lynx, NES, PC, SCD, SMS, SNES; Konami, Sega; 1992) – side-scrolling beat-‘em-up platformer. Officially licensed from DC Comics and tied in with the Burton sequel. The game features many of the film’s locales and characters, using a recreation of Danny Elfman’s film score and supplementing the narrative with digitized film stills between the seven different levels. One stage was devoted exclusively to driving the Batmobile. Atari made their own version for the Lynx and offered a bundled deal with Lynx unit and **Batman Returns** cartridge together in a special box as a purchasing incentive.

Relation to Film: The game recreates much of the film’s plot, although it starts in the middle (after Penguin murders the Ice Princess) rather than at the beginning, using key locations and characters from the film.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The front box cover and cartridge have an image of the three main characters from the film, with Michael Keaton as Batman, Danny DeVito as Penguin, and
Michelle Pfeiffer as Catwoman. The back box cover, though, shows only screenshots from the game.

Summary: Playing as Batman, users navigate through the world of Gotham City (including rooftops, Shreck’s Wonderland, and Penguin’s sewer hideout), fighting thugs, gargoyles, killer clowns (even though the Joker is not in this game, his copycats apparently are), Catwoman, Penguin, and members of Penguin’s Red Triangle Circus. Movement consists not only of standard walk and jump, but also use of a grapple line and, at some points, Batman’s cape to slow his descent, parachute-style. Batman fights enemies with a simple punch/kick mechanic, but he also carries several different limited-use weapons, such as batarangs (of both normal and homing varieties), a bat swarm that engulfs enemies, and smoke bombs. Players can find ammunition for these limited-use weapons as in-game power-ups. [Note: This game has nothing in common with the NES or SNES *Batman Returns* games except for the source material. The Nintendo versions were both developed by Konami.]

*Batman & Robin* (PS; Acclaim; 1998)

*Beauty & the Beast* (SNES; Hudson; 1994) – Disney. 2D platformer.

*Beauty & the Beast: A Board Game Adventure* (GBC; Disney Interactive; 1999) – Disney

*Bee Movie Game* (PC, PS2, Wii, X360; Activision; 2007)

*Beethoven’s 2nd* (PC, SNES; 1993)

*Beetlejuice* (GB, NES; Rare for LJN; 1991)

*Ben Hur* (ARC; Multimedia Content; 2000) – chariot racing

*Beowulf* (PC, PS3, X360; Ubisoft Tiwak for Ubisoft; 2007) – based on the 2007 CGI film. Considered to be a poorly developed title with deficient level design and a badly implemented combat system, although it adds a rhythm mini-game that Beowulf must use frequently to motivate his soldiers to victory.

*The Beverly Hillbillies* (PC; Synergistic for Capstone; 1993) – based on 1993 film

*Beverly Hills Cop* (AMI, C64, PC; Tynesoft; 1990)

*Biggles* (C64; Dalali Software for Mirrorsoft; 1986) – time-travelling movie

*Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure* (AMI, C64, Lynx, NES, PC; 1990) – licensed from Nelson Films, Inc. (one of the four production companies on the film). Retitled as *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Video Game Adventure* for NES release. Characters look and talk like their movie versions. Bill and Ted must rescue kidnapped historical figures from six different historical eras including Medieval Europe, the American Old West, Ancient Greece, and the American Revolution.
Bill and Ted’s Excellent Gameboy Adventure (GB; LJN Ltd., Beam Software; 8/1/1991)

The Black Cauldron (APL, PC, Atari ST; Sierra On-Line; 1986, 1987 (Atari)) – graphic adventure game based on the Disney film of the same name. It consists of about 70 full-color screens drawn in a 3-D perspective, each frame depicting a different location in the mythical land of Prydain. Some screens are still-lifes that the player moves through, others are populated with characters the player may interact with, and at least six screens play arcade-type games.

Blade (GBC, PS; Activision; 2000)

Blade II (PS2, XB; Activision; 2002)

Blade: Trinity (Mobile; Blue Beck; 2004)

Blade Runner (C64, ZX; developed and published by CRL Group PLC; 1985) – a “video game interpretation of the film score by Vangelis” that resulted in an odd side-scrolling adventure in which the player had to cruise along in a skimmer over a map of city streets to track down six “replidroids” and kill them to earn the bounty. Obstacles on the street include other skimmers and pedestrians. The player’s character wears an overcoat similar to that of Deckard in the film and various signs in the background advertise the chance to “move off world”.

Blade Runner (PC; Westwood Studios for Virgin Interactive; 1997) – see discussion in Chapter 3.

The Blair Witch Experience (PC; Artisan; 2001)

Blair Witch, Volume I: Rustin Parr (PC; Terminal Reality for Gathering of Developers; 2000)

Blair Witch, Volume II: The Legend of Coffin Rock (PC; Human Head for Gathering of Developers; 2000)

Blair Witch, Volume III: The Elly Kedward Tale (PC; Ritual Entertainment for Gathering of Developers; 2000)

Bloodwings: Pumpkinhead’s Revenge (PC; Electronic Arts; 1995) – based on second Pumpkinhead film

Blown Away (PC; Imagination Pilots for IVI Publishing; 1994) – loosely based on MGM film

The Blues Brothers (AMI, C64, GB, NES, PC, ST; Titus France SA; 1991) – side-scrolling platformer comprising five levels where a player controls Jake or Elwood Blues in collecting records while journeying through a prison, catacombs, and the city to make it to a big concert.

The Blues Brothers: Jukebox Adventure (GB, PC, SNES; Titus France SA; 1993) – Action platformer with fighting and puzzle solving. Sequel to the earlier Blue Brothers games. Jake
and Elwood Blues are traveling to Chicago for their first paying gig, when an evil jukebox suddenly traps them. Player choses either Jake or Elwood (or both in the two-player game). Each character has different abilities so choosing the brother who matches your gaming style is an important decision. Jake is fast but can't jump very high and Elwood has hops but can't run very well. 34 single-player levels or 25 two-player levels that feature the music of The Blues Brothers.

**The Blues Brothers 2000** (N64; Titus Interactive; 2000)

**Bolt – The Video Game** (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; 2008) – Action adventure based on CG film, although the game is about the superpowered dog as he is depicted in the show within the film, not the average actor dog. Web-based games on the official internet site included Mittens’ Hot Dog Hideaway, Rhino’s Rollerball, and Run Bolt Run. RhinoBall was additionally offered as an iPhone app. DS players could text BOLT to Disney to get a cheat code for the game.

**Bram Stoker’s Dracula** (PBL; Williams; 1993)

**Bram Stoker’s Dracula** (GB, GEN, GG, NES, PC, SCD, SMS, SNES; Psygnosis Limited and Traveller’s Tales for Sony Imagesoft; 1993) – The 16-bit console versions are side-scrolling hack-and-slash games, with the GameBoy version also featuring side-scrolling adventure game with more emphasis on exploration. The Sega CD version is a side-scrolling fighting game that uses FMV backdrops and digitized actors. The DOS version (developed and published solely by Psygnosis and released in 1994) is an adventure game played from a first person perspective.

**Braveheart** (PC; Eidos; 1999)

**Bruce Lee** (A8, 1200XL; Datasoft; 1983)

**Bruce Lee Lives** (NES; Mindscape; 1990) – only announced at the 1990 Winter Consumer Electronics Show.

**Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon** (XB; Universal Interactive; 2002)

**Bruce Lee: Return of the Legend** (GBA; Vivendi Universal; 2003) – renewed interest in Bruce Lee has resulted in his estate licensing his image and voice for a number of projects. According to Vivendi’s announcement the game “combines stealth and platform elements with classic Bruce Lee fighting action in a dramatic movie-like story line.”

**Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid** (2600; Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – mentioned in Electronic Games (May 1983) and Video Games Player (August/September 1983). Apparently never developed.

**Cage King** (WEB; 2008) – fighting game on the website used to promote Babylon A.D.

**Casper** (3DO, GB, GBC, PC, PS, SAT, SNES; Interplay; 1996) - Based on the 1995 film, the game follows the plot of the film closely. Casper is on a mission, and he must explore Whipstaff
Manor for clues and solve puzzles as he avoids the ghostly trio of Stinky, Stretch, and Fatso who are looking to put a stop to Casper’s adventure. The game is played from an isometric perspective, with the rooms and hallways of the mansion in high color and detail.

**Casper** (GBA; Microids; 2002)

**Catwoman** (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Electronic Arts; 2004)

**Chaos Island** (PC; developed and published by DreamWorks Interactive; 1997) – based on the film *The Lost World*. Features original voice acting by all the main actors in the feature film, including Lord Richard Attenborough and Jeff Goldblum.

**Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Global Star; 2005) - According to Metacritic, the PC version was considered one of the worst releases of 2005 for computer games.

**Charlie’s Angels** (GC; Ubisoft; 2003) – based on live-action film

**Charlotte’s Web** (DS, GBA; Sega; 2006) – based on live-action film

**Chicken Run** (DC, GBC, PC, PS; Eidos; 2000)

**China Syndrome** (Atari 2600; Spectravision; 1982) – no official relation to the 1979 film of the same name, although the game, like film, deals with a core breach and possible meltdown scenario. The term “China Syndrome” refers to an extreme result of a nuclear meltdown in which the molten contents of the reactor core breach their barriers and flow downwards out of containment. The phrase arises from the exaggerated notion that molten reactor material would melt from the United States through the center of the earth and emerge in China. There is some speculation that Spectravision might have been trying to leech from the film’s popularity, especially with the popularity of film-licensed games in 1982, but given the years between both products this would be minimal at best.

**The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe** (DS, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Buena Vista; 2005) – team-based adventure where the player can control Lucy, Peter, Edmond, and Susan to solve action and brainteaser puzzles

**The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian** (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Disney Interactive; 2008) – play as 20 different characters from the film.

**The Chronicles of Narnia: Gryphon Attack and Castle Escape** (WEB; Disney; 2008) – games on website to promote release of film

**The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena** (PC, PS3, X360; Tigon Studios and Starbreeze Studios for Atari; 2009) – FPS. What began as an attempt to update the original *Escape from Butcher Bay* for the X360 turned into a new, full length, fully featured game, which includes an extensive remake of *Escape from Butcher Bay* as a bonus. *Assault on Dark Athena* begins immediately after the end of *Escape from Butcher Bay* with Riddick and Johns being
captured by the Dark Athena, which leads into the new game. “Pitch Black” and “Butcher Bay Riot” are featured as multiplayer modes along with a classic deathmatch and arena modes. “Pitch Black” pits all players, as guards, against one player as Riddick himself. The game takes advantage of the lighting system as levels are designed with areas of total darkness, which is advantageous for Riddick, who can see in the dark, while the guards are stuck with flashlights. If a guard kills Riddick, that player takes over as Riddick, who becomes “it” while hunting the other players who are themselves hunting Riddick.

In an interview about the game, Diesel remarked, “The objective in creating Tigon was to have the ability – because I have access in a unique way to Hollywood – to make videogames at the same level that you would approach making a franchise movie. Meaning, pulling out all the stops, taking a very serious approach to the story in the same way that studios do to their films, and bringing in top-caliber talent across the board. As a fan-boy growing up, I always appreciated an IP that allowed me to delve deeper into that universe if I felt compelled” (McInnis, 1).

_The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay_ (PC, XB; Starbreeze Studios and Tigon Studios for Vivendi Universal; 2004) – Xbox exclusive title. PC version sub-labeled as “Developer’s Cut” and features commentaries, interviews, and bonus features typically associated with DVD releases of films.

Tigon Studios, founded in 2002 by Vin Diesel, was one of the developers on the game.

_Chuck Norris Superkicks_ (2600, CV, VIC20; Xonox; 1983) – star branding of generic kung fu fighting game. “Chuck Norris is a licensed property from Top Kick Productions 1983.” Norris likeness appears on box and label. License ran out and game was re-released as _Kung Fu Superkicks_.

_Cinderella: Magical Dreams_ (GBA; Buena Vista Interactive; 9/20/2005) - Replay the Disney film from one of three perspectives: Cinderella, the mice, or the Fairy Godmother. 2D platformer.

_City of Lost Children_ (PC, PS; Psygnosis; 1997) – The player is Miette, who works for Pieuvre, the siamese schoolmistress twins. The graphics are the style of 3D characters over rendered backgrounds through the streets. Miette does small robberies, but soon a larger plot emerges as mysterious men called Cyclopes are kidnapping children to steal their dreams. Game advertises fully motion-captured animations for the characters, detailed backgrounds with atmospheric lighting and shadows, and digitized voices and sound effects. Co-director of the theatrical film Marc Caro oversaw the production and art design of the game.

_Clash of the Titans_ (PS3, X360; Game Republic for Namco Bandai; 2010) – released 3 months after the theatrical film. Game play somewhat similar to _God of War_, although new mechanics are introduced, such as the ability to steal opponents’ weapons and a larger arsenal of upgradeable armaments. Typical campaign time is 15 hours, which is almost double of most games of this type.
**Cliffhanger** (GB, GEN, GG, NES, SCD, SNES; Sony Imagesoft; 1993) – SNES is a sidescrolling fighter with some terrain elements to be negotiated.

Relation to Film: The game rehashes the film’s plot in a general way and features characters from the film, especially the main villains and their cronies as end-level bosses.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The main image on the box cover is a still from the film, showing star Sylvester Stallone rock climbing.

Summary: The main game is a single-player platform brawler along the lines of *Double Dragon*, with players controlling Gabe, the Stallone character from the film, as he fights numerous thugs, some of them wielding weapons that Gabe can pick up after defeating them. A small wrinkle in the typical brawler format is that, from time to time, Gabe must climb up a cliff to reach the next platform level, avoiding falling rocks, birds, and enemy gunfire as he does so. Gabe’s main mission is to locate several suitcases full of money that the main villains have lost and exchange them for the lives of his captured friends. Between levels, users will see images and get on-screen text dialogue that gets across the rudimentary plot elements from the film, although the pixelated images bear no real resemblance to the film's actors and no actual film dialogue gets used (apparently, the SegaCD version features actual clips from the film, though). The plot, as outlined in the game itself, is rather confusing and will likely leave players unfamiliar with the film almost entirely in the dark. After completing the single-player game, users may access a two-player versus mode.

Special Note: As with many film tie-in games, *Cliffhanger* was released for several systems. However, while the Genesis, SegaCD, and SuperNES versions are all basically the same game, the lower tier versions (GameBoy, GameGear, and NES) have significantly different gameplay.

**Clive Barker’s Nightbreed: The Action Game** (AMI, C64, PC, ST; Ocean; 1990)

**Clive Barker's Nightbreed: The Interactive Movie** (AMI, PC, ST; Ocean; 1990)

**Cloak & Dagger** (ARC; Atari; 1983) - The working title for the game was *Agent X*, but the name was changed to coincide with the release of the film *Cloak & Dagger* as Atari approached the film company in the hopes of bumping *Donkey Kong* as the featured game within the film. Scenes from the game were also featured within the film. The arcade version was released in advance of the film. See Chapter 1 for more information. Considered for porting to the 2600 and 7800 but never done; a version for the Atari 8-bit computer line and 5200 gaming console was started but abandoned approximately halfway through development due to the 1984 video game crash (atariprotos.com).

**Close Encounters of the Third Kind** (PBL; Gottlieb; 1978)

**Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs** (PSP; Ubisoft; 2009) – based on the film which is based on the book. “PLAY AS FLINT, THE HERO-INVENTOR FROM THE NEW MOUTHWATERING MOTION PICTURE… Explore 20 levels and environments from the movie and beyond”
**Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs** (WEB; 2009) – 3D Food Fight, Sticker Studio, and Stump the Monkey. Designed to promote home video release.

**Clueless: The CD-ROM** (PC; Mattel Media; 1997) – combination of film and spin-off television show

**Cobra** (C64; Ocean; 1986) – Stallone film

**Cool World** (AMI, C64, GB, NES, PC, SNES, ST; Twilight for Ocean Software; 1992)

**Congo** (PBL; Williams; 1995)

**Congo the Movie: Descent into Zinj** (PC; developed and published by Viacom New Media; 1996)

**Congo the Movie: The Lost City of Zinj** (SAT; Jumpin Jack for Sega; 1995) – FPS. Uses elements of the film to tell a side story following the exploits Butembo Kabalo, the only survivor of the first Travicom expedition. Features FMV segments. *Congo the Movie: The Secret of Zinj* was announced for the SNES but the project was cancelled.

**Constantine** (Mobile, PC, PS2, XB; THQ; 2005) – cell phone version by Warner Bros. Wireless.

**Coraline** (DS, PS2, Wii; D3 Publisher of America; 2009) – based on the CGI film which is based on a Neil Gaiman book. Action adventure. Players control Coraline’s interactions with all the film’s characters while exploring two interactive worlds (the Normal World and the Other World). Also features mini-games and puzzles inspired by the film. Finding hidden collectibles allows players to unlock unique outfits to customize Coraline’s look and access artwork from the film.

**Crash Dive** (Atari 2600; Fox Video Games for Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – originally was going to be tied to *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* but was retitled by Fox.

**Creature From the Black Lagoon in 3D** (PBL; Bally; 1992)

**Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon** (GBA, PS2, XB; Ubisoft; 2003) – released three years after the theatrical film. The fighting system was okay, but bogged down under repetitive gameplay.

**Crow: City of Angels** (PC, PS, SAT; Acclaim; 1997)

**Crush, Crumble and Chomp! The Movie Monster Game** (APL, Atari 8-bit, C64, PC; Epyx; 1981) – not specifically licensed to any one film property. The player takes control of a movie monster and attacks a famous city (New York, San Francisco, Tokyo, or Washington, DC). Playable monsters included: Goshilla, a giant amphibian like Godzilla; The Kraken, a sea monster; Arachnis, a giant spider; The Glob, akin to the monster in The Blob; Mechismo, a giant robot; and Mantra, a giant flying monster like Mothra.
Cutthroat Island (GB, GEN, GG, SNES; Acclaim; 1996)

Daredevil (GBA; Encore; 2003) - version planned for PS2 was cancelled (the film, while making over $100 million domestic box office against a $78 million budget, was critically panned and fairly rejected by comic book fandom).

The Dark Crystal (A8, APL, PC; Sierra; 1983) – bundled with movie poster

Darkman (AMI, C64, GB, NES, ST; Ocean Software; 1991)

The Da Vinci Code (PC, PS2, XB; 2K Games; 2006) – adding more puzzle elements to the puzzles from the film, the game also incorporates fighting sequences with Louvre guards and Opus Dei monks, turning academic Robert Langdon into a sort of action hero. Long cutscenes show characters who look and sound nothing like Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou.

The Da Vinci Code: Light Puzzle (Mobile; Blaze; 2006)

The Day the Earth Stood Still (2600; Twentieth Century Fox) – announced, never developed, but a version for the Atari 400/800 system was found.

Days of Thunder (AMI, C64, GB, PC, NES, ST; Mindscape; 1990)


Debbie Does Dallas (2600; American Multiple Systems) – referenced in Electronic Fun with Computers and Games (November 1982).

Deep Throat (2600; Games People Play; 1983) – X-rated title referenced in Video Games Player (August/September 1983) but never developed.

Delta Force: Black Hawk Down (PC, PS2, XB; 2003 (for PC), 2005) – grafting of film onto existing Delta Force game franchise

Demolition Man (PBL; Williams; 1994)

Demolition Man (3DO, GEN, SCD, SNES; Alexandria Inc. for Virgin Interactive and Acclaim; 1995) – 3DO version developed and published in 1994 by Virgin Interactive, features digitized graphics of the actors and movie sequences, taken during the shots for the movie. The Sega CD version adds digitized clips from the film to introduce levels and advance the plot. Announced for the Jaguar CD but not developed.

Dennis the Menace (AMI, GB, NES, SNES; Ocean Software; 1993) – based on live-action film. Dennis, accompanied by his dog Ruff, has to track down Switchblade Sam, who has stolen Mr. Wilson’s prize coin collection. Weapons include squirt gun, blowgun, and slingshot.
**Despicable Me: The Game** (PS2, PSP, Wii; D3Publisher; 2010) – control Gru’s Minions through various levels. Also features flight missions against Gru’s rival Vector.

“*Despicable Me* has all the right ingredients for a successful game,” said Bill Anker, vice president of business development and licensing, D3Publisher. “The film’s unique cast of characters and playful, mischievous action will translate exceptionally well into the interactive space. We look forward to working closely with the Universal team to deliver an authentic and compelling gameplay experience for fans of the film as well as gamers of all ages.”

**Despicable Me: The Game – Minion Mayhem** (DS; D3Publisher; 2010) – command Gru’s Minions to solve puzzles and retrieve items to build his rocket. Features new Minions exclusive to the game.

**Dick Tracy** (AMI, ST, C64, GB, GEN, PC, NES, SMS; multiple publishers; 1990) – GB release in 1991 most similar to NES release as Dick Tracy works through five stages to stop Big Boy and his criminal gang.

**Dick Tracy: The Crime-Solving Adventure** (AMI, PC; Distinctive Software for Walt Disney Computer Software; 1991)

**Die Hard** (C64, PC; Dynamix for Activision; 1989) – first-person, uses cut scenes

**Die Hard** (TG16; Pack-In-Video for Nihon Bussan; 1990) – top-down perspective

**Die Hard** (NES; Pack-In-Video for Activision; 1991) – top-down perspective. Features cinematic sequences that change the story depending on which choices that player makes.

**Die Hard Arcade** (ARC; Sega; 1996) – scrolling fighter

**Die Hard Arcade** (SAT; Sega; 1997)

**Die Hard: Nakatomi Plaza** (PC; Fox Interactive; 2002) – closely follows the plot of the first film, down to spoken dialogue (with some horrible voice acting). FPS. Some new levels added to expand play area.

**Die Hard Trilogy** (PC, PS, SAT; Fox Interactive; 1996)

**Die Hard Trilogy 2: Viva Las Vegas** (PC, PS; Fox Interactive; 2/29/2000)

**Die Hard: Vendetta** (GC, PS2, XB; Fox Interactive; 2002)

**A Dinosaur’s Tale** (GEN; Hi-Tech Expressions; 1994) – based on animated Spielberg film. One of the earliest Genesis games to use 3D game play (alternating with 2D stages).
**Dirty Dancing** (PC; Say Design for Codemasters Online Gaming; 2007) – Play as Frances Houseman or Johnny Castle. Series of mini-games (such as “Breakfast Buffet” and “Bellboy Bedlam”) and puzzles with no linear plot. Progression through different levels of the mini-games opens up other parts of the camp. Earnings (“camp dollars”) are used to buy furniture and decorate player’s cabin and pool.

**Dirty Harry** (PBL; Williams; 1995)

**Dirty Harry: The War Against Drugs** (NES; Mindscape; 1990) – based on Dirty Harry film franchise. The game begins with a digitized sample of “Go ahead, make my day.” Harry himself in the game is a rather small blue-suited character that in no way resembles Clint Eastwood, whose picture graces the front of the game box.

**Dirty Harry** (PS3, X360; The Collective for Warner Bros. Interactive; 2007) – this game was cancelled. The game was to continue the story of the 1971 motion picture, and be situated between the first and second films, with the San Francisco Harry Callahan detective tracking down a serial killer named Scorpio. Clint Eastwood was to lend his voice and likeness to the game as well as providing consultation and creative input. Game design possibly was to be open-world. Player action and choices was potentially going to influence AI reaction from criminals and police officers as a balance was to be followed between upholding the law and deviating from the law. According to official press releases by Warner Bros.: “Dirty Harry helped define a genre and introduced the world to a character who has since become a cultural icon, so bringing Clint Eastwood’s authentic Dirty Harry character to this next generation of consoles provides exciting promise for game playing audiences everywhere,” said Jason Hall, Senior Vice President of Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment. “Our work with The Collective is aimed at culminating in a game with an all-new story that allows players to experience the action and suspense of the legendary franchise firsthand.” Warner Bros. even released a trailer for the game that ended with the famous line, “You’ve got to ask yourself a question: Do I feel lucky?”

**Discs of TRON** (ARC; Bally/Midway; 1983) – originally slated to be one of the levels in the original TRON arcade game, the part of the program that became Discs of TRON was removed due to hardware limitations and time constraints, eventually becoming a stand-alone title. Manufactured as a regular cabinet and as an environmental cabinet, featuring enhanced sounds (including speech) and lights (including a disc that the player stands on that looks like the disc platforms in the game as well as blacklight accents) to create a more immersive experience. The player controls TRON in a disc throwing battle against Sark through a series of progressively complicated levels. Features a complicated control scheme combing a joystick (with trigger and thumb button) and a rotary optical controller (with push and pull actuators).

**Disney's 101 Dalmatians II: Patch's London Adventure** (PS; Buena Vista; 2003)

**Disney's 102 Dalmatians: Puppies to the Rescue** (DC, GBC, PC, PS; Activision; 2000)
**Disney's Aladdin** (AMI, GB, GBA, GBC, GEN, GG, PC, NES, SMS, SNES; Capcom; 1993) – Sidescroller. Developer Virgin used their design experience on *Global Gladiators* and *Cool Spot* to craft this title.

Relation to Film: The game follows the film’s plot in a general way, using many of the film's settings and characters.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): Main characters from the film—Aladdin, Abu, the genie, and Jafar—are featured prominently on the box, but the image is not from the film itself.

Summary: The player controls Aladdin as he fights and jumps his way through levels based on settings from the film, such as the city of Agrabah, the Sultan’s dungeon, the Cave of Wonders, and Jafar’s Palace. Combat is straightforward, consisting of apple tosses (limited ammunition) and simple sword slashes supplemented by three slightly more advanced sword moves, but no combos as such. The goal, as in the film, is to rescue Princess Jasmine and defeat Jafar. Some bonus levels have the player controlling the monkey Abu as he collects items and avoids or fights enemies. If players collect any “Genie tokens” during a given level, a Genie’s Bonus Machine mini-game becomes available for play at the level’s end. This bonus game is basically a slot machine, giving players the chance to earn more apples, lives, or gems (currency which can be used to purchased lives or continues) at the risk of losing all remaining Genie tokens. So long as the players have Genie tokens remaining, they can continue to play the bonus game.

**Disney’s Ariel: The Little Mermaid** (GEN, GG, SMS; Sega; 1992) – Action; Side-Scrolling Platformer

Relation to Film: The plot has nothing to do with the film’s plot, but the game does feature key characters from the film. The game's main theme music is the same as that from the film.

Packaging: The box sports an image of the game’s main characters – Ariel, Triton, Ursula – but not one taken directly from the film or its promotional materials.

Summary: The sea witch Ursula has transformed all of the merpeople into worm-like polyps, and the player must take control of the surviving member of the royal family, either Ariel or King Triton, to put things right. As the action all takes place underwater, characters have full two-dimensional freedom of movement with simple d-pad controls. The buttons control basic attacks (sparkles for Ariel, fireballs for Triton), special attacks (magical stars for Ariel, thunderbolt for Triton), and summoning (effect depends on which fish friend is active). The player swims around, defeating enemies such as sharks while looking for polyps. When a polyp is attacked, it transforms back into a merperson. Besides the playable characters and summonable supporting characters, such as Flounder the fish and Sebastian the crab, the game has nothing to do with the film except for the final boss, Ursula the sea witch. Of the Disney-based games named here, this is the simplest to play and easiest to beat, perhaps because of the absence of jumping puzzles.

**Disney’s Atlantis: The Lost Empire** (GBA, GBC, PS; Sony; 2001)

**Disney’s Atlantis: The Lost Empire: Search for the Journal** (PC; Buena Vista Games; 2001)
Disney’s Atlantis: The Lost Empire: Trial by Fire (PC; Disney Interactive; 2001)

Disney’s Beauty and the Beast (SNES; Hudson Soft USA, Inc.; 1994) – Player controls the Beast with the objective of causing Belle to fall in love so that the curse cast upon him and his castle will be broken. The final boss of the game is the hunter Gaston. Cutscenes between stages advance the story. A modified version (different maps, characters have different abilities/behaviors) was released for the NES only in Europe.

Disney’s Beauty & the Beast: A Board Game Adventure (GBC; Nintendo; 1999)

Disney’s Beauty & the Beast: Belle’s Quest (GEN; Sunsoft; 1993)

Disney’s Beauty & the Beast: Roar of the Beast (GEN; Sunsoft; 1993)

Disney’s Brother Bear (GBA, PC; Disney Interactive; 2003) – mobile version developed by J2ME and released by Disney Mobile Studios in 2005.

Disney’s Chicken Little (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Buena Vista; 2005)

Disney’s Chicken Little: Ace in Action (DS; Buena Vista; 2006)

Disney’s Dinosaur (DC, GBC, PC; Ubisoft; 2000)

Disney’s Dinosaur Activity Center (PC; Disney Interactive; 2000)

Disney’s The Haunted Mansion (GC, PS2, XB; TDK Mediactive; 2003)

Disney’s Hercules (GB, PC, PS; Buena Vista; 1997)

Disney’s Home on the Range (GBA; Buena Vista; 2004)

Disney’s The Hunchback of Notre Dame (GB; Disney Interactive; 1992)

Disney’s Lilo & Stitch (GBA; Disney Interactive; 2002)

Disney’s Lilo & Stitch 2: Hamsterveil Havoc (GBA; Buena Vista Interactive; 2004)

Disney’s The Lion King 1 ½ (GBA; THQ; 2003)

Disney’s The Lion King: Simba’s Mighty Adventure (GBC, PS; Activision; 2000)

Disney’s The Little Mermaid (GB, NES; Capcom; 1991) – Sidescrolling adventure across five stages: Sea of Coral, Sunken Ship, Sea of Ice, Undersea Volcano, and Ursula’s Castle.
Disney’s *The Little Mermaid: Magic in Two Kingdoms* (GBA; Buena Vista Games; 2006) – timed for release of DVD

*Disney’s The Little Mermaid II – Pinball Frenzy* (GBC; Nintendo; 9/24/200) – redressing of Pokémon Pinball game using Disney film characters. Released week after *The Little Mermaid II: Return to the Sea*.

*Disney’s Meet the Robinsons* (DS, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, PSP, Wii, X360; Buena Vista Games for Disney Interactive; 2007) – Player controls Wilbur through 40 missions and 6 different locales, a few of which are revisited in the movie, to repair the time stream. Wesley Singerman, Harland Williams, Adam West, Nicole Sullivan, and Stephen Anderson reprise their roles for the Robinson family. GBA version by Climax Group; this game, which mixes side-scrolling and flying, takes place after the movie. The DS version simplifies the plot and action into a third-person shooter. Nintendo created a version of the movie for Gameboy Advance Video.

*Disney’s Mulan* (GB; THQ; 1998)

*Disney’s Peter Pan in Return to Neverland* (GBA; Disney Interactive; 2002) – 2D platformer

*Disney’s Peter Pan in Return to Neverland* (PS; Sony; 2002) – 2D platformer

*Disney’s Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End* (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Disney Interactive; 2007)

*Disney’s Pocahontas* (GB, GEN; Black Pearl; 1996)

*Disney’s Snow White* (2600; Atari; 1983) – unreleased prototype. Several different iterations (perhaps as many as five) exist according to programmer Greg Easter. When Easter was recently contacted regarding one of the prototypes, he sent this in reply:

> I began calling the game “Snow White and the Seven Versions” because of all of the different marketing lunatics who each insisted on changes. Most of their changes were contradictory to each other’s requests, which is the main reason that the game was never released by Atari.

> Of course the second reason is that the company was in deep financial trouble by the time that was done, mostly due to the insane decisions made by those same marketing people. The game went through focus testing with children ages 6 to 11 and the summary in the report described the game as “very exciting” for the children in the age range that this product was targeted for. Jewel Savadelis, who was vice president of marketing at Atari at the time read me the report personally, and said that this was why the game should NOT be released – “it is too exciting for children.” When I said that should be considered a good thing for a video game, she said, “children spend too much time in front of the television already, and it rots their brains.” Just the person that should be in senior management of a video game company, huh? (atariage.com)

(Jewel Savadelis now runs Savadelis Films – a wedding videography service – with her husband.)
**Disney's Stitch: Experiment 626** (PS2; Disney Interactive; 2002)

**Disney’s Story Studio: Mulan** (PS; Disney Interactive; 1999)

**Disney’s Tarzan** (GBC, N64, PC, PS; Activision; 1999)

**Disney’s Tarzan Untamed** (GC, PS2; Ubisoft; 2001)

**Disney’s Toy Story** (GB, GEN, PC, SNES; Buena Vista; 1995)

Relation to Film: The levels visit familiar settings from the film, such as Andy’s room, Sid’s room, and the claw machine, and the overall plot follows the film's plot point for point. Between levels, players are treated to story points via text on screen supplemented by still images from the film.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box features a still image from the film with main characters Woody and Buzz Lightyear. Curiously, the back cover of the international version does not mention the film.

Summary: The user receives mission objectives via an on-screen Etch-a-sketch and controls Woody as he moves through environments from the film, avoiding dangerous toys and other enemies. Some missions primarily involve puzzle solving, such as the level where Woody must corral all the toys and get them back to their proper places before Andy returns to his room, a plot element manifested in the game by a time limit on the level. Other missions are more action-oriented, such as driving levels where Woody must pilot a remote-controlled car. In true kid-friendly fashion, no defeated enemies are destroyed; they are merely disabled, and can reactivate, so Woody must keep moving at all times. The controls are simple, with the direction pad controlling where Woody runs and buttons assigned for jumping and whipping Woody's pull chord; the latter serves as an attack and to help him swing across large gaps. The game itself is not kid-friendly in its difficulty, though. Even some of the easier levels can prove challenging because of time limits.

**Disney’s Treasure Planet** (PS, PS2; SCEA; 2002)

**Disney’s Treasure Planet: Battle at Procyon** (PC; Disney Interactive; 2002)

**Disney/Pixar A Bug’s Life** (GBC, N64, PC, PS; Activision; 1998)

**Disney/Pixar Cars** (DS, GBA, GC, PS2, PSP, XB; THQ; 2006) – rated E and targeted primarily at young children. This title ultimately sold 7 million copies. *Carfinder Game* included on DVD film release.

**Disney/Pixar Cars: Mater-National Championship** (DC, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; THQ; 2007)
*Disney/Pixar Cars: Race-O-Rama* (DS, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; THQ; 2009)

*Disney/Pixar Cars: Radiator Springs* (PC; THQ; 2006)

*Disney/Pixar’s Finding Nemo* (APL, GBA, PC, PS2, XB; THQ; 2003)

*Disney/Pixar’s Monsters, Inc.* (GBA, GBC, PS, PS2; Buena Vista; 2001)

*Disney/Pixar’s Monsters, Inc. Scare Island* (PC, PS2; Buena Vista; 2002)

*Disney/Pixar's Monsters Inc.: Wreck Room Arcade: Bowling for Screams* (PC; Buena Vista; 2002) – arcade style bowling game for 1 or 2 players. Uses characters and narration from the film. Features power-ups.

*Disney/Pixar's Monsters Inc.: Wreck Room Arcade: Eight Ball Chaos* (PC; Buena Vista; 2002) – pool game

*Disney/Pixar's Monsters Inc.: Wreck Room Arcade: Monster Mania* (PC; Buena Vista; 2002) – this game was only available to players who had unlocked it by purchasing all of the other *Wreck Room Arcade* titles. Players jump through windows and doors to collect screams while avoiding humans and thrown objects.

*Disney/Pixar's Monsters Inc.: Wreck Room Arcade: Monster Tag* (PC; Buena Vista; 2002) – play against Rozfor as a member of the CDA (Child Detection Agency) and collect as many human items as possible while balanced on a seesaw without falling off.

*Doomsday – Marauder Massacre* (WEB; 2008) – FPS rail shooter

*Donnie Darko: The Adventure Game* (PC; 2003) – unlicensed adventure game created for the June 2003 MAGS (Monthly AGS) competition

*Double Dragon* (ARC; Technos; 1995) – a video game based on a film based on a 1987 video game by Taito. Loosely follows the film’s plot. This game contains FMV scenes at the intro and at certain stages that were taken straight from the movie.

*Double Dragon* (NG, NGCD, PS; SNK; 1995) – port of the arcade game.

*Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* (GEN, GG, JAG, SMS, SNES; Virgin Interactive for Acclaim; 1993)

*Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* (HAND; MGA)

*DragonHeart: Fire and Steel* (GB, PC, PS, SAT; Funcom Oslo for Acclaim; 1996) – features “Seven beasts too savage for the movie”

The Drawn Together Movie: The Movie! (WEB; Comedy Central; 2010) – a flash game designed to promote the direct-to-DVD release of the film which is based on the animated series of the same name that ran on Comedy Central from 2004-07. The Anti-Defamation League sent a complain to Comedy Central’s executives citing the characters Jew Producer and I.S.R.A.E.L. (the Intelligent Smart Robot Animation Eraser Lady”), one a cyborg and the other a robot, as offensive and in need of removal or at least with age verification required to access the game to keep it away from minors. Players fire eraser missiles at cartoon people or control animals that use defecation as an attack. While other Drawn Together games remain on Comedy Central’s games page, this one was removed.

Dreamworks’ Shark Tale (GBA,GBC, PC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2004)

Driven (GC, PS2; 2001) – Stallone film

Dr. Seuss’ The Cat in the Hat (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Magenta for Vivendi Universal; 11/11/2003) – Inspired by the film, the video game tells the story of Conrad, a young boy who has been tricked by his neighbor, Mr. Quinn, into opening the Cat’s big red box of Seussian magic and allowing it to escape into the real world. The Cat must help Conrad and his sister, Sally, return the Seussian magic to the box and retrieve all three pieces of the “Crab Lock” in order to lock the box for good. Players will also get the unique chance to explore a world beyond the film, as they navigate through rooms of the house that are not seen in the movie.

Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas (DS; Black Lantern for Destination Software; 2007) – based on the 2000 film

Dumbo’s Flying Circus (2600; Atari; 1983) – unreleased prototype. Licensed from Disney’s 1941 film.

Dune (2600; Atari; 7/10/1984) – unreleased prototype based on Lynch’s film. Originally started by Bruce Poehlman and Gary Stark before they began working on The Last Starfighter for the Atari 5200. Continued coding by unknown programmer. Various objects and characters from film appear, some only represented by placeholder graphics as project was abandoned. Also considered for development for Atari 5200 (according to programmer Jim Huether, he was asked to look into modifying Xevious to this title) and computer line.

Dune (AMI, PC, SCD; Cryo Interactive for Virgin Games; 1992) – based more on the Frank Herbert novel, but visually inspired by the 1984 David Lynch movie: “Adventure packed strategy game follows the surreal storyline of both the Frank Herbert book and the David Lynch film” (box back cover)

Dune II: Battle for Arrakis (GEN; Westwood Studios for Virgin Interactive; 1992) – A loose sequel of the computer strategy game Dune (although it shared no storyline or game play). Both games were loosely based upon David Lynch’s 1984 film, which was in turn taken from Frank
Herbert’s science fiction novel of the same name. A new house, House Ordos (not found in the novel or film), was created especially for this game.

**Dune 2000** (PC, PS; Westwood Studios; 1998) – Westwood deserves credit for making the game look more consistent with the 1984 David Lynch film than the original game tie-in ever did. In particular, the spice harvester and the interstellar frigate look like they were pulled straight from the celluloid, and the new FMV intro and cut scenes are equally authentic.

**The Earth Dies Screaming** (Atari 2600; Sirius Software for Twentieth Century Fox; 1983)

**Elf** (GBA; Human Soft for Crave; 2004) – Ten missions following the movie storyline as well as three mini-games themed in elf motifs. Simultaneous release date with the *Elf* infinifilm™ DVD and VHS for the holidays.

**The Emperor’s New Groove** (GBC, PS; Disney Interactive; 2000)

**The Empire Strikes Back** (ARC; Atari Games; 1985) – conversion kit for *Star Wars: The Arcade Game*. Player alternates between controlling Luke Skywalker on Hoth (shooting probe droids and taking down AT-ATs) and Han Solo escaping Hoth (fighting Imperial forces and then navigating an asteroid field). Features digitized voice clips from film.

**Enter the Matrix** (GC, PC, PS2, XB; Shiny Entertainment for Atari Inc.; 2003) – functions as an interstitial title situated narratively between *The Matrix* and *The Matrix Reloaded* and expands on secondary characters Niobe and Ghost. Special combat moves are rendered with FMV. Problems with the integration of plot between the game and the second *Matrix* movie resulted in largely negative reviews for the game ((Metacritic score: 62). Despite selling 5 million units, Atari reported a financial loss in 2004 of $38.6 million, and despite releasing *The Path of Neo* in 2005, Atari did not renew the option to make a third and final *Matrix* game.

**The Entity** (2600; Twentieth Century Fox; 1983?) – unreleased prototype. See under “Twentieth Century Fox” in Chapter 1 for more information.

**Epic Mickey** (Wii; Junction Point for Disney Interactive; 2010) – A 3D platformer with RPG elements, it draws upon nearly a century of Mickey Mouse’s visual Disney history, in the Wasteland, a world inhabited by forgotten Disney characters. Features pirates from *Peter Pan* (animated version). Gameplay mechanic lets the player alter the world using paint and thinner through combat and puzzle-solving. Side-scrolling play is represented in a level based on *Steamboat Willie*.

In the game’s backstory, a sorcerer named Yen Sid creates a world where Disney’s forgotten and retired creations live. (Originally, the powerful sorcerer from “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” in *Fantasia* (1940) was nicknamed Yen Sid by Disney animators, although never named as such on screen.) Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, Walt Disney’s first cartoon star created in 1927, becomes the first inhabitant of the Cartoon Wasteland after Mickey Mouse is created. When Mickey curiously stumbles upon Yen Sid’s map, he makes an innocent yet terrible mistake and
inadvertently devastates the Cartoon Wasteland, and he must face the destruction he unknowingly created while facing Oswald as a jealous antagonist.

**Eragon** (DS, GBA, PC, PS2, PSP, XB, X360; Vivendi Universal; 2006)

**Escape from Alcatraz** (2600; Sega; 1983) – announced only

**E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial** (2600; Atari; 1982) – asterisk next to character name is explained on the back of the box as “E.T. and the E.T. character are trademarks of and licensed by Universal City Studios, Inc.” See discussion in Chapter 1. According to programmer John Segers, a version was started for the 5200. TI version announced in International Users Group (IUG) newsletter 10/1982. According to programmer John Seghers, a version was started for the 5200.

**E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial** (GBA, PS; NewKidCo; 2001)

**E.T. Away from Home** (PC; Ubisoft; 2002) – Thirteen different digital board games. Intended to coincide with the film's 20-year anniversary and its re-release in theaters.

**E.T. and the Cosmic Garden** (GBC; 3/15/2002)

**E.T. Digital Companion** (GBC; NewKidCo; 10/18/2001)

**E.T. Escape from Planet Earth** (GBC; 11/4/2001)

**E.T. Intergalactic Mission** (PC; Ubisoft; 2002)

**E.T. Interplanetary Mission** (PC, PS; Ubisoft; 2002)

**E.T. Phone Home!** (1200XL, XE; Atari; 1983) – While hiding in the house, E.T. guides Elliot around the neighborhood to find pieces for the intergalactic telephone. If the pieces can be gathered within the time limit, and E.T. can scurry to the landing site without detection, the spaceship lands and carries him away. This happy ending for the game was one of the main concerns of Spielberg, who took an active part in the development of the game, approving the concept, implementation and design at several stages. According to Chris Horseman, VP for Software Engineering with Atari’s Home Computer Division, work on the computer game began in October 1982. The challenge was to move the project quickly from proposal to market while maintaining qualities required by Spielberg: “high standards of graphic and sound representation, especially for the E.T. figure and voice, and a natural yet playable game concept that was true to the feeling of the film” (DeWitt, 20). Time was also important for marketing because Atari hoped to use *E.T. Phone Home!* as a key demonstration product for the new 1200XL computer due to be unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. To meet this schedule, Atari applied a team approach to design for the first time with a computer game. While previous Atari game products had benefited from the input of various specialists, most nevertheless had been developed by a single programmer. “E.T. enjoyed the attentions of graphic artists, play designers, sound engineers, and programmers teamed up under guidance of the Manager for Entertainment Software Products.” (DeWitt, 20)
E.T. Phone Home Adventure (PC; Ubisoft; 2002) – set in a 3D world and contains a number of scenes from the movie.

E.T. Return to the Green Planet (PS2; NewKidCo; 2002) – picks up after end of theatrical film.

The Evil Dead (C64; developed and published by Palace Software; 1984)

Evil Dead: Fistful of Boomstick (PS2, XB; THQ; 2003)

Evil Dead: Hail to the King (DC, PC, PS; THQ; 2000)

Evil Dead: Regeneration (PC, PS2, XB; THQ; 2005)

Expect No Mercy (PC; developed and published by Microforum; 1995) – 2D Fighting game featuring digitized actors and digitized photo backgrounds.

The Expendables (WEB; Flipline Studios; 2010) – side-scrolling 8-bit style reminiscent of Contra. Playable only on Facebook. Players who want access must “Like” the film, which means seeing status updates on the movie (advertising), while also having the film added to the movie section of their “Likes and Interests” section.

Extreme Ghostbusters: Code Ecto-1 (GBA; Magic Pockets for DreamCatcher Interactive; 2002) – based on 1997 cartoon series that was somewhat a sequel to the 1986 cartoon series which functioned as an extension of the film properties. A sequel to this game, Extreme Ghostbusters: Ultimate Invasion, was released in 2004 in Europe.

Fantasia (GEN; Sega; 1991) – primarily the Sorcerer’s Apprentice section of the film. Music in the game is same as the movie.

Fantastic Four (GBA, GC, Mobile, PC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2005)

Fantastic Four: Flame On (GBA; Activision; 2005)

Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer (PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; 2K Games; 2007) - According to Metacritic, the DS version was considered one of the worst releases of 2007 for the device.


The Fast and the Furious (ARC; Global VR; 2005)

The Fast and the Furious (PS2; Namco Bandai; 2006) – based on the Tokyo Drift sequel.

The Fast and the Furious: Fugitive (Mobile; I-Play; 2007)
The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo (Mobile; I-Play; 2007)

The Fifth Element (PC, PS; Activision; 1998) – Luc Besson received screenplay and story credit within the game. Actors Milla Jovovich, Gary Oldman, Ian Holm, Bruce Willis provide voice work for the game.

Finding Nemo: The Continuing Adventures (GBA; THQ; 2004)

Finding Nemo: Escape to the Big Blue (DS; THQ; 2006)

Finding Nemo: Learning with Nemo (PC; Buena Vista Games; 2005)

Finding Nemo: Nemo's Underwater World of Fun (APL, PC; THQ; 2003)

Fight Club (PS2, XB; Vivendi Universal; 2004) – basically functions as a two-person fighting game with minimal narrative content to link the fights together, eschewing the larger plot points of the film.

Firefox (ARC; Atari; 1984) – based rather closely on Eastwood film. Firefox was a laserdisc based game, one of many that had appeared after the success of Dragon’s Lair. According to an Atari internal memo, considered for porting to the 2600 and 5200 but never done.

Flash Gordon (PBL; Bally; 1981)

Flash Gordon (2600, Sirius Software for Twentieth Century Fox, 1983) – Borrows the title and poster art from the 1980 movie, but has virtually no relation to film’s narrative most likely due to the fact that Sirius adapted their computer game title Spider City for this console version. Side-scrolling shooter. Advertised for VIC-20 in Power Play, Summer 1983.

Flesh Gordon (2600; Wizard Video) – developed by an external programmer who came close to finishing the game, but it was rejected by Wizard despite their advance advertising of it.

Flight of the Intruder (AMI, NES, PC, ST; Spectrum Holobyte; 1990) – licensed more from novel than film

The Flintstones (PBL; Bally; 1994) – live-action film

Flintstones: The Movie (GB, SNES; Ocean; 1994 (1995 for SNES))

The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (PS2; Toka for Swing! Entertainment Media; 2001) – based on second live-action film

Flushed Away (DS, GBA, GC, PS2; D3; 2006)

Flushed Away – The Underground Adventure (WEB; 2006) – navigate Roddy through three levels to reach Circuit City where he can buy the DVD. Website also features six other games:
Sewer Ball Pinball, Screamin Slugs, Sewer Escape, Sewer Estates, Sewer Surfing, and 5 Card Slug.


Frankenstein (HAND; Bandai) – marketed as Mr. Franken in Japan. Packaging uses character image from Universal film, but appears to be unlicensed.

Freddy: A Nightmare on Elm Street (PBL; Gottlieb; 1994)

Friday the 13th (2600; Sega; 1983) – announced only, but reportedly not based on the film.

Friday the 13th (C64; Domark; 1985)

Friday the 13th (NES; LJN Toys; 1989) – guide six playable characters around Camp Crystal Lake, collecting weapons to defeat the disembodied head of Pamela Voorhees, which summons Jason, who is very difficult to kill. After all the playable characters are dead, which happens most of the time due to the game’s difficulty, the game is over.

Fright Night (AMI; developed and published by MicroDeal; 1988)

From Dusk Till Dawn (PC; DreamCatcher Interactive; 2001)

From Russia with Love (GC, PS2, PSP, XB; 2005 (2006 for PSP)) – featuring likeness and voice of Sean Connery; PSP version features some minigames (Q-copter obstacle course) not available on other platforms

G-Force (DS, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Disney Interactive; 2009) - Based on the Bruckheimer 2009 summer movie, players control Darwin, the guinea pig leader of the covert intelligence G-Force squad, and housefly surveillance sidekick, Mooch. X360 and PS3 versions include 3D glasses for the game.

Ghostbusters (2600, A8, C64, PC; Activision; 1984/5) – Atari version is of C64 game, reversing the usual trend of Activision porting (console to computer). Name and logo from Columbia. Uses version of Ray Parker Jr.’s theme song for film. Given the technology of the time, the game is still a fairly complicated action adventure involving financial management of the Ghostbusters franchise, navigating the city in a car to catch ghosts, setting traps on foot to catch more ghosts, and baiting the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man: “The marriage between hit movies and computer software has been a rocky one in the past. Games based on the cinema have rarely been commercially or artistically successful. That’s usually because the game is produced as a rush-job to capitalize on the motion picture’s success. Until now, that is. Ghostbusters, from Activision, is the first adaptation to capture both the feel and the theme of the movie on which it is based” (Bernstein, 81).

Ghostbusters (GEN, NES, SMS; Activision and Sega; SMS (1987), 1988 (NES), 1990 (GEN)) – Based on the movie of the same name. The Ghostbusters must reduce the paranormal (PK) level
in the city before the Temple of Zuul awakens and resurrects an evil goddess, Gozer. Game play is action-oriented with a combination of an overhead view and a side-scroller. The ending of the NES version, in strange English, reads: “Conglaturatation!!! You have completed a great game. And proved the justice of our culture. Now go ahead and rest our heroes!” The Genesis version by Sega is completely different from the Activision title of the same name; the Genesis version is a side-scrolling platformer. Peter, Ray, and Egon each have different abilities, and can purchase weapon and life upgrades from shops throughout the levels. Other familiar faces make appearances, such as Slimer and the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man. The Genesis version was the first to have graphics decent enough to use the likenesses of Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis, and Bill Murray on their character models. Rick Moranis declined an invitation to participate, reputedly because he has made so much money from the *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* series of films that he has effectively retired from acting.

**Ghostbusters: The Video Game** (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Terminal Reality, Zen, and Red Fly Studio originally for Sierra Entertainment, picked up by Atari; 2009) – Game from an original script written by Dan Akroyd and Harold Ramis, writers of the original films. Uses a new physics engine, dubbed the Velocity Engine, to produce advanced onscreen effects, while the video software, the Infernal Engine, strives to capture the look of the movie. The narrative is set 2 years after the events in *Ghostbusters 2* (1989). Some differences in multiplayer exist between the two titles, notably a ghosts versus Ghostbusters mode. The Ghostbusters are now a government-sanctioned organization, and the player controls the newest member of the group (and lacks the ability to control any of the NPC Ghostbusters). Voice work provided by original cast members (except Rick Moranis) and the original story had contributions from Ramis and Akroyd. Wii version eschews the realistic look of the PS2 and PS3 versions for a more cartoon style while essentially retaining the same story. In-game environment supposedly completely destructible. DS version is a top-down action game in which the player controls all four characters. Dropped by Activision Blizzard after their acquisition of Sierra but reportedly picked up by Atari for a 2009 release. The PC, Playstation 3, and Xbox 360 versions are being developed by Terminal Reality, with the PS2 and Wii versions by Red Fly Studio, and the DS version by Zen Studios. Summer release timed to coincide with 25th and 20th anniversaries of two theatrical films and home video release on Blu-Ray disc. Rated E10+ for comic mischief and fantasy violence. PC version shipped without multiplayer and downloadable content disabled.

According to Terminal Reality, actual prop proton packs were recorded for movement foley sounds of the Ghostbusters. Looking carefully at Ray’s desk in the firehouse reveals all the prototype equipment developed for the game but ultimately cut, including ghost stasis-mine disks and five different PKE models. In the game, Slimer differs from the film version (as well as the Steve Johnson bust offered through amazon.com) because the movies never featured any clear, well-detailed shots of Slimer from the rear; in the game, he has a short, stretchy tail while the bust/movie sculpt shows a kidney-bean backside. While other games take advantage of 3D scans to model the likeness of each actor, because the last Ghostbusters film was made prior to digital scanning, modelers used photo and still-frame references of the actors culled not only from the Ghostbusters films but also other films from that era that featured the actors.
**Ghostbusters II** (2600, Amiga, C64, GB, NES, PC, ST; all published by Activision (except for 2600, by Salu); 1989 (C64), 1990) – side-scrolling shooter

**Ghostbusters 2** (HAND; MGA; 1992)

**Ghostbusters II** (HAND; Pack-in-Video) – Japanese release

**Ghost in the Shell** (PS; THQ; 1997) – Based on the Japanese comic and animated film of the same name. Mixes traditional shooting elements, mission-based objectives, railed shooters, and arcade action. The game’s animated sequences were created by Masamune Shirow. While some introduce missions, most are hidden prizes for the player to find. For example, winning the game and scoring high in the training mode will only unlock nine out of seventeen possible shorts (totaling ten minutes of footage in all). (Stand Alone Complex games based on television series.)

**Ghost Rider** (PS2, PSP; 2K Games; 2007) – storyline uses a variety of scenes and locations from both the Marvel comic universe and Sony Pictures’ movie (including the Quentin Carnival and Caretaker’s Graveyard). Comic book writers Garth Ennis and Jimmy Palmiotti penned the game’s storyline, which picks up where the movie leaves off. PSP version has different levels and additional features.

**GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra** (DS, Mobile, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Electronic Arts; 2009) – Designed to coincide with release of film, but features an exclusive storyline that picks up where the live-action movie leaves off. Players can choose from 12 characters and unlock 4 more COBRA villains.

Because the movie mostly deals with the origins of COBRA, the developers of the game introduced elements from the 45-year history of the toy line and cartoon series to enhance the story line. “We pick up where the movie ends,” said Electronic Arts senior product manager Jason Enos. “We tell a genuine story that’s exclusive to the game but ties in key plot points in the film. That also allows us to leverage the larger ‘GI Joe’ universe – characters, vehicles, things you’re not going to see in the film but you’ll get in the game” (Lang, 1).

**Give My Regards to Broadway** (2600; Twentieth Century Fox) – merely an announced title, albeit an intriguing one to consider given the film was a musical from 1948.

**The Godfather: The Action Game** (AMI, PC, ST; U.S. Gold Ltd.; 1991) – Gameplay spans 50 years of Corleone history. Each of the five levels represents a decade from the 1940s to the 1980s. The game came out a year after the final movie was released in 1990. Certain scenes are based and/or inspired from all three Godfather movies, such as the 1940s era New York City setting of the first movie (1945 onwards), location of Havana, Cuba comes from second movie, and the helicopter attack on the conservatory comes from the third film. Shooting rivals increases your standing, while shooting innocent people lowers it. Each level also provides the opportunity for shootouts, a reflex-testing mini-game that requires the player to kill people who draw their guns as quickly as possible, while not killing innocent bystanders. Some boxes in the UK included promotional material in the form of “A Pictographic history of The Godfather Movies Part I, II and II” that contained a plot summary, trivia, and color photographs, and
advertised the video cassette box set of the films. On March 31, 1993, *The Godfather: The Action Game* was put on the infamous German *indiziert* (index) by the BPjS/BPjM (*Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Schriften/Medien* or the Federal Examination Office for Youth-Endangering Publications/Media) meaning that it is illegal to sell or make it available to minors in Germany, and furthermore it is illegal to advertise for it in any form, including the mere presence of the game on the shelves of a store. The only way to actually buy these games is via request (*unter der Ladentrehe* or “under the counter”).


*The Godfather II* (PC, PS3, X360; EA Redwood Shores for Electronic Arts; 2009) – sequel to *The Godfather: The Game* and also based on the film of the same name, although the plot deviates significantly from the film (no flashbacks to early Sicily). Michael Corleone orders the player’s character, Dominic, to take charge of the family after the death of Aldo Trapani, the first game’s protagonist, as the action takes place from the late 1950s to the early 1960s in Havana, New York City, and Miami. Third-person shooter, open world play. Players who pre-order the game at participating retailers worldwide will be able to hire an exclusive crew member, Tommy Cipolla. Robert Duvall reprises his role as Tom Hagen. To promote the game, in April 2009 EA sent journalists a press kit that included a set of brass knuckles (inside a cigar box), which were illegal weapons in many states, prompting EA to ask for the “brass curio item” to be returned (via a prepaid mailer the company sent out). This incident caused some negative press for the company. Interestingly the press kit also included a cigar and a wire garrote, which apparently did not violate any weapons laws.

*Gods and Generals* (PC; Activision; 2003)

*Godzilla* (C64; Code Works; 1983)

*Godzilla* (HAND; Bandai; 1983)

*Godzilla* (HAND; Bandai) – different hardware (“triple vision”) from 1983 release

*Godzilla* (GB; Toho Company; 1990)

*Godzilla* (PBL; Sega; 1998)

*Godzilla* (GB, MSX; Toho Cinefile-Soft; 1985)

*Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* (GC, XB; Atari Europe; 2002)

*Godzilla: Domination* (GBA; Infogrames; 2002)
**Godzilla: Monster of Monsters** (NES; Toho Cinefile-Soft; 1988)

**Godzilla: Save the Earth** (PS2, XB; Atari; 2004)

**Godzilla: The Series** (GBC; Crave; 1999) – based off the Fox television show, which derived from the 1998 film.

**Godzilla Unleashed** (Wii; Atari; 2007)

**Godzilla Unleashed: Double Smash** (DS; Atari; 2007)

**Godzilla 2: War of the Monsters** (NES; Toho Company; 1991) – Toho Company, Ltd. logo on front of box.

**Gold & Glory: The Road to El Dorado** (GBC, PC, PS; Ubisoft; 2000) – some differences in cover art between platforms

**The Golden Compass** (DS, PS3, Wii, X360; Shiny Entertainment for Sega; 2007) – Game begins with a sequence involving the polar bear warrior Iorek fighting a pack of wolves, which is out of place with the rest of the story. Developer constrained by narrative of film, inserting minigames into dialogue segments to pad out game play and lacking the critical plot points from Pullman’s book that were cut out for the film, resulting in a product that was critically reviled. In November 2007, Wal-Mart offered a free sneak peek disc that included footage of and interviews about the movie as well as a documentary on the making of the game (and a cheat code for it).

**GoldenEye 007** (PBL; Sega; 1996) – from promotional flyer: “Be warned, after playing this game you may develop an uncanny desire for a Brioni tuxedo and a martini…shaken, not stirred.”

**GoldenEye 007** (N64; Rare; 1997) – a title with major impact. “actors from the movie, including Robbie Coltrane and Sean Bean, were recognizable secondary characters within the game itself” (Poole, 85). See discussion in chapter 3. Referenced often in another video game, *Perfect Dark*. In 2009, Rare announced their intention to revisit *GoldenEye* (and several other hit properties, including *Perfect Dark*) using updated technology, notably Microsoft’s Project Natal for the X360.

**GoldenEye** (VB; unreleased) – It is unclear if the game was in the making at Rare or Nintendo is still unclear, but instead of a FPS like the N64 version, the Virtual Boy version was to be an action racing game, in which the player was to control one of Bond’s dream cars. A promotional brochure, which contains the only known screenshot of the game, reads: “If you thought rush-hour traffic was a nightmare, wait ‘til you get behind the wheel of 007’s car. Avoid obstacles and blow the other cars away. Buckle up for safety because, in this game, you never know what’s gonna happen.”
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent (DS, GC, XB)

Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee (GC, XB) – uses characters from various films in the series. Other Godzilla based titles – which are direct or indirect to film sources?

The Goonies (A8, APL, C64, NES; developed and published by Datasoft; 1985)

The Goonies (ARC; Konami; 1986) - released for the Nintendo Vs. System. The player guides Mike “Mikey” Walsh to One Eyed Willy’s pirate ship while beating the Fratellis and rescuing all the Goonies. The game plays Cyndi Lauper’s song “Good Enough”. Ported to the MSX and NES by Konami.

The Goonies II (NES; Konami; 1987) – Sidescroller. Sequel to 1985 game. Uses licensed characters and music, including the theme song by Cyndi Lauper. Player controls Mikey to rescue kidnapped members of the Goonies as well as Annie the Mermaid from the Fratelli family.

The Great Escape (PC, PS2, XB; Gotham Games; 2003) – adventure game involving lots and lots of sneaking.


Gremlins (2600, 5200, APL, C64, PC; Atari; 1984) – “Based on the Spellbinding Movie” and “Presented by Steven Spielberg” graces the box cover for computer versions. 2600 version very different from 5200 version (2600 version re-released in 1986 by Atari Corp.). 2600 version is basically two screens of action, the first involving the player controlling Billy Peltzer to catch Mogwais so they don’t turn into gremlins, and then shooting gremlins in the next screen as they advance down the game field. The 5200 version (completed in 1984 but delayed until 1986) is more complicated, but also involves catching and collecting Mogwais and destroying gremlins with a sword (or stunning them with flash cubes) while distracting them with an assortment of devices (a popcorn popper, a television set, a refrigerator) derived from the mise-en-scène of the film (alternately, since each level is timed, the player can “survive” until 6:00am to advance to the next round). For one or two-players and features a demo mode. The instruction manual is divided into major sections including: “The Cast” (introducing the characters in the game); “The Plot” (briefly recounting the plot of the film); “On the Set” (explaining the game rules); and “Special Props” (describing how to use the Mogwai pen, the sword, and the flash cubes as well as the function of other devices). This was the last title released for the 5200. Mentioned as a 7800 release in the November 1984 issue of Electronic Games. Drawing of box found for XE version.

Gremlins – The Adventure (C64, PC, ZX; Adventure International for Adventure International; 1985) – interactive fiction adventure with some animated graphics. As Billy, player must travel to 50 different locations to defeat the gremlins.
Gremlins 2: The New Batch (AMI, Atari ST, C64, PC; MotiveTime for Elite Systems; 1990) – also for MSX (Japan) and ZX Spectrum (UK)

Gremlins 2: The New Batch (NES; Sunsoft for Sunsoft; 1990)

Gremlins: Stripe vs. Gizmo (GBA; DreamCatcher; 2002) - platform game; allows the player to choose between two different scenarios, either with Gizmo or Stripe. Progression through five gigantic worlds inspired by the film and one multiplayer level.

Gremlins Unleashed (GBC; LSP; 2001) – European release

The Grinch (DC, GBC, PC, PS; Konami; 2000) – released to capitalize on live-action 2000 film. Graphics in game are derived from the film, while the external packaging is evocative of the television cartoon.

Halloween (Atari 2600; Wizard Video; 1983) – player controls a babysitter who must protect children from Michael Myers (referred to only as a “homicidal maniac” in the instructions), who is accompanied onscreen by the distinct Halloween theme. For additional information, see chapter 1.

Hannah Montana: The Movie (DS, PC, PS3, Wii, X360; Disney Interactive; 2009)

Happy Feet (GC, PC, PS2, Wii; Midway; 2006)

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (GBA, GBC, GC, PS, PS2, XB; Aspyr; 2002)

Harry Potter Find Scabbers (Mobile; Warner Bros.; 2004)

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (DS, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, PSP, XB; EA; 2005)


Harry Potter: Mastering Magic (MOBILE; EA Mobile)

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007) – sandbox style, with 80 locations culled from the books and films. First game in the series designed for next-gen consoles.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (MOBILE; EA Mobile)

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; EA; 2004)

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (GBA, GBC, GC, PC, PS, PS2, XB; Aspyr; 2001)
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; EA; 2003)

Harry Potter Interactive DVD Game Hogwarts Challenge (DVD; WB; 2007) – released in conjunction with Order of the Phoenix on DVD

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 1 (DS, MOBILE, PS3, Wii, X360; EA; 2010) – The more mature content of the film (and the book) has been matched with an increase of mature content in the game, such that the mechanics have moved to more of a third-person shooter.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2 (EA; 2011)


Hellraiser (NES; developed and published by Color Dreams) – undeveloped prototype, also announced for the Sega Genesis and Atari Lynx. Color Dreams purchased the film rights (reportedly for between $35,000 to $50,000) as Dan Lewton, one of the founders of Color Dreams, had seen the film and liked it. Depicting gory graphics in 8-bit resolution proved difficult, so the Wolfenstein 3D engine was licensed from id Software and a possible switch to a PC version was considered. id’s own Doom (1993) came out and made the Hellraiser game seem outdated in comparison, despite hardware innovations to produce a cartridge capable of handling the video requirements, and moreover Nintendo had been exerting financial pressure to keep its clientele from ordering what it saw as an unlicensed game (which technically it might have been, as the Color Dreams engineers had figured a legal way around the NES lockout chip). No actual programming was done on the game, and only 20% of the artwork was completed. Color Dreams would find its niche producing Christian-based video games, and eventually the rights to the Hellraiser license expired in 1995 (supposedly another company had announced its own CD-ROM game based on the film). The prototype game featured characters from the film as well as the occult gate cube (Santulli, 307).

Herbie Fully Loaded (GBA; Buena Vista Interactive; 2005)

Hey Arnold! The Movie (GBA; THQ; 2002) – 2D platformer

Highlander (C64; Canvas for Ocean Software; 1986) – sword fighting game

Highlander (PC, PS3, X360; Widescreen Games for Eidos; 2008) – spans 2000 years of history from a story by David Abramowitz, writer on the original “Highlander” television series, which was derived from the theatrical films, and much of the Highlander franchise has several different narrative continuities, into which this game will add yet another. There are 18 missions and 77 immortal warriors to face including some familiar characters from the movies and television series, but the player controls Owen MacLeod, a new character created specifically for the game (as an adopted member of the clan, Owen is actually an older immortal and unrelated to Connor or Duncan from the films and television shows); while this may not make sense given that there are already established characters, the practice of creating a new character specifically for a
game is a relatively common practice in film-to-game translations as it serves to insulate properties somewhat should further franchise development occur. Third person action scheme similar to *Devil May Cry* and *God of War*. Game set in futuristic New York but other places and times (Pompeii, Scottish Highlands, feudal Japan) are introduced through flashbacks and essentially function as levels.

**High School Musical: Sing It!** (PS2, Wii; Disney Interactive; 2007)

**High School Musical 3: Senior Year** (DS; Disney Interactive; 2008) – touch-based music and rhythm game using each of the movie’s 11 songs.

**Home Alone** (AMI, PC; Capstone; 1991)

**Home Alone** (GB, NES, SNES; THQ; 1991) – SNES and GB versions are similar in narrative and game play, while the NES version is a completely different game where Kevin must avoid the Wet Bandits for 20 minutes. SNES version features digitized scenes from the movie.

**Home Alone** (GEN, GG; Sega; 1992)


Relation to Film: The basic setup and plot follow the film’s loosely, starting with Kevin in a New York airport.

Packaging: The box and cartridge bear the image of Macauley Culkin as Kevin superimposed over the World Trade Center, with Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern lurking in the background as Harry Lime and Marv Merchants, respectively.

Summary: Controlling Kevin, players run and jump around different environments, starting with an airport and moving through the New York streets, trying to grab presents (for points), weapons (for taking care of enemies), and ammunition (for weapons), all while avoiding or dispatching various “enemies,” which include security guards, people passing through the airport, pigeons, people on the street, and the occasional appearance of Harry and Marv. Weapons include baseballs, snowballs, bricks, cherry bombs, water pistols, slingshots, and pie guns. When in his uncle’s house, Kevin also can lead Harry and Marv into traps.

**Hook** (PBL; Data East; 1992)

**Hook** (ARC; Irem; 1992)

**Hook** (GB, GEN, GG, NES, SCD, SNES; Sony Imagesoft; 1992) – Olaf Olafsson, chief of Sony Electronic Publishing, visited the set of the film several times during production, deciding what backgrounds of the film to put into the game, what parts of the soundtrack to use, and how to time the release of the game to that of the film (Sheff, 380).
*Howard the Duck* (C64, MSX; Activision; 1986)

*How to Train Your Dragon* (DS, PS3, Wii, X360; Activision; 2010) – Explore this epic world as Hiccup or Astrid in Adventure Mode or experience battle action in Arena Mode.

*Hudson Hawk* (AMI, C64, GB, NES, ST; Sony Imagesoft; 1991) – Sony Imagesoft was asked to rework the character’s hairline in the game because it resembled Bruce Willis too much (*NP* #26).

*The Hulk* (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Radical Entertainment for Vivendi Universal; 2003) – Though a tie-in with the Universal motion picture of the same name, the game pays only passing respect to the movie’s storyline, instead borrowing elements from both the film and the comic book series to create an entirely new adventure set after the film’s conclusion. Includes voice work by actor Eric Bana, who plays Bruce Banner in the movie.

*The Hunt for Red October* (C64, GB, NES, SNES; 1990 (C64), 1991 (NES), 1992 (GB), 1993 (SNES)) – based on the 1990 film (Datasoft’s 1988 computer release based on Clancy’s book)

*The Hustler* (ARC; Konami; 1987) – Japanese version of *Rack ‘Em Up*. This billiards game appears to be an unlicensed use of the 1961 film’s title.

*Ice Age* (GBA; Ubisoft; 2002)

*Ice Age 2: The Meltdown* (DS, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, Wii, XB; Vivendi Universal; 2006)

*Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*

*Igor: The Game* (DS; Southpeak Interactive; 2008) – puzzle solving mixed with fighting elements in an adventure setting.


*The Incredible Hulk* (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Amaze for Sega; 2008) – Thirty levels across Alaska, South America, and New York City, where the objective is to destroy all buildings and enemies, leading to a confrontation with the Abomination; the narrative thread of the game is not really emphasized. Exploits in single-player game will unlock additional multiplayer characters. Tagline advertises “See the Move. Live the Fury.” While much of the game is centered around complete destruction, if The Hulk becomes too destructive, Iron Man will appear to rein in the action, marking a video game cross-promotion that reflects a similar move between the two film franchises (where Robert Downey Jr., as Tony Stark, has a cameo in *The Incredible Hulk* film; since both The Hulk and Iron Man are also part of the superhero team known as The Avengers, closer ties between the two properties is seen as desirable by Marvel
Comics, now producing films under their Marvel Studios and Marvel Enterprises companies. A cell phone version was produced and released by Hands-On Mobile in June 2008.

**The Incredibles** (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; THQ; 2004)

**The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer** (DS, GBA, GC, PS2, XB; THQ; 2005)

**The Incredibles: When Danger Calls** (PC; THQ; 2004)

**Independence Day** (PBL; Sega; 1996)

**Independence Day** (PC, PS, SAT; Fox Interactive; 1997)

**The Indian in the Cupboard** (PC; Viacom New Media; 1995)

**Indiana Jones** (PS3, X360; 2009) – Game originally announced in 2006 for a 2007 release. Original story (set in 1939) developed separately from any of the films, but set for release to coincide with *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, which did not happen. Written under the direction of George Lucas. First internally developed project for PS3 and X360 by LucasArts. Also represents the first collaboration of talent and technology between LucasArts and Industrial Light & Magic (two companies now under one roof at the Letterman Digital Arts Center in San Francisco). “Embark upon thrilling chase sequences that remain true to the spirit established in scenes such as Indy’s pursuit of the motorcade in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the mine-cart scene in *The Temple of Doom*, and the free-for-all aboard the tank in *The Last Crusade*” (according to the game’s website). Uses Pixelux Entertainment’s Digital Molecular Matter (DMM) technology along with the Euphoria engine. As of January 2009, rumors of the title being canceled began to circulate as development on other games continued with a drastically reduced workforce at LucasArts (80% layoff in June 2008).

**Indiana Jones and His Desktop Adventures** (PC; LucasArts; 1998)

**Indiana Jones and the Emperor’s Tomb** (APL, PC, PS2, XB; LucasArts; 2003) - set in 1935, just before the events of *The Temple of Doom*.

**Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis: The Action Game** (AMI, APL, C64, PC; LucasArts; 1992) – set in 1939. Originally the development team considered a rejected *Indiana Jones* movie script by future film director Chris Columbus as the narrative basis for the game before ultimately also deciding to reject it in favor of Plato’s description of Atlantis. The game was a commercial success upon release.

**Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis: The Graphic Adventure** (AMI, APL, PC; LucasArts; 1992)

**Indiana Jones’ Greatest Adventures** (SNES; Factor 5 for JVC Musical Industries; 1994) – platform levels from all three films. The game is highlighted by selections from the John
Williams score, and includes sound effects, digitized speech, and image captures during cut scenes.

**Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine** (GBC, N64, PC; LucasArts; 1999) – written for PC then ported. Set in 1947. The collision detection system required extensive rewriting. Look of game inspired by popularity of *Tomb Raider*. First Jones adventure in a 3D environment.

**Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade** (GB, GEN, GG, NES; 1991 (NES), 1992 (GEN, GG), 1994 (GB)) – also released for SMS in Europe and Brazil. Different from either of the computer versions.

**Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Action Game** (AMI, APL, Atari ST, C64, PC; Lucasfilm Games; 1989) – A five-level arcade adventure (Indy can use his whip or hand-to-hand combat) with some puzzle solving. The levels follow the plot structure of the film: level one takes place in caves underneath Colorado; level two is onboard the moving circus train; level three comprises a combination of the Venetian catacombs and Castle Brunwald in Austria; level four takes place on a Zeppelin; and level five is the Grail recovery, which must be completed before Indy’s father dies from a gunshot wound.

**Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure** (AMI, APL, Atari ST, PC; Lucasfilm Games; 1989) – packaged with a mock Grail Diary designed to look like the one from the film; more than just a promotional item, the Grail was actually used by the player to follow clues throughout the game to locate the resting place of the Grail and then select the correct Grail during the game’s final puzzle.

**Indiana Jones and the Lost Kingdom** (C64; Mindscape; 1984) – scoring system is known as the “Indiana Jones Quotient” (IJQ).

**Indiana Jones Pinball Adventure** (PBL; Williams; 1993)

**Indiana Jones in Revenge of the Ancients** (PC; Mindscape; 1987)

**Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings** (DS, PS2, PSP, Wii; A2M for LucasArts; 2009) – rated Teen for “mild language, violence”. The Wii version incorporates the motion controller. PSP has exclusive bonus content. Set in 1939. Uses original film music composed by John Williams. Indy searches around the world – the PS2 and Wii versions include Sudan and Istanbul while the DS version includes Paris – for the staff of Moses. By collecting “fortune” – glowing golden fedoras that represent ancient artifacts – players can unlock the trailers for all four theatrical films as well as different skins for the player’s character including Tuxedo Indy, Henry Jones Sr., and Han Solo (for a bit of crossover property promotion). The Wii version includes an exclusive co-op story mode (with Indy and Henry Jones Sr.) and unlockable version of *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*. PS3 and X360 versions were worked on internally but eventually cancelled after delays caused by LucasArts prioritizing *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*. Some action sequences in the game inspired by particular ones from the films.
*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (ARC; Atari; 1985) – attract screen features a very noticeable likeness of Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones. Some lines spoken by Ford in the film were digitized for playback during the game.

*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (APL, Atari ST, C64, NES; Mindscape; 1987 (C64), 1988)

*Inkheart* (DS; Dreamcatcher; 2009)


*Iron Man* (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Secret Level for Sega; 2008) – Third-person action shooter. While a tie-in with the film, it draws upon a lot of the comic book history to augment the plot with characters (allies and enemies) and mixes recreations of film sequences with content created especially for the game. Players will be expected to tinker with their armor, customizing and upgrading it, something Sega saw as an important element of the Iron Man mythos. It features the voices of the film’s stars, including Robert Downey Jr., Terrence Howard and Shaun Toub. The video game launched on the same day the movie opened, May 2. Developed by A2M for the Nintendo systems, this game plays differently from the PS3 and X360 versions, using the motion-sensing Wiimote and the DS touch pad (as well as the DS rumble pack). Bundled with comic book as purchase incentive. Partnered with Land O’ Frost lunchmeats to give away 500 copies of the video game (out of 3.5 million game pieces). Unfortunately much of the controls proved too imprecise for accurate and enjoyable game play, resulting in most reviewers to deem it “just another botched licensed movie game” and “a disaster even by movie game standards”. Still, despite these issues, *Iron Man* was the top-selling game in 2008 based on a movie, moving 1.4 million units according to market researcher NPD Group.

*Iron Man 2* (DS, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Sega; 2010) – announced more than a year ahead of its release, which will coincide with the film sequel. Play as Iron Man or War Machine; both Robert Downey Jr. and Don Cheadle provide voices and likenesses. The development studio, Secret Level, that Sega acquired to make the game was shut down a month before the release of the game and film. This game sequel was regarded as an improvement over the previous game (unlike the second theatrical film, which was seen as weaker than the first). The game is not an adaptation of the second film per se, but a new story that includes elements from the film and the comic books. While the improvements to the story and graphics were well received, the gameplay was still seen as the weak point.

*The Italian Job* (PC, PS; PixeLogic for SCi Games; 2001) – based on the 1969 Michael Caine film

*The Italian Job* (GC, PS2, XB; Climax Group for Eidos; 2003) – based on 2003 film remake of 1969 film

Jackie Chan’s Action Kung Fu (NES, TG16; Hudson Soft; 1990) – not related to any particular Jackie Chan film but features him

Jackie Chain in Fists of Fire (ARC; Kaneko; 1995) – Nine different digitized characters, including three different versions of Jackie Chan.

Jackie Chan: Stuntmaster (PS; Radical for Midway; 2000) – digitized Chan on title screen

James Bond 007 (PBL; Gottlieb; 1980)

James Bond 007 (2600, 5200, C64, CV, XE; Parker Bros.; 1983) – According to Joe Gaucher, lead designer and programmer for the 2600 version, Parker Bros. approached his company, On Time Software, because another subcontracted company (Western Technologies) was one year behind schedule on releasing a Bond game. The original concept for the 007 game, as described in a 1983 game catalog, was:

- Based on the daring train sequence from the James Bond adventure, “Octopussy.”
- Take the train ride of your life with Agent 007 in this fast-moving action video adventure. A deadly knife-thrower and some trigger happy gunmen are on your heels as you battle across the top of a speeding train. Think fast – and act even faster – as you try to avoid their attacks without being knocked off the train.

The “Octopussy” version apparently existed in some form, and reportedly demonstrated at a Consumer Electronics Show, although it was never completed. Gaucher remarked that Parker Bros. stipulated that the game “had to have the James Bond 007 opening, correct music and proper James Bond action” but left everything else open to interpretation. In the game that was eventually released for the 2600, players guided Bond through an oil rig raid based on Diamonds Are Forever (1971), an attack on Stromberg’s undersea hideaway from The Spy Who Loved Me (1977), and a space sequence from Moonraker (1979). Side-scrolling shooter reminiscent of Moon Patrol. The 5200 version begins with a new underwater level based on For Your Eyes Only (1981). Charlie Heath, a programmer at Parker Bros. from June-November 1982, programmed a short Bond demo based on Moonraker where the player is “in space orbiting earth in the space shuttle, chasing bio-terrorist pods to shoot them down before they break up in the atmosphere, while [the] shuttle and the pod are being buffeted about by reentry” (atariage.com). Several different prototype versions of the game box exist, featuring variations on Roger Moore, including his appearance on the theatrical poster for Live and Let Die (1973) before settling on the generic version released.

James Bond 007 (GB; Saffire for Nintendo; 1997) – released to capitalize on the success of the previous year’s GoldenEye for the N64. Features an original story mixing together characters from multiple James Bond films. Top-down adventure game. Incorporates gambling mini-games such as Baccarat and Blackjack.

James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire (GC, PS2, XB; EA; 2001)
James Bond 007: The Duel (GEN, SMS; Domark; 1993) – Timothy Dalton

James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing (GBA, GC, PS2, XB; EA; 2004) – Though not based directly on a James Bond film, the way the story is presented strives for a cinematic feel. For the first time, actor Pierce Brosnan lends his voice to a Bond game; in addition, the cast of the game includes John Cleese, Dame Judi Dench, Richard Kiel, Willem Dafoe, Shannon Elizabeth, Heidi Klum, and singer Mya, who both performs the game’s main theme and appears in the game as an NSA agent. While using Hollywood talent in games is nothing new, EA has actually based the looks of the characters on their real-life counterparts. So, for instance, Q has not only John Cleese’s voice, but also his likeness. All of this combines to make the game feel like a very big production that exceeds what’s been done in past Bond games. The storyline also intersects with the Bond franchise. Willem Dafoe plays the heavy in the story, an ex-KGB agent named Nikolai Diavolo, who is said to have worked with former Bond supervillain Max Zorin from A View to a Kill. Further tying the game to past Bond activities is the appearance of Jaws.

James Bond: GoldenEye 007 (DS, Wii; Activision; 2010) – reworked version of original title for current generation hardware. Daniel Craig’s likeness and voice replaces Pierce Brosnan. The Classic Edition features an exclusive gold Controller Pro, inspired by the legendary golden gun, for the Wii. Updated single player storyline written by Bruce Feirstein, the screenwriter for the original movie.

James Bond 007: Goldfinger (APL, PC; Mindscape; 1986)

James Bond 007: Live and Let Die – The Computer Game (AMI, C64, ST, ZX; Elite Systems International for Domark Software, Inc.; 1988) – The player is James Bond and must stop Mr. Big from delivering heroin. Control a boat that can destroy enemy boats and can go up to 100 MPH while dodging defensive gun fire and destroying enemy boats. Elite Systems International began writing a game called Aquablast that was swiftly branded with as a 007 product and retitled Live And Let Die as Domark made a connection between the game and the film’s speedboat chase. (Also released as Aquablast without any Bond branding.)

James Bond 007: NightFire (GBA, GC, PS2, XB; EA; 2002) – Probably the most striking element of the game is James Bond himself. The character models throughout the game are very well done, but the lead character looks and moves just like Pierce Brosnan.

James Bond: Quantum of Solace (PC, PS3, Wii, X360; Activision; 2008) – Players will have access to several of the locales from Casino Royale and Quantum of Solace as well as some new ones not found in either film. Quantum of Solace multiplayer include three new gameplay modes: Bond Versus, Bond Evasion, and Golden Gun. The title is essentially a game of both Casino Royale and Quantum of Solace, since an official tie-in for Casino Royale was never released. (See discussion of James Bond in Chapter 4 for more information.) The trailer for the game uses dialogue sample from the movie over footage from the game. Play is a mix of FPS with third-person cover combat. Uses Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare engine. Players can earn trophies (and achievements) in the game for completing certain tasks including: A View To Kill (Bronze) - Complete White's Estate; Casino Royale (Bronze) - Complete Montenegro Train,
Casino Royale, and Casino Poison; Diamonds Are Forever (Bronze) - Hack all locks; Die Another Day (Bronze) - Escape as Bond in Bond Evasion mode; Dr. No (Bronze) - Win a round as Bond in Bond Versus mode; For Your Eyes Only (Bronze) - Disable 10 cameras; From Russia With Love (Bronze) - Complete Siena, Opera House, and Sink Hole; Goldfinger (Bronze) - Unlock and purchase all golden weapons; Licence to Kill (Bronze) - Defeat an enemy with one shot; Live and Let Die (Bronze) - Takedown 50 enemies; Moonraker (Bronze) - Collect 30 cell phones; Octopussy (Silver) - Complete game on New Recruit; On Her Majesty's Secret Service (Bronze) - Complete Science Center Exterior, Interior, and Airport; Quantum of Solace (Bronze) - Complete Eco Hotel; The Living Daylights (Bronze) - Complete Shantytown and Construction Site; The Man with the Golden Gun (Bronze) - Defeat 50 enemies with one shot each; The Spy Who Loved Me (Bronze) - Complete Barge and Venice; The World is Not Enough (Silver) - Collect all cell phones; Thunderball (Silver) - Collect all power weapons; Tomorrow Never Dies (Silver) - Complete game on Field Operative; and You Only Live Twice (Silver) - Complete game on Agent. Collector's Edition released for X360 in “008” metallic game case; includes bonus disc featuring behind-the-scenes videos with actors from the game and movie and a coupon for $3 off the DVD for Dr. No, For Your Eyes Only, or Die Another Day.

**James Bond 007: Blood Stone** (DS, PC, PS3, X360; Bizarre Creations; 2010) – Third person action adventure with driving (land and sea) elements. The game is based on an original script from screenwriter Bruce Feirstein (Tomorrow Never Dies, The World Is Not Enough). Announced in 2008, it quietly reappeared in listings in April 2010. Singer Joss Stone will create original music for the game (the game exclusive track “I’ll Take it All” written and performed by Stone and Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics) as well as appear as the Bond Girl. In addition to Stone, the game features the likeness and voice talent of Daniel Craig and Judi Dench. Locales include Athens, Istanbul, Monaco, and Bangkok. Multiplayer modes will be available. Pre-credit sequence is a self-contained story; once completed, the opening credits roll and then the primary narrative starts, in an imitation of the usual structure of a Bond film.

“James Bond 007: Blood Stone captures the cinematic intensity of a Bond film by immersing players in an intriguing conspiracy that will require them to think and act like James Bond,” said David Pokress, Head of Marketing for Licensed Properties, Activision Publishing.

The version for the DS is being developed by n-Space.

**James Bond 007: A View to a Kill** (APL, PC; Mindscape, 1985)

**James Cameron’s Avatar the Game** (DS, PS3, Wii, X360; Ubisoft; 2009) – Released 2 weeks prior to theatrical release of film and narratively set 2 years before the events in the movie. (On “Avatar Day”, 21 August 2009, some fans got to see the first 16 minutes of the film as well as merchandise related to the film, including the video game.) In advance press, according to Ubisoft representatives, the goal of the game is to match the vision of the movie. First 3D console game of this hardware generation. Players are given an option to turn the 3D effect on or off. Work on the game began 2.5 years before its release. With Cameron’s approval, Ubisoft’s Montreal studio – who were competing with three other studios during 2007 for the rights to produce the game – created a new story with different characters than in the movie. For Ubisoft, the deal with Cameron, which also involved Twentieth Century Fox, represents the
company’s investment on a movie property, eclipsing its landmark deal with Peter Jackson and Universal for the *King Kong* game. (Ubisoft’s deal does not include the rights to a possible massively multiplayer online game.) At the time the deal was struck, Ubisoft CEO Yves Guillemot said the company sees as much as 20% of its revenue coming from Hollywood licenses in the years to come, with the expectation that movie games will generate at least 50% of a blockbuster film’s global box office tally. Unfortunately for Ubisoft, while the theatrical film and its home video release set gigantic records, this was not the case with the sales figures from *Avatar the Game*. Ubisoft had expected sales of 3.5-4 million but only had 2.5 million as of January 2010.

Players have to choose early in the game whether to play as Able Ryder, a member of the human Resources Development Administration (RDA), or as a Na’vi. According to Kevin Shortt, lead script writer and story designer for the game, the game doesn’t presume that one side or the other is good or bad. A website for the game served as a promotional portal as well as a repository for development information. Sigourney Weaver, Michelle Rodriguez, and Stephen Lang provided the voices for their characters.

Anti-smoking watchdogs complained about character Grace Augustine’s (Sigourney Weaver) lighting up in the movie *Avatar*, but James Cameron says that her character’s cigarette habit was a critique of video gamers. In a 03 January 2010 article in the *New York Times*, the director said that Weaver’s character was never meant to be a role model for young people and that her smoking was meant to be a commentary on the character’s obsession with climbing into her blue meat puppet. “We were showing that Grace doesn’t care about her human body, only her avatar body,” Cameron said. Augustine’s destructive behavior “is a negative comment about people in our real world living too much in their avatars, meaning online and in video games” (Cieply, 1).

In an interview with *Avatar* producer Jon Landau, he detailed the ways that his filmmaking team helped Ubisoft with the stereoscopic 3-D used in the video game and a digital-asset-management system that helped get art to Ubisoft, but decried 20th Century Fox for its mismanagement of the game property, including a reluctance to allow an early trailer for the video game to be released and a year-end release of the game that, while coinciding with the film’s debut, saw a significant sales drop after the holiday season. Generally the PC version was much better reviewed than other platforms.

*James Cameron’s Avatar* (MOBILE; Gameloft; 2009) – App for iPhone and iTouch. Narratively this game is set 20 years before the events in the film. The story is narrated by Neytiri, who says that it was told to her by her sister, Sylwanin. The plot of the game is split into 16 chapters.

*James and the Giant Peach: Spike the Aunts* (DVD; 2010) – exclusive to Blu-Ray release

*Jaws* (2600) – announced by both Parker Bros. and Universal, but undeveloped.

In an article in *Electronic Fun With Computers & Games* (May 1983), programmer Ron Dubren states the concept for *Guardians of the Deep*, then known as *Treasures of the Deep*, was
originally done in February 1982 and offered to Parker Brothers for use with their *Jaws* license. After Parker Bros. lost the license, Dubren showed it to Jim Wickstead (of James Wickstead Design Associates), who accepted it in August and finished the development in October using a five member team. After being advised not to use “The Deep” in the title because of the name of the 1977 film, it was submitted to US Games who changed it to *Guardians of Treasure*. Interestingly, a prototype also exists labeled as *Octopussy*, perhaps as a last enticement to Parker Bros. with their James Bond license.

**Jaws** (NES; LJN Toys; 1987) – based loosely on *Jaws: The Revenge* (1987) and intended to coincide with theatrical release of film

**Jaws** (HAND; Matsushima; 1987)

**Jaws: The Computer Game** (AMI, C64, MSX, ST; Intelligent Design for Screen 7; 1989)

**Jaws Unleashed** (PC, PS2, XB; Appaloosa Interactive for Majesco; 2006) – game play inspired by *GTA*, although “Bruce” (as the mechanical shark was known during the first film’s production) has now become an eco-warrior, upset at the environmentally destructive intrusion of humans into the oceans. The game includes 20 levels and 32 side questions (with three difficulty levels each). In addition to biting, Jaws has ramming, whipping, and jumping attacks. Game play also includes hidden collectibles and timed races. The game features the original John Williams score. Majesco spent millions buying the rights to big license properties – including *Jaws, Aeon Flux*, and even Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* – but has put itself in financial trouble as these investments failed to deliver a return.

**Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius** (GC, PS2; THQ; 2001) – game based on film based on television show

**Johnny Mnemonic** (PBL; Williams; 1995)

**Johnny Mnemonic** (PC; Sony Imagesoft; 12/12/1995)

**Journey to the Center of the Earth** (DS; THQ; 2008)

**Judge Dredd** (ARC; Gremlin for Acclaim; 1997) – light gun shooter

**Judge Dredd** (GB, GEN, GG, PC, PS, SNES; Acclaim; 1995)

Relation to Film: The game’s plot mirrors that of the film, hitting the main points and using key locations from the film, such as Heavenly Haven, Aspen Penal Colony, and Cursed Earth. After finishing the film plot about two-thirds of the way through, the game continues with an entirely different plotline based on events from the *Judge Dredd* comics.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box cover shows a close-up shot of film star Sylvester Stallone in the Judge Dredd uniform and helmet, a image taken from promotional posters for the film. The manual cover also uses this image superimposed over two other film stills: another of Stallone as
Dredd and one of the cybernetic goon from the Angel clan. Yet another production still adorns the third page in the manual, this one also of Stallone as Dredd, from film’s Block War sequence.

Summary: In this action shooter, players control Judge Dredd as he fights various enemies, many of which can either be executed or sentenced to prison (the latter earns the user more points, and more points can earn extra lives). While Dredd wields only a single weapon, his signature Lawgiver pistol, he can pick up different types of ammunition that the gun can fire, including grenades, armor piercing rounds, a variety of missiles (heat seekers, ricochet missiles, incendiaries, high explosives, and the double-whammy, a dual version of the heat seeker), and the goofy-sounding boing bubbles (used in the last third of the game to imprison Dark Judges). Besides the different sorts of ammunition, players can also find various power-ups, including the usual health and extra-life bonuses as well as force field generators, anti-gravity belts, and key cards. The point of the game as a whole is to defeat Rico, the rogue Judge, in a boss fight atop the Statue of Liberty, which mimics the film’s climax. After this, Dredd must deal with a trans-dimensional threat to Mega-City One, the Dark Judges. This second plotline is completely unrelated to the Rico plotline and involves Dredd traveling across dimensions to Deadworld and the endgame boss fight with Judge Death.

*Jumanji* (PC; Philips Interactive; 1997)

*Jumanji* (HAND; Parker Bros.; 1996)

*Jumper* (PS2, Wii, X360; Brash Entertainment; 2008) – subtitled “Griffin’s Story” but also marketed as “Official Movie Game”, a player takes control (third-person view) of Griffin, the supporting character Jumper from the movie, and plays through what functions as a prequel before turning into a parallel (and sometimes intersecting) narrative with the film. Likenesses of some characters based on the actors (Jamie Bell, Hayden Christensen, and Samuel L. Jackson).

*Ju-On: The Grudge* (Wii; FeelPlus for XSEED Games; 2009) – subtitled “A Haunted House Simulator”. Based on the original Japanese film, not the American remake (although Takashi Shimizu, who directed both films, was involved in the development of the game as a consultant). Adventure game where player explores haunted locations like an abandoned warehouse, a dimly-lit hospital, and a mannequin factory. The gameplay has been altered from most horror titles in that the standard combat element has been removed in favor of puzzle-solving and exploration, conveying more sense of fear. A second player can use remote to activate sounds and events to scare the first player.

*Jurassic Park* (PBL; Data East; 1993)

*Jurassic Park* (ARC; Sega; 1994)

*Jurassic Park* (AMI, GB, NES, PC, SNES; developed and published by Ocean Software; 1993) – game divided into two missions, one from an overhead perspective, the second as an FPS. Game was in development for over a year at an estimated 20,000 hours. Mode 7 effects used to scale and rotate rooms and sprites. Uses realistic stereo imaging and Dolby Surround Sound, incorporating actual sound effects (such as the dinosaur roaring) from the movie. 16 megabit
cartridge. In the GB version, an Info option was added that provides light educational material on the six dinosaur species found in the game; play is across four stages: rescuing Tim, rescuing Lex, activating the island’s main computer, and destroying the raptor nest.

*Jurassic Park* (GEN, GG, SMS; BlueSky for Sega; 1993) – side scrolling platformer. Player can choose to be human or a velociraptor, with corresponding story and design changes.

*Jurassic Park* (SCD; developed and published by Sega; 1993) – point-and-click adventure game set after the film’s conclusion

*Jurassic Park Interactive* (3DO; Universal Interactive; 1994) – only *Jurassic Park* game to feature RPG elements. Includes FMV segments of characters modeled on movie actors.

*Jurassic Park: Rampage Edition* (GEN; Sega; 1994)

*Jurassic Park: The Lost World* (ARC, PS, SAT; Sega; 1997)

*Jurassic Park Part 2: The Chaos Continues* (GB, SNES; Ocean; 1994)

*Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis* (PC, PS2, XB; Vivendi Universal; 2003)

*Jurassic Park: Survival* (PS2; Vivendi; 2002) – third-person action adventure. The story features David Vaughn, a security technician on a previously unknown third island, who is caught in the midst of a conspiracy involving the US Government and a lot of dinosaurs. Released screenshots show that most of the dinosaurs featured in *Jurassic Park III* were included and were to sound similar to their movie counterparts. The game was canceled due to conflicts with Vivendi over payments.

*Jurassic Park: Warpath* (PS; EA; 1999)

*Jurassic Park III* (ARC; Konami; 2001) – light gun

*Jurassic Park III: Dino Defender* (PC; Knowledge Adventure; 2001)

*Jurassic Park III: The DNA Factor* (GBA; Konami; 2001)

*Jurassic Park III: Island Attack* (GBA; Konami; 2001)

*Jurassic Park III: Park Builder* (GBA; Konami, 2001)

*Jurassic Park* (APL, PC, PS3, Wii, X360; Telltale Games; 2010) – episodic games based on the Universal Studios films. “*Jurassic Park* and *Back to the Future* are two of our broadest and most beloved properties,” said Bill Kispert, interactive vice president at Universal Studios. “We were very interested in bringing them into the interactive space, but they’re not exactly the kind of properties that lend themselves to the stereotypical shoot-’em-up style of gameplay” (Lang, 1).

**Karate Kid** (NES; LJN Toys; 1987)

**Keystone Kapers** (Atari 2600; Activision; 1983) – inspired by the Keystone Kops but no official licensing.

**King Arthur** (GC, PS2, XB; Konami; 2004) – Konami chose to publish a game several months after the film ceased theatrical exhibition. The story is presented through a series of computer-generated and ripped-from-the-film cut scenes, which actually tie together fairly seamlessly. Similarly, the missions are based entirely within the scope of the film’s plot.

**Kingdom Hearts** – uses worlds from Disney movies

**Kingdom Hearts 2**

**King Kong** (Atari 2600; Tigervision; 1982) – Tigervision was a division of Tiger Toys, an established producer of handheld electronic games. Licensed from Universal Studios. More evocative in cover art of the 1976 Paramount remake of the 1933 RKO film. In terms of gameplay and looks, *King Kong* is very similar to Coleco’s 2600 port of Nintendo’s *Donkey Kong*. This game is most certainly an attempt to cash in on the popularity of *Donkey Kong*.

**King Kong** (HAND; Tandy; 1984) – officially licensed from Universal Studios. Gameplay is a rough clone of the first level in *Donkey Kong*.

**King Kong Jungle** and **King Kong New York** (HAND; Epoch) – unlicensed references to Kong (also sold by Grandstand and GAMAtronic)

**King Kong** (PBL; Data East; 4/1990)


**Kong** (ARC; Fun Games Inc.; 1976) - Fly biplane around the Empire State Building and shoot at King Kong (with Fay Wray in his clutches). Avoid being knocked from the sky. Released to coincide with the 1976 remake of 1933 film, but most likely unlicensed.

**Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World** (GBA; Ubisoft; 2005)

**Kruistocht in Spijkerbroek: De Game** (PC; developed and published by Submarine; 2006) – based on the film *Kruistocht in Spijkerbroek*

**Krull** (ARC, PBL; Gottlieb; 1983)
**Krull** (Atari 2600; Atari; 1983) – according to 5200 programmer John Seghers, Atari sent him to England during filming to discuss game ideas with the director and producer and came up with several ideas including dodging rocks and navigating a spider web. The project was cancelled and the 2600 version was green lit instead.

**Kung Fu Panda** (DS, MOBILE, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Vicarious Visions for Activision; 2008) – mix of platforming, fighting, and puzzle-solving across over twelve worlds. Created by the team that did the *Spider-Man 3* game. Released in advance of the theatrical film. Cell phone version by EA Mobile.

**Kung Fu Panda: Legendary Warriors** (DS, Wii; A2M for Activision; 2008) – Play the next chapter in the legend of Po, the new Dragon Warrior, as the player battles the vengeful Tai Lung, who is trying to capture the Furious Five.

**Labyrinth** (APL, C64, MSX; Lucasfilm for Activision; 1986) – The player begins in a text interface as a character going to the movies. After talking with a couple of teenagers in the theater audience, the movie begins, at which point the character is informed that the character has been selected to be the thrall of Jareth, and there are only 13 hours to defeat him and avert this fate. (*Labyrinth: The Computer Game* for the Nintendo Famicom (Japan-only release) was produced by Tokuma Soft and is unrelated to the Lucasfilm game.)

**The Land Before Time** (GBC; Natsume; 7/14/2001 // GBA; Crave; 2/28/2002)

**The Land Before Time: Big Water Adventure** (PS; TDK Mediactive; 2002)

**The Land Before Time: Great Valley Racing Adventure** (PS; Sound Source; 2001)

**The Land Before Time: Return to the Great Valley** (PS; Sound Source; 2000)

**Land of the Dead: Road to Fiddler’s Green** (PC, XB; Groove Games; 2005)

**The Last Action Hero** (PBL; Data East; 10/1993)

**The Last Action Hero** (AMI, GB, GEN, GG, NES, PC, SNES; Psygnosis; 1992)

**The Last Airbender** (DS, Wii; THQ; 2010) – game picks up at climax of theatrical film and follows the antagonist, Prince Zuko, before allowing play as Aang and The Blue Spirit. Ten levels of fighting with some puzzle solving. Character likenesses and voices of the original film cast include Dev Patel (Zuko), Noah Ringer (Aang), and Aasif Mandvi (Zhao).

**The Last Starfighter** (ARC; Atari Games; 1984) – unreleased game based on film. The actual game was about 75 percent completed when the project was cancelled. The arcade game screens featured in the film were based on the initial designs of the coin-op game, detailed in the initial 38 page proposal by CJ Horseman, Jim Morris, and Barry Whitebook.
The Last Starfighter (5200; Atari; 1984) – unreleased prototype. This game originally started out as a completely different project called Orbiter. When Orbiter was about 35% done Atari decided to reprogram it as The Last Starfighter. In 1985, Atari decided to release The Last Starfighter as Star Raiders II (on disk for the Atari XL and on cartridge for the XE). While Star Raiders II is basically the same game as The Last Starfighter, some changes were made to make it blend better with the Star Raiders style along with removing all references to The Last Starfighter. The Atari 2600 version of The Last Starfighter was eventually changed and released as Solaris (1986) (no relation to the Lem novel or associated films).

The Last Starfighter (NES; Mindscape; 1990) – Despite its cover and title screen, this is actually a port of the C64 game Uridium (1985). (VGC, Issue #5, Spring 2006)

The Lawnmower Man (PC; developed and published by Sales Curve; 1993) – “Not only the best CD-ROM game ever, but the nearest thing anyone’s seen to an interactive movie” quote from Game Zone on game box. Includes 22 minutes of color footage from the film.

The Lawnmower Man (GEN, SCD, SNES; THQ, Time Warner Interactive; 1993) – a version for the 3DO based on The Lawnmower Man II: Job’s War was rumored.

Relation to Film: The film’s basic premise of a mentally-handicapped man becoming a super-intelligent psychopath with vast mental powers through the use of virtual reality and psychotropic drugs serves as the game’s set-up. Some key locations from the film appear as levels in the game, and users play as one of two film characters.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box cover shows Jobe, the titular character, as he appears at the film’s end in the virtual world, with a computer-generated Jeff Fahey face on what looks like a mechanical body. This is a still frame from the film.

Summary: The game’s events have little to do with the film’s (or the original Stephen King short story), but the core plot has the same setup, with players trying to stop Jobe and the evil directors of “The Shop,” a secret military research outfit. Controlling either Dr. Lawrence Angelo (the Pierce Brosnan character from the film) or Carla Parkette (played in the film by Rosalee Mayeux), players move through several vastly different environments, beginning with a first-person, 3-D “virtual world” that looks very much as the virtual world does in the film. Some of the virtual world levels are first person, but others are third person vehicle or piloting levels; all use true 3-D graphics which were revolutionary for 16-bit consoles of the time. The 3-D levels serve as bridges to the side-scrolling platform levels, where the game follows the basic platform shooter pattern of kill enemies, pick up ammo, kill more enemies, pick up new gun, kill mini-boss or boss, and repeat. Players must also solve occasional puzzles to advance.

LEGO Creator: Harry Potter (PC; 2001; EA)

LEGO Creator: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (PC; 2002; EA)

LEGO Harry Potter Years 1-4 (PS3, Wii, X360; Traveller’s Tales for Warner Bros. Interactive; 2010) - Collector's Edition for PS3 or Wii includes the game, a peek behind the scenes of LEGO
Harry Potter, fun on the set of Harry Potter, an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, and an exclusive set of 4 House Crest LEGO magnets. This game combines elements from both the books and the films. Players can choose from more than 100 characters. In July 2010, according to NPD, the DS version was the 5th best-selling game software with 141,700 copies (the Wii version was 7th).

**LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures** (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Traveller’s Tales for LucasArts; 2008) – features movie moments from all three films across 18 story levels. Playing in Raiders of the Lost Ark, The Temple of Doom, and The Last Crusade are selected through wall-mounted maps that feature the familiar red travel lines as loading screens. While the overall levels follow the events of their respective movies, Traveller’s Tales took a fair amount of liberty with scene recreation. In addition to playing as Indiana Jones, players will also be able to access Dr. Jones Senior, Marcus Brody, Belloq, Short Round, Marion, Sallah, Willie Scott, Toht, Satipo, and others for approximately 60 playable characters; different characters have different abilities (as well as different phobias) that are required to solve puzzles, and the player will control both a main and a secondary character. Barnet College acts as the hub for character congregation and game artifact museum. Collecting all of the holy relics from each of the films unlocks special powers. Uses the score by composer John Williams. In the Wii version, players flick the remote to simulate cracking Indy’s whip. The DS version has redesigned platforming sections and makes use of the microphone and has touch-screen minigames. At least one LEGO Star Wars character is expected to cameo. Because it is a game aimed at children, some adult content such as the Kali Ma heart removal scene and all references to Nazis have been removed (fortunately the DS retains a minigame featuring chilled monkey brains). Released a little over one week after the release of the fourth Indiana Jones film. According to a review in Nintendo Power, “the main draw of LEGO Indiana Jones is playing through many of the movies’ most memorable moments in the charming LEGO style”.

Declared by Jordan Mechner to be “the most brilliant movie tie-in videogame ever”.

**LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues** (DS, PC, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360, Traveller’s Tales for LucasArts; 2009) – derived from all four cinematic adventures, including Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull. Includes all-new levels for the original trilogy of feature films, as well as all-new content for Kingdom of the Crystal Skull. Players will be able to design their own levels. New animations for Indy. New vehicles to use.

**LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game** (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, PSP, XB; Traveller’s Tales for Eidos; 2005) – set during the Prequel Trilogy and released to promote the Revenge of the Sith. Player controls over 30 characters through key moments from all three prequel films, including all of the famous light saber battles, races, and spaceship dogfights.

**LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy** (DS, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, PSP, XB, X360; Traveller’s Tales for LucasArts; 2006) – reenact all three of the original movies. Has more of a light-hearted, humorous tone compared to the movies. Uses no dialogue. Power Block items and coin stubs collected in Story Mode will also unlock new characters, vehicles, and items for play. One of the bestselling film franchise titles of 2006, selling 2.3 million units.
**LEGO Star Wars: The Complete Saga** (DS, PS3, Wii, X360; Traveller’s Tales for LucasArts; 2007) – collected version of the first two LEGO Star Wars titles with some minor changes, such as a few sequences are added or altered, the ability to use the characters from the first game in the second and vice-versa, and a new Indiana Jones character. Online play added for X360 360 and PS3.

**Lemony Snicket’s A Series of Unfortunate Events** (GBA, GC, Mobile, PC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2004)

**Lethal Weapon** (AMI, C64, GB, NES, PC, NES, SNES, ST; Ocean Software; 1992) – based somewhat on Third film in franchise

**Lethal Weapon 3** (PBL; Data East; 8/1992)

**Lilo & Stitch** (PS; Sega; 2002)

**Lilo & Stitch 2** (GBA; Disney Interactive; )

**Lilo & Stitch: Memory Mayhem** (Mobile; Walt Disney Internet Group; 2004)

**Lilo & Stitch: Space Escape** (Mobile; Walt Disney Internet Group; 2003)

**Lilo & Stitch: Trouble in Paradise** (PC; Disney Interactive; 2002)

**The Lion King** (AMI, GB, GEN, GG, PC, PS, SMS, SNES; Sega; 1994) – Disney. Action; Side-Scrolling Platformer.

Relation to Film: The game plot follows the film plot point for point, starting with King Mufasa teaching young Simba about the world, to King Mufasa's assassination by Scar, to Simba’s life in exile, and eventually to Simba’s overthrow of Scar and the hyenas. The game also uses music and songs from the film.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box cover features an illustration of Simba with his enemies the hyenas and Scar in the background. While the image does come directly from the film, the character designs are clearly the same as the film's. The manual has supplemental images of some of the film's main and supporting characters, such as Scar, Mufasa, Timon, and Pumbaa.

Summary: Players control Simba both as a cub and as an adult, using simple jump, claw, and roar commands. The gameplay differs slightly for young Simba and adult Simba. The basic roar stuns enemies and, in some levels, orders certain allies, such as monkeys, to change position on the screen, allowing Simba access to different paths through the levels. The adult Simba's roar is more powerful and can damage enemies as well as stun. Young Simba can execute rolls and pounce, while adult Simba can slash, maul, and flip enemies. Basically, young Simba is not much of a fighter, and his levels reflect this as he must avoid or outwit enemies, but adult Simba can face foes such as hyenas head on. The game’s plot follows the film’s plot, but the individual levels have little to do with the film except for some which feature settings from the film, such as
Pride Rock and the Elephants’ Graveyard, and two which represent key scenes from the film: the Wildebeest stampede and the final boss fight against Scar.

**The Little Mermaid 2** (PS; THQ; 2001)

**The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure** (DS; Buena Vista Games; 2006) – timed for release of DVD

**Little Nicky** (GBC; Ubisoft; 2000)

**Little Nemo: The Dream Master** (NES; CAPCOM; 1990) – based on the 1989 animated film *Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland*, which is in turn based upon the comic strip *Little Nemo in Slumberland* by Winsor McCay.

**The Living Daylights** (A8, C64, MSX, PC; Domark; 1987)

**Lochjaw** (2600; Apollo; 1981) – this title is neither a direct nor indirect adaptation of a film source, but still is notable for its connection to licensing issues. The player controls a diver searching for “a fabulous treasure of diamonds that spilled from the hold of a sunken Spanish galleon” in a maze made of kelp (game box). Pursuing the diver are sharks and the Loch Ness monster. The illustration on the game materials depicts Nessie, a diver and diving cage, several sharks, and predominantly what appears to be a Great White. Universal (along with Parker Bros.) sued Apollo over the similarity of the game’s name to that of *Jaws* (1975), prompting the company not only to change the name of the game to *Shark Attack* but also to slightly redesign the programming. After several unchallenged (and perceived) infringements on this film property, Universal became more vigilant in enforcing any potential rights issues.

**Looney Tunes: Back in Action** (GBA, GC, PS2; Warthog for EA; 2003)

**The Lord of the Rings: Journey to Rivendell** (2600; Parker Bros.; 1983) - This game licensed both the film and the books; in the Parker Bros. catalog, credits go to Saul Zaentz (film rights) and Elan Merchandising (book rights). The font of the title on the splash screen of the game is identical to that of the 1978 Bakshi film. Prototype box features artwork from Bakshi film. Since the game has been found in completed form, the dispute with ownership rights may have played at significant part in it not being publicly released.

**The Lord of the Rings** (PBL; Stern; 2003)

**The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn’s Quest** (DS, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii; Warner Bros. Interactive; 2010) – Player controls Aragorn during the War of the Ring. Game’s release set to coincide with that of PS3 Move controller, which will allow the player to experience sword swinging, horseback riding, and bow-wielding. A co-op mode exclusively for PS3 and Wii features Gandalf as the second character. Voice talent for the game features Samwise Gamgee actor Sean Astin and Gimli actor John Rhys-Davies. *Lord of the Rings* film composer Howard Shore also contributes to the score.
The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-Earth (PC, PS2; Electronic Arts; 2004) – the license of the game is taken from the movies, allowing it to have the voices, likeness and even clips from the production.

The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-Earth II (PC, X360; Electronic Arts; 2006) - follows the lesser known story of the War of the North, which took place at the same time as the trilogy. Instead of a retelling of the story of the movies, EA has managed to get the rights for Tolkien’s other works. The Collector’s Edition includes a bonus DVD with HD trailers, cinematic movies, behind-the-scenes footage, interviews, an extensive collection of game art and the game’s full music tracks.

The follow quotes are from Richard Taylor, the Cinematic Director on the The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-Earth II, during the game’s production:

> Like many in the gaming industry, my background is in film making. I’ve been a commercial director for close to 30 years and I’ve also been a special effects director for feature films, but now I’m working in games. I think gaming is the cutting edge of new media and as such it is where the most interesting visual work is evolving.

> In this year’s game, creating the cinematic sequences is far more exciting because for the first time we have the unified rights to The Lord of the Rings books as well as the films. Because of this, we are now introducing lands, characters, and creatures that appeared in the books but were not in the movies. Consequently, the cinematics become even more important for informing the player of the story as the players may have never seen or heard of these lands and characters.

> Traditional film making artists like me are evolving into the gaming industry because the production values of filmmaking are now becoming essential to the future of games. I’ve chosen to be in games because to me it’s a lot more creative and a lot more fun. Designing the world-class visuals that we’re able to produce in games these days is personally very rewarding to me. (Taylor, 1-2)

The Lord of the Rings: Conquest (DS, PC,PS3, X360; Pandemic for Electronic Arts; 2009) – Pandemic is using the play mechanics they developed for Star Wars: Battlefront for this Tolkien title, which takes the player through key events from both the movies and the books. According to an interview with game director Eric Gewirtz in the Juneau Empire, “We’re trying not to faithfully recreate the events from the film, but rather create a scenario where the events from the film can happen.” Players can choose to play the Campaign mode from the side of good or evil (the game’s slogan is “It’s good to be bad”), with the good campaign mostly following the events of the films (the evil campaign begins with the death of Frodo and Sauron’s forces then rampaging through Middle-Earth, as the gamer ultimately gets to play as Sauron). Multiplayer options available, including capture the flag, deathmatch, and a version of tag where one player is Frodo trying to carry the ring and the pursuing players are ringwraiths.

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (GBA, PC, PS2, XB; Black Label; 2002)
**The Lord of the Rings: Legends** (Mobile; Microjocs Mobile for Jamdat Mobile; 2005) – European release, based on New Line Cinema’s movie trilogy, is accessible in five different languages – English, Spanish, German, French and Italian. Legends follows the plot of the three films from beginning to end. Players choose to be one of four characters – Aragorn, Frodo, Legolas and Eowyn – as they battle their way through 11 action levels.

**The Lord of the Rings Online** – transformed from a subscription based MMORPG into a free-to-play one by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, the game division of Warner Bros., after purchasing the game’s studio, Turbine. Initially this game has nothing to do with the theatrical films by Jackson, but the declining interest in the *Lord of the Rings* property may have influenced Warner Bros. to back the game.

**The Lord of the Rings: Tactics** (PSP; Electronic Arts; 2005) - a single-player campaign from the perspective of either good or bad in Peter Jackson’s film trilogy based on the J.R.R. Tolkien fantasy novels. A smattering of movie clips is used to introduce the campaigns and their missions, but these are fairly disjointed. The actual plot of the movies serves only to loosely set up most of the game’s battles, which may seem familiar despite significant changes. Most of the major and minor characters from the films are represented at some point, including Gollum and the balrog. Howard Shore’s music from the movies is used liberally throughout the game.

**The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King** (APL, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Electronic Arts; 2003) – According to actor Ian McKellen, “If you can’t be in the movie, you might as well play the game; it’s the next best thing.” Third person hack and slash. The game follows three storylines loosely based on the film. Players can interact with the game environment (activate machines and weapons).

“The job of the game was not to re-tell the entire story,” explained Todd Arnold, senior producer at developer Electronic Arts, “but to provide the player with an opportunity to be the hero and come as close as possible to living through key moments from the film. We constructed our levels around this objective, conveying just enough story to set up the action and provide context for what the player is doing” (Cook, 1).

Completion of certain levels unlocks interviews with McKellen, Christopher Lee, Elijah Wood, Sean Astin, and other actors who provided voice-over work for the game. The game won in two categories at the DICE 2004 awards: Outstanding achievement in character performance (for Elijah Wood’s voice role as Frodo) and Outstanding achievement in sound design. The computer version of the game was the 10th overall best seller of 2003.

**The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age** (GBA, GC, PS2, XB; Electronic Arts; 2004) – introduces entirely new characters which aren’t mentioned in the books or movies, but includes scenes from all three Jackson films, with new background speech by Ian McKellan (Gandalf). The GBA version is different from the consoles and gives players the option of playing the heroes from the trilogy (Aragorn and Gandalf) or using the evil forces of Mordor (the Witch-king or Saruman).

**The Lord of the Rings: The Treason of Isengard** (PS2, XB) – cancelled
**The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers** (GBA, GC, Mobile, PS2, XB; Electronic Arts; 2002) – actually covers events from the first and second movies. Player can choose to control Aragorn, Legolas, or Gimli. Between the levels, cut scenes are used, combining actual film footage with scenes rendered using the game engine. Bonus content (unlocked by completing missions or reaching certain levels with the characters) features interviews with the filmmakers and actors (who also provide voices for the game) as well as various making-of documentaries. GBA version top-down perspective. Mobile version released in 2003.

**The Lord of the Rings: War in the North** (PC, PS3, X360; Snowblind; 2011) – Developed in association with Middle-earth Enterprises, the game explores both original and familiar narrative elements as Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment holds the rights to develop video games based on both the literary and motion picture content from *The Lord of the Rings*. Using story elements and characters from Middle-earth as well as from past feature films, gamers will work cooperatively to develop three-person teams to fight against the forces of Sauron. Includes customization of character weapons, skills, and special abilities.

**Lost in Space** (PBL; Sega; 1998)

**The Lost World: Jurassic Park** (ARC; Sega; 1997) – light gun

**The Lost World: Jurassic Park** (PBL; Sega; 1997)

**The Lost World: Jurassic Park** (GB, GCOM, GEN, GG, PS, SAT; 1997/98) – box proclaims “Finally – a movie game that is worthy of its license!” from the Ultra Game Players.

**Madagascar** (DS, GBA, GC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2005)

**Madagascar – Operation Penguin** (GBA; Activision; 2005)

**Mad Max** (NES; developed and published by Mindscape; 1990)

**Maneater** (ARC; Project Support Engineering; 1975) – one of many unlicensed games to capitalize on the popularity of *Jaws*. The arcade cabinet for this game is quite unique in that it is in the shape of a white shark’s head with the nose pointing up and the mouth open. The game monitor sits in the top jaw while the bottom jaw holds the control panel.

**Marathon Man** (2600; Sega; 1983) – announced as adaptation of 1976 film, but reportedly scrapped by Sega for playability issues.

**March of the Penguins** (DS, GBA; Destination Software; 2006)

**Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein** (GEN, SCD, SNES; Sony Imagesoft; 1994) – SCD version bundled with *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* game

**Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein** (PBL; Sega; 1995)
**M*A*S*H** (2600, TI; Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – see discussion in Chapter 1. Derived from television show, itself a derivative property of the film. Mentioned as an XE release in a 1983 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) press kit. A proposed sequel, **M*A*S*H II**, was rumored to have been briefly considered; the XE version was also listed in the 1983 CES press kit with a scheduled November 1983 release. Developed as a prototype for CV. In a promotional flyer (82-FOX-2131) touting the consumer appeal for this title, Fox touted the prime time and syndicated ratings for the show as well as its numerous awards. Additionally, Fox advertised its plans to use Jamie Farr as a spokesperson for its national advertising campaign (television, radio, and print) for the game. Some versions of the game were bundled with a special promotional t-shirt. Developed in-house by Fox, a different version was programmed by Sirius but not used.

**The Mask** (SNES; THQ; 1995)


**The Matrix: The Path of Neo** (PC, PS2, XB; Shiny Entertainment for Atari Inc.; 2005) – The player controls Neo as the game follows the events of the entire *Matrix* trilogy, although the Wachowski brothers rewrote the ending to feature a new finale where Neo defeats Agent Smith and then takes on the final boss, Mega-Smith, composed of debris from the city where the battle takes place; immediately before the final fight, however, the game is interrupted by the Wachowski Brothers (represented with single-color sprites resembling an earlier technological era of game design) who directly address the player to explain their reasoning behind deviating from the movie’s ending. Some missions are elaborations of events only spoken of in passing in the films, which creates a confusing narrative for players unfamiliar with the source film.

**Mary-Kate and Ashley: Sweet 16 - Licensed to Drive** (GBA, GC, PS2) – subtitle of 2002 film *Getting There* was “Sweet 16 and Licensed to Drive”.

**The Mask of Zorro** (GBC; Sunsoft; 11/11/1999) – This game follows the storyline of the film to the letter, from the introduction of the new Zorro, to the exposition of his colored past, to his blossoming relationship with Montero's daughter, the beautiful Elena. The characters based on Antonio Banderas or Catherine Zeta-Jones are practically unrecognizable as such since the sprites are so lacking in terms of detail.

**Maverick** (PBL; Sega; 1994)

**Megaforce** (Atari 2600; Fox Video Games for Twentieth Century Fox; 1982) – Side-scrolling shooter. Takes basic premise of movie (attack Middle Eastern dictator) as main component of game play.

**Men in Black** (HAND; Bandai; 1997)
Men in Black: The Game (PC; Southpeak Interactive; 1997)

Men in Black II: Alien Escape (GC, PS2; Infogrames; 2002 (GC released in 2003)) – released one week before film. The game’s plot has agents J and K (Will Smith’s and Tommy Lee Jones’s characters, respectively) chasing down a group of aliens who have crashed to Earth on a prison ship and escaped. The voice work is designed to sound like Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones, and Rip Torn, and it comes reasonably close; graphically, the character design is not identical to the movie characters, but close enough to suggest specific likenesses.

Men in Black II: Crossfire (PC; Sony; 2002)

Miami Vice: The Game (Mobile, PSP; Vivendi Games; 2006)

Michael Jackson’s Moonwalker (ARC; Sega; 1990)

Michael Jackson’s Moonwalker (GEN, SMS; Sega; 1990) – Looking for a way to be more competitive against Nintendo, Sega spent several million dollars to sign Jackson. Loosely based on the Jackson film, Sega programmers added to the plot which Jackson fine-tuned. Jackson’s voice, face, and dance moves were digitized. “The music quality was what made it stand out from its competitors…this game had good music and good game play” (Narang, 32). This game briefly helped to boost sales of the Sega console. The licensing experience that Sega learned from working with Jackson was parlayed into later agreements with sports celebrities such as Arnold Palmer, Tommy Lasorda, and Joe Montana as well as studios like Disney.

Michael Ninn’s Latex: The Game (PC; developed and published by VCA Interactive; 1998) – point-and-click game based on pornographic film. Topped sales charts in “adult game” category when released.

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie (GB, GEN, GG, SNES; Sega; 1994) – Nintendo system versions released by Bandai


Missing in Action (7800; TNT Games for Atari; 1989) – unreleased prototype. Title screen shows Chuck Norris in pose from theatrical poster. The code was finally released in 2007 after the prototype was privately purchased (reportedly for several thousand dollars) and then made publicly available. Game is technically unfinished but is playable (albeit with some collision detection issues). Sidescrolling shooter.

Mission: Impossible (HAND; MGA; 1996)

Mission: Impossible (GBC, N64, PS; Infogrames; 1998) – from 1996 film, loosely follows plot. Tom Cruise not involved (voice or likeness). GBC version had an “Agent Action Kit” (not part of the game) – a name and address organizer that uses the cartridge’s battery backed-up memory and also allowed the user to send messages to friends.
Mission: Impossible – Operation Surma (GBA, GC, PS2; XB; Atari; 2003) – player is Ethan Hunt, but likeness definitely not based on Tom Cruise. Ving Rhames, playing computer expert Luther Stickell in the films, does lend both his likeness and his voice talent.

Mission: Impossible 3 (Mobile; Gameloft; 2006)

El Misterio del Nilo (C64, MSX, PC; Zigrurat; 1986) – unlicensed Spanish adaption of The Jewel of the Nile (1985). Deviates significantly from film.

Monster Bash (PBL; Williams; 1998) – features Universal characters like Creature from the Black Lagoon, Dracula, Wolf Man, Frankenstein, Bride of Frankenstein, and The Mummy

Monster House (DS; THQ; 2006)

Monsters, Inc.: Scream Arena (GC; THQ; 2002)

Monsters, Inc.: Scream Team (PS; Sony; 2001)

Monsters vs. Aliens (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; 2009)

Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life (PC; Panasonic Interactive; 1997)

Monty Python & The Quest for the Holy Grail (PC; 7th Level; 1996)

Moonwalker (AMI, C64, MSX, PC, ST; Keypunch; 1989)

The Mummy (GBA, GBC, PC, PS; Konami; 2000) – 1999 film

The Mummy Returns (GBC, PS2; Universal Interactive; 2001)


Muppet Treasure Island (APL, PC; Activision; 1996)


Navy Seals (AMI, C64, ST; developed and published by Ocean Software; 1990)

Navy Seals (GB; Ocean; 1991) – Sidescrolling platformer through five stages.

The Neverending Story (A8, APL, C64; Datasoft; 1985)
The Neverending Story II (AMI, C64, PC; Merit Studios; 1990)

New Ghostbusters II (NES (Famicom); developed and published by HAL Laboratory, Inc.; 1990) – Japan and Europe only release. Loosely follows the film’s plot. Louis Tully (Rick Moranis) is a playable character. Top-down adventure, 2 player co-op.

Night at the Museum: The Battle of the Smithsonian

Night at the Museum: The Battle of the Smithsonian (WEB) – Matching Pairs and Spot the Difference

The Nightmare Before Christmas (Mobile; Walt Disney; 3/12/2004)

A Nightmare on Elm Street (C64, NES, PC; Westwood Associates for Monarch Development; 1989)

Night Watch (PC; Nival Interactive for CDV Software Entertainment USA; 2006) – RPG. The game uses clips from the movie in the introduction sequence.

No Escape (GEN, SNES; Psygnosis, Sony Imagesoft; 1994)

Nosferatu the Vampyre (C64; Design for Macmillan; 1986) – more inspired by Stoker’s Dracula than by Murnau’s film

Oliver & Company (AMI, PC, ST; developed and published by Coktel Vision; 1989)

Open Season (DS, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, Wii, XB, X360; Ubisoft; 2006) – GBA gameplay differs from other versions

Open Season 2 (WEB; Sony Pictures Animation; 2008) – Boog & Elliot’s Match Game, Buddy Darts, and Pinball were featured on the promotional website for the direct-to-video sequel of the original theatrical film.

Over the Hedge (GC, PC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2006)

The Pagemaster (GB, GEN, PC, SNES; Fox Interactive; 1994)

Patton (2600; Twentieth Century Fox) – yet another in a long list of movie adaptations mentioned by Fox but never developed.

Percy Jackson & the Olympians – The Lightning Thief (WEB; Fox; 2010) – A quiz was released to promote the movie, and then two more web games, Demigod Duel and Percy’s Quest, were released to promote the release of the movie on home video.
Peter Jackson’s King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie (DS, GC, PC, PS2, PSP, X360, XB; Ubisoft; 2005) – play as Jack Driscoll and Kong. Limited Collector’s Edition released for PC and PS2 featuring different packaging and including a bonus DVD on the making of the game. According to Metacritic, the DS version was considered one of the worst releases of 2005 for the device.

Upon completion, replaying game and accumulating points allows bonus features to be accessed, including an ending for the game where Kong does not die, created with Jackson’s approval. To unlock the alternate ending, players must earn a total of 250,000 points; other unlockable content includes several Weta Digital concept art galleries, interviews with both Jackson and Phillipa Boyens, an “old movie” filter visual effect, and a King Kong theatrical trailer. After saving the giant ape from death, a player can pilot an airplane and discover Kong back home on Skull Island. “I wanted the game to be able to take the audience a bit further than what the film could,” Jackson said in a statement. “And the final climax of the game gave us an opportunity to do something that the film could not do, which was to have an alternate ending. Obviously everybody pretty much knows how King Kong ends” (Klepek, 1).

The move to Ubisoft – from EA, who had produced the Lord of the Rings games – was done because Jackson was displeased with EA. Mr. Jackson, said close associates, chafed at his dealings with EA during the making of the Lord of the Rings games. “Electronic Arts was not interested in input from the filmmaker,” but later marketed the games as if he were closely involved, said Ken Kamins, Mr. Jackson’s manager. An Electronic Arts spokeswoman said in response that the access given by Mr. Jackson for the game was “above and beyond expectations.” Jackson’s decision was also motivated by his admiration for Ubisoft’s Beyond Good and Evil (2003). For King Kong, Ubisoft’s staff increased to 80, said Xavier Poix, a studio director and producer of the King Kong game, which was budgeted at more than $20 million. Jackson received a percentage of the game’s profits, an unusual arrangement for a movie director. Jackson provided the designers with descriptions about what the scenes should look like as well as drawings of animals he had created specifically for the game. The Ubisoft development team was able to read rough drafts of the film’s script (but not take any notes) while they were developing the script for the game.

Peter Pan: The Motion Picture Event (GBA; Saffire for Atari; 2003)

Phantom Fighter (NES; Marionette for Fujisankei Communications; 1990) – based on a Hong Kong film Mr. Vampire (1985)

Piglet’s Big Game (APL, GBA, GC, PC, PS2; Disney Interactive; 2003) – based on Piglet’s Big Movie (2003), front picture of game box shows this title with “Movie” crossed out and “Game” written in. Point-and-click adventure game.

Pinocchio (GB, GEN, SNES; Buena Vista Games; 1995) – Disney

Pirates of the Caribbean (GBA, PC, XB; Akella for Bethesda Softworks; 2003) – has little to do with the feature film but is actually very similar to Akella’s previous effort, Sea Dogs, a PC
game that featured open-ended role-playing elements, ship-to-ship combat, swashbuckling, trading, and more. The player takes the role of Nathaniel Hawk.

**Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl** (GBA; TDK Mediactive; 2003)

**Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest** (DS, GBA, PSP; Buena Vista; 2006)

**Pirates of the Caribbean: The Legend of Jack Sparrow** (PC, PS2; Bethesda Softworks; 2006)

**Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End** (2007) – Narratively spans the preceding film as well as the titular one. Players can choose from Captain Jack Sparrow, Will Turner, and Elizabeth Swann to navigate through fairly close adaptations of the films’ plots, with some added changes for the boss fights.

**Pirates of the Caribbean Online** – MMORPG. Free to download and free to play, but premium content requires joining the pay service. Disney specifically targeted this game at a teen audience, unlike other MMORPGs which are usually rated “M” for mature content, by keeping the game play toned down.

**Planet of the Apes** (Atari 2600; Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – unreleased prototype. Player progresses through 5 levels (forest, river, village, desert, and caverns) in a quest to escape from the apes and enter the Forbidden Zone. Last level in game attempts to replicate the famous shot of the buried Statue of Liberty.

**Planet of the Apes** (GBA, GBC, PS; 2001/02) – based on Burton film

**Planet of the Apes** (GBA, PC, PS; Visiware for Fox Interactive and Ubisoft; 2001) – Third-person fighter. Released in conjunction with Burton remake, yet follows a completely different story suggested by the original story by Pierre Boulle (most likely due to economic issues related to the licensing of the film, as nothing about the game expressly ties it to the Burton production). The player controls Ulysses, the sole human survivor of a crashed spaceship on an uncharted planet (Earth) ruled by apes two thousand years in the future. Familiar characters like Cornelius and Dr. Zaius make appearances. GBA version is a side-scrolling platformer.

**Planet 51 – The Game** (DS, PS3, Wii, X360; Sega; 2010) – “Target 51” game on DVD of movie.

**Planet 51 – The Game** (WB; 2010) – Whack An Alien, Spot the Difference, Target Practice, Land Chuck’s Spaceship, Planet 51: Online Game, Which Character Are You Most Like?, and Chuck’s Astronaut Training Program.

**Plan 9 From Outer Space** (AMI, PC, ST; Gremlin for Konami and Gremlin; 1992) – Bela Lugosi’s double is mad about being in “the worst film of all time” and vows revenge by stealing the print of the film with plans to colorize it. The player is in the role of a private eye who must recover the missing film reels. Part of the game is analyzing the film (digitized from the original) frame by frame to look for evidence of tampering.
**Platoon** (AMI, APL, C64, NES, PC, ST; Data East; 1987) – ST: The player leads five cohorts through six increasingly hazardous situations: traversing a jungle to blow up a bridge (while keeping an eye out for booby traps and snipers), searching a village for a hidden trap door, navigating through underground tunnels, shooting the guerrilla fighters on sight, finding a safe jungle foxhole before a napalm air strike, and finally using grenades to take out a sergeant who betrayed the platoon. Game factors include morale, hits (the number of “strikes” a player can sustain before becoming “retired in action”), ammunition, and score (Pearlman, 51).

**Platoon** (PC; Digital Reality for Monte Cristo and Strategy First; 2002) – “take part in one of the world’s most groundbreaking wars and its most legendary movie – Platoon!” (box rear)

**The Polar Express** (GBA, GC, PC, PS2; THQ; 2004)

**Police Academy: The Video Game** (NES; Tengen) – according to programmer Steve Woita, the game was about half finished when the project was cancelled.

**Poltergeist** (COCO; Radio Shack; 1982) – licensed from MGM and SLM Entertainment.

**Porky’s** (Atari 2600; Fox Video Games for Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – Considering the source film, this is a fairly tame action adventure that features some locales and characters from the movie. See Chapter 1 for details.

**Predator** (AMI, C64, COCO, NES, ST; Activision; 1989) – licensed from Twentieth Century Fox. Side-scrolling platformer.

**Predator: Soon the Hunt Will Begin** (MSX, NES; developed and published by Pack-In-Video; 1987)

**Predator 2** (AMI, C64, PC, SMS, ST; Arc Developments for Konami; 1990) – rail shooter.

**Predator 2** (GEN, GG; Teeny Weeny Games for Arena Entertainment; 1992) – seven levels based on the film in a third-person isometric views. Stills from the film do introduce the levels.

**Predator: Concrete Jungle** (PS2, XB; Eurocom Entertainment for Sierra Entertainment; 2005) – third-person. Copies some visual effects from films.

**The Princess Bride Game** (Mac, PC; Worldwide Biggies; 2008) – collection of five mini-games based on 1987 film. Some actors reprise their roles and lend their voices to the game, including Mandy Patinkin and Wallace Shawn.

**The Princess and the Frog** (WEB; 2010) – Bayou Adventure, Tiana and the Tiara, Louis’s Band on the Bayou, Mama Odie and Dr. Facilier: Magic Gumbo Mix, Love at First Bright

**Princess Minerva** (PC, SNES, TG16; developed and published by Riverhill Software; 1994) – based on anime film
Psycho (AMI, C64, PC, ST; Starsoft Development for Box Office; 1988)

The Punisher (PC, PS2, XB; THQ; 2005) – an attempt to reconcile differences between ongoing comic series and film which was based on series. Actor Thomas Jane provides voice but character likeness is derived from comic. (Mobile version released in 2004.)

Puss N’ Boots: Pero’s Great Adventure (NES; Shouei System for Electro-Brain; 1990) – based on anime film by Toei Animation

Raiders of the Lost Ark (Atari 2600; Atari; 1982) – under license from LucasFilm Ltd. Fairly complicated action adventure game. See Chapter 1 for more details. Indiana Jones appears as an Easter Egg in Atari’s E.T. game (both titles programmed by Howard Scott Warshaw). A headline from the 07 June 1982 edition of the Wall Street Journal announced “Atari and Lucasfilm Plan Joint Venture In Video Products – Warner Communications Unit And Movie Firm to Market ‘Raiders’ Game Cartridge”.

Rambo (HAND; Acclaim; 1988) – LCD game, packaging and unit features 2 pictures of Rambo

Rambo (MSX, NES; developed and published by Pack-In-Video; 1985)

Rambo: First Blood Part II (PC; Angelsoft for Mindscape; 1985)

Rambo: First Blood Part II (C64, Ocean Software; 1986)

Rambo: First Blood Part II (SMS, Ocean Software for Sega; 1986) - stars John Rambo and his partner Zane. The two can team up or go solo to rescue hostages from concentration camps in the jungle. Mainly a reworked version of Ashura.


Rambo III (ARC; Taito; 1989)

Rambo III (AMI, C64, MSX, PC, ST; Ocean Software for Taito; 1988) – approximates plot of movie

Rambo III (GEN, SMS; Sega; 10/21/1989) – SMS version compatible with light gun

Ratatouille (DS, GBA, GC, Mobile, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Heavy Iron Studios; 06/26/2007) – Features voice talent from the film. Gusteau’s Gourmet Game included on DVD film release. Subtitled Food Frenzy for the DS.
**The Real Ghostbusters** (Amiga, ARC, C64, ST; Data East for Activision; 1987) – arcade game based on the cartoon show that was based on the film (the success of previous game version was also instrumental in getting the cartoon show into production). Console versions ports of arcade game.

**Record of Lodoss War** (DC; Conspiracy Entertainment; 2001) – derived from anime

**Reign of Fire** (GBA, GC, PS2, XB; BAM! Entertainment; 2002)

**Reservoir Dogs** (PC, PS2, XB; Eidos; 2006) – “Relive the events surrounding the movie – experience the fallout from the botched heist first hand and guide the robbers from the cops to safety. Find out how Mr. White made good his escape, see where Mr. Pink stashed the diamonds, learn how Mr. Blonde picked up Officer Marvin Nash, experience the fates of Mr. Blue and Mr. Brown, and sort out the whole sorry mess as Nice Guy Eddie.” Plot unfolds in non-chronological order, switching between different events and characters. Psycho/Professional (P/P) Rating system: player’s style is monitored and ratings calculated on moralistic choices. Only member of cast to lend voice was Michael Madsen (he licensed his likeness as well). Features the full original soundtrack from the film.

**Resident Evil: Degeneration** (MOBILE; Capcom Mobile; 2008) – based on CG film of the same name, which is part of the Resident Evil game franchise (not the live action films which were themselves adapted from the games). Like the film, the game begins in Raccoon City as players assume the role of Leon Kennedy fighting an airport overrun with undead. The CG film also functioned as publicity for the Resident Evil 5 game.

**Resident Evil: Extinction – Convoy Game** (WEB; created by Sony Pictures; 2007) – Ten levels: half drive through desert, running over zombies and picking up a supply (weapons, fuel, survivors) designated on the map, half using a series of weapons to shoot progressively larger waves of zombies.

**Return of the Jedi** (ARC; Atari; 1984) – Four different stages in the game. Intercutting between Imperial fleet and Endor assault in the same way as the film.

**Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes** (Atari 2600; Fox Video Games for Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – appropriated idea from Attack of the Killer Tomatoes and a rare non-film branded game from Twentieth Century Fox in the midst of their film releases; version for XE mentioned in 1983 CES press kit

**Richie Rich** (PBL; Data East; 1994) – tie-in with Caulkin film. Only one unit manufactured.

**Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves** (GB, NES; Virgin Games; 1991) – Adventure game with RPG elements. Perspective changes from overhead to sidescrolling view based on game mode (standard, dueling, or melee). According to a *Nintendo Power* (#26) article, “Virgin Games, Inc. plans to follow up the movie with a video game as action-packed as the film. Even though the actual actors and actress’s [sic] likenesses are not in the game, it does follow the script almost
scene for scene. […] It’s almost like you’re in the movie!" Licensing issues with Warner Bros. prevented use of the actor likenesses in the game.

**RoboCop** (ARC; Ocean Software for Data East; 1988)

**RoboCop** (AMI, APL, C64, COCO, MSX, NES, PC, ST; Tandy; Data East; 1988) – side-scroller, licensed from Orion, ported from arcade

**RoboCop** (GB; Ocean Software; 1990)

**RoboCop** (GBC; Titus Software; 2001) – GBA version, subtitled *The Future of Law Enforcement*, was cancelled.

**RoboCop** (PBL; Data East; 1990)

**RoboCop** (HAND; Remco) – billed as “Electronic Arcade Game” and looks like a miniature arcade cabinet (with tiny joystick) but actually LCD pinball. Remco also released an “Electronic Pinball” version that looked like a miniature pinball game.

**RoboCop** (PC, PS2, XB; Titus Software; 2003) – FPS

**RoboCop 2** (ARC; Nihon Bussan/AV Japan; 1991)

**RoboCop 2** (AMI, C64, GB, NES, ST; Special FX for Ocean; 1990)

**RoboCop 2** (HAND; MGA)

**RoboCop 3** (C64, GEN, GG, NES, SMS, SNES; Probe Software for Ocean Software; 1992) – side-scrolling platformer.

 Relation to Film: Loosely follows the film’s basic plot, using key locations and characters from the film, primarily the bosses.

 Packaging: The cover shows RoboCop flying and shooting a very big gun, much as he does late in the film.

 Summary: Players control RoboCop as he tries to clean up the streets of Old Detroit (and, eventually, the boardrooms of OCP) by shooting everything that moves, including dogs, robots (non-humanoid robots as well as robot ninjas/samurai), and the usual thugs. Ammunition is limited but can be bolstered by power-ups. RoboCop can also use different kinds of ammunition, such as single-fire, machine gun, triple-shot, and missiles/grenades. The arm angles he can use to fire are limited to straight up, straight forward, and forty-five degree angle forward, making targeting more difficult. Power-ups include ammunition, weapon modifications, and health. Some levels involve use of the jet pack that RoboCop uses in the film.
RoboCop vs. The Terminator (GB, GEN, GG, SMS; Virgin Interactive; 1993) – based on Dark Horse comics which use film characters. NES version cancelled.

Robots (DS, GBA, GC, XB; Vivendi Universal; 2005)

The Rocketeer (NES; Bandai America; 1991)

The Rocketeer (PC, SNES; Atari Europe; 1991)

Rocky (PBL; Gottlieb; 1982)

Rocky (SMS; Sega; 1987)

Rocky (GBA, GC, PS2, XB; Ubisoft; 2002)

Rocky Interactive Horror Show (PC; On-Line Entertainment; 1999) – more related to stage production than film. Features Richard O’Brien and Christopher Lee.

Rocky: Legends (PS2, XB; Ubisoft; 2004)

Rocky Super Action Boxing (CV; Coleco; 1983) – requires special Super Action controllers to play. A 1983 Coleco press kit hyped a 2600 port called Rocky Battles the Champ, which was never released.

Rugrats Go Wild (GBA, PC, PS2; THQ; 2003)

Rugrats in Paris (N64, PC, PS, PS2; Mattel; 2002)

Rugrats: The Movie (GB, GBC, PS2; THQ; 1999)

The Running Man (AMI, C64, ST; Emerald Software for Grandslam Entertainment; 1989)

SAW: The Video Game (PC, PS3, X360; Zombie Studios for Konami; 2009) – survival horror genre. Narratively situated between the first two films in the series. During the first film’s finale, Detective David Tapp is shot in the chest while attempting to track down the killer, Jigsaw. According to the game, Tapp was captured by Jigsaw and transported to Whitehurst Asylum, a booby-trapped, abandoned mental institution. The game begins with Tapp regaining consciousness and confined in a head-bursting trap. Via real-time onscreen cues, the player must rotate the thumbstick accurately and press buttons to escape while the camera shakes and zooms in, mimicking the visual style of the movie. The rest of the game is played from a third-person perspective as Tapp is pursued by other characters determined to get the key to their freedom that Jigsaw has implanted in Tapp’s now-patched chest wound. Includes many puzzle mini-games. The player is also tasked with saving other NPCs, such as Amanda from the Saw movies. Rewards given for solving clues, many of which are necessary to escape from traps and advance the storyline. Originally developed by Brash Entertainment, which went bankrupt, and so the game was considered a dead project until it was acquired by Konami.
SAW II (PS3, X360; Zombie Studios for Konami; 2010) – like its predecessor, this game is set narratively between the first two theatrical films.

Scarface: The World Is Yours (PC, PS2, Wii, XBOX; Radical Entertainment for Sierra Entertainment; 2006) – functions as a sequel to the De Palma film by imagining that Tony Montana did not die in the mansion shoot-out, but lived and had to rebuild his empire. This scenario was conceived by screenwriter David McKenna, who wrote for such films as American History X (1998), Get Carter (2000), and S.W.A.T. (2003). Vivendi Universal released a 2 disc Collector’s Edition for the PS2; the 2nd DVD featured a making-of documentary, a walkthrough of the game with the producer, cast videos and interviews, and additional features. While Al Pacino declined to record new dialogue, Steven Bauer (Manolo in Scarface) did, and he was joined by James Woods, Wilmer Valderrama, Tommy Lee, Cheech Marin, and Tommy Chong among others. This game was released at the same time as the two-disc Scarface: Platinum Edition DVD.

Scarface: The Rise of Tony Montana (MOBILE; G5 Mobile for Starwave; 2006) – Starwave is owned by Disney.


Scene It? Box Office Smash! (X360; Microsoft Games; 2008) – console version of the DVD title

Scene It? Lights, Camera, Action (X360; Microsoft Games; 2007) – console version of the DVD title

Scene It? Twilight (DS, Wii; A2M for Konami; 2009) – console version of the DVD title

Scooby-Doo: The Motion Picture (GBA; THQ; 11/15/2001)

Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed (GBA, PC; THQ; 3/11/2004)

The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian (GC, PS2) – likeness and voice talent of The Rock. The player controls of the character from the film, Mathayus, through an original storyline created specifically for the game. The plot here is positioned as a prequel to the film; Mathayus is still training to be an assassin in the warlike society of Akkad.

The Scorpion King: Sword of Osiris (GBA; Universal Interactive; 2002)
Scott Pilgrim vs. The World: The Game (PS3, X360; Ubisoft; 2010) – based on the film which is based on a series of comic books, both of which were aesthetically influenced by video games. Available via download on the PlayStation Network and Xbox Live Arcade. Side-scrolling beat ‘em up. Opening cinematic explains conceit of game with additional story sequences between levels. Game is purposefully designed to resemble the 8-bit era.

Sea Monsters (DS, Wii; Atomic Planet Entertainment for Destination Software; 2007) – based on the National Geographic CGI documentary

Seven Samurai 20XX (PS2; Dimps Corporation for Sammy Studios; 2004) – third-person 3D action game. Not directly modeled on Kurosawa’s film, but involved the cooperation of Kurosawa Production and the late director’s son, Hisao. Additional contributions from artist/designer Moebius and composer Ryuichi Sakamoto.

The Shadow (PBL; Bally; 1994)

The Shadow (SNES) – was set to be a beat-em-up similar to Streets of Rage and coincide with the release of the movie. The player could activate special moves like invisibility and speed running. This title was cancelled.

Shadowfax (C64; 1983) – titled after Gandalf’s horse from The Lord of the Rings, although this is not its film source. Originally begun by Mike Singleton as a British horse race betting game called Computer Race. Singleton based his game’s graphics directly on the time-lapse photography stills done by Eadweard Muybridge for Leland Stanford (DeMaria, 345).

Shaq-Fu (AMI, GB, GEN, GG, SNES; EA; 1994)

Shark Jaws (ARC; Horror Games; 1975) – unlicensed exploitation of Spielberg film, particularly through emphasis in title on “JAWS” in a much larger font than “Shark”. The player is a deep-sea diver trying to catch small fish while avoiding being eaten by a great white shark. Atari created a subsidiary, Horror Games, as a marketing cushion “established exclusively to protect Atari, Inc. from potential lawsuits brought on by Jaws’ copyright holder, Universal Pictures” (Burnham, 124). Universal did not pursue any legal action.

Short Circuit (C64; developed and published by Ocean; 1987)

Shorts (WEB; 2009) – search three images to find the missing Rainbow Rock. Linked to website for movie.

Shrek (XB; TDK Mediactive; 2001)

Shrek: Extra Large (GC; TDK Mediactive, Digital Illusions; 10/31/2002) – Enhanced and redesigned for the GameCube, the character-based platformer features 10 levels, new and old twisted fairy tale characters, and over 15 brand new cut scenes. Players will explore fairy tale lands and complete over 50 missions in order to rescue Princess Fiona.
Shrek: Fairy Tale Freakdown (GBC; TDK Mediactive; 2001)

Shrek: Hassle at the Castle (GBA; TDK Mediactive; 2002)

Shrek: Reekin’ Havoc (GBA; TDK Mediactive; 2003)

Shrek Super Party (GC, PS2, XB; TDK Mediactive; 2002)

Shrek Super Slam (DS, GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2005)

Shrek Swamp Cart Speedway (GBA; TDK Mediactive; 2002)

Shrek Treasure Hunt (PS; TDK Mediactive; 2002)

Shrek 2 (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2004) – PC version different from consoles

Shrek 2: Beg for Mercy! (GBA; Activision; 2004)

Shrek 2: Team Action (PC; Activision; 2004)

Shrek the Third (PC, PS2, PSP, Wii, X360; Activision; 2007)

Shrek Forever After (DS, PS3, Wii, X360; 2010) – Play as Shrek, Fiona, Donkey, and Puss In Boots.

Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger (PBL; Gottlieb; 10/1978) – based on the 1977 film. Gottlieb at the time was also owned by Columbia Pictures, who was the distributor for the film. D. Gottlieb & Co. was a Columbia Pictures Industries Company from 1977-1983.

Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas (PC; Atari; 2003) – based on animated film

Six Pack (Atari 2600; Twentieth Century Fox) – proposed, never developed, mentioned in game catalogs.

Small Soldiers (GB, PS; EA; 1998)

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Atari 2600; Atari; 1983) – unreleased prototype; splash screen titles game as Disney’s Snow White. Player must guide the Seven Dwarfs through a mine, across a river, and into an enchanted forest in a search for Prince Charming who must save Snow White from the evil queen.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (GBC; Ubisoft for Disney Interactive; 2001)
Soldier Boyz (PC; Hypnotix, Inc. and Motion Picture Corporation of America Interactive for DreamCatcher Interactive; 1997) – based on Motion Picture Corporation of America distributed by HBO. FMV shooter.

Sorcerer’s Apprentice (Atari 2600; Atari; 1983) – based on the sequence from Fantasia (1940) featuring Mickey Mouse. The game instructions fold out to make a 15" x 21" poster featuring a large picture of Mickey Mouse wearing the Sorcerer's hat and gesturing to two living brooms, each carrying two buckets of water up stairs.

Soulcalibur IV – Yoda is a playable character only in the X360 version. Darth Vader is a playable character only in the PS3 version. Both characters come with their own exclusive stages: Yoda fights on an X-Wing docking ship (with the Death Star visible in the background) while “Duel of the Fates” plays, and Vader fights in the Death Star itself as “The Imperial March” plays (using non-Star Wars characters on the Star Wars levels cues the film’s main title theme to play). In both versions, players can unlock the Starkiller character (Darth Vader’s Secret Apprentice) from Star Wars: The Force Unleashed by beating the Arcade Mode of the game using either Yoda or Darth Vader.

A Sound of Thunder (GBA; Mobius for Bam! Entertainment; 2005) – isometric action adventure. Based on the film which was based on a Ray Bradbury short story. Proposed versions for the GameCube, PS2, and Xbox were all cancelled (not surprising since principal filming on the feature was completed in 2002 but the film languished in post-production because the original production company went bankrupt; on the $52 million budget, the film only posted a domestic gross of $1,890,000 and an foreign gross of approximately $6 million). The GBA version was first demoed in 2002.

Space Camp (MSX; Pack-In-Video; 1986)

Space Jam (PBL; Sega; 1996)

Space Jam (PC, PS, SAT; Acclaim; 1996)

Spacemaster X-7 (Atari 2600; Sirius Software for Twentieth Century Fox; 1983) – Space shooter that bears little resemblance, aside from name, with source film. Possible XE version planned.

Speed Racer (DS, PS2, Wii; Sidhe Interactive and Virtuous Games for Warner Bros. Interactive; 2008) – based on the live-action Wachowski brothers film. Purposefully eschewing any sort of narrative relationship, reportedly to avoid perceived movie tie-in trends, this game is solely a racing game featuring the Mach 5 and a futuristic setting. According to WB Interactive representative Jeff Nachbaur, the game takes place one year after the events of the movie, during the next season of the World Racing League; this is established in an opening cinematic. Actors such as Matthew Fox, Christina Ricci, and Emile Hirsch provided voice talent for their characters from the film in the game. The Wachowski brothers had several meetings with the game developers about the title. Interestingly, John Gaeta – the visual effects supervisor for both Speed Racer and The Matrix films – met regularly with the design staff and had considerable
input on the visuals of the game as well as car movement. Can be used with the Wii Wheel peripheral. Due to the short development cycle, versions for the X360 and PS3 were not attempted. The DS and Wii versions were released at the same time as the theatrical film, while the PS2 version came out when the film was released on home video.

*Spice World* (PS; Psygnosis; 1998) – generally tied into the entire Spice Girl phenomenon and released around the time of the movie. Vocals provided by the Spice Girls.

*Spider-Man: The Movie* (GBA, GC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2002) – Raimi film

*Spider-Man 2* (DS, GBA, GC, PC, NGE, PS2, PSP, XB; Activision; 2004) – from the Raimi film. Notable as a rather good film to game adaptation, in many ways better than the source film.

*Spider-Man 3* (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Activision; 2007) – Collector’s Edition available for PS3, Special Edition available for PS2. Action takes place in New York as the player battles villains from the film – including Venom, New Goblin and Sandman – as well as franchise enemies not seen in the movie, such as The Lizard, Scorpion, and Kingpin.

*Spider-Man 3* (Mobile; Sony; 2007) – side-scrolling 2D platformer.

*The Spiderwick Chronicles* (DS, Mobile, PC, PS2, Wii, X360; Sierra; 2008) – play as Jared, Mallory, Simon, or Thimbletack; combination of fighting and puzzle-solving. After completing the game, developer Stormfront Studios (who also did *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*) unfortunately had to shut down after over 20 years of making video games due to economic reasons.

*Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron – Forever Free* (PC; THQ; 2002)

*Spongebob Squarepants: The Movie* (GC, PS2, PS2, XB; THQ; 2004)

*Spy Hunter: Nowhere to Run* (PS2; Midway; 2006) – game based on film which is originally based on an arcade game. Released to promote film, which as of 2010 still has not been produced. Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson provided his voice and likeness of super-spy Alex Decker in the game before he started working on the film.

*Spy Kids Challenger* (GBA; Disney Interactive; 2002)

*Spy Kids Learning Adventure: Mission: The Underground Affair* (APL, PC; Brighter Minds; 2004)

*Spy Kids 2: Mega Mission Zone* (PC; Disney Interactive; 2002)

*Spy Kids 3D: Game Over* (GBA, PC; Disney Interactive; 2003)

*The Spy Who Loved Me* (AMI, C64, PC, ST; Domark; 1990)
**Stargate** (GB, GEN, GG, SNES; Acclaim; 1994 (GB), 1995) – side-scrolling platformer

**Starship Troopers** (PBL; Sega; 1997)

**Starship Troopers** (PC; Microprose; 2000) – originally subtitled *Terran Ascendancy*. Third person squad command; narrative intersects with film. Many design elements copied from film.

**Starship Troopers** (PC; Strangelite; 2005) – FPS. Many design elements copied from film.

**Starship Troopers: Roughnecks** (MOBILE; Ojom/J2ME; 2007) – licensed from Sony Pictures Digital, title references the CGI television show which was derived (especially visually) from the Verhoeven film.

**Star Trek** (ARC; For-Play; 1972) – unofficially lifted the name and suggestive cabinet art for its space battle game which was a copy of *Computer Space* (1971).

**Star Trek** (PBL; Bally; 1979) – released the same year as *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (or as the promotional flyer advertises, “Star Date: 1979, Destination: Profit”). Costumes worn by Kirk et al stylistically similar to film, not television series, but no indications of express tie-in with theatrical film.

**Star Trek: Conquest** (PS2, Wii; 4J for Bethesda Softworks; 2007) – combination of turn-based conquest with RTS combat. Features very minor characters and recycles musical score from an earlier Bethesda Star Trek game.

**Star Trek: D-A-C** (APL, PC, PS3, X360; Naked Sky Entertainment for Paramount Digital; 2009) – Deathmatch-Assault-Conquest. Top-down space shooter. Player chooses to fight for Starfleet or the Romulan Empire. Includes new Enterprise flagship class of ship from film as well as music and sound effects from the movie. Ships may be upgraded. Online multiplayer with team deathmatch, conquest, assault, and survival. Box – “Inspired by the new major motion picture from Paramount Pictures” – and uses the same image from the final theatrical onesheet poster. Arcade style play without a narrative; this, as the developer claims, is to prevent the biggest mistake that movie tie-in games make which is to have the game follow the plot of the film. DLC released November 2009 when film released on Blu-Ray.

**Star Trek: The Electronic Game** (HAND; Coleco; 1980) – based on 1979 film. Packaging and mock-up created but never commercially released.

**Star Trek: Generations** (HAND; MGA; 1996)

**Star Trek: Generations** (PC; Microprose; 1997)

**Star Trek: Generations – Beyond the Nexus** (GB, GG; Absolute; 1994)
**Star Trek: The Mobile Game** (Mobile; EA Mobile; 2009) – tie-in with the J.J. Abrams film. Space shooter where player controls the USS Enterprise to fight against the famous races from the Star Trek universe, occasionally aided by famous characters from the series who appear to help the player.

**Star Trek: The Motion Picture** (VEC; GCE; 1982) – licensed from Paramount. The only film title for the home vector-based system known as the Vectrex. This game is extremely similar to Sega’s *Star Trek: Strategic Operations Simulator*, which was a vector game, and GCE had licensed a number of other vector games for home conversion. Why this game was retitled is unclear, especially since *Star Trek II* was in theaters. Released as *Star Ship* in the European market.

**Star Trek: The Motion Picture** (2600; Milton Bradley; 1983) – unreleased. Announcements appeared for the game, including a sell sheet from their 1983 CES press kit, but that appears to be the extent of the project. While Milton Bradley was not new to the video game industry – having produced the handheld Microvision unit in 1979 and distributed the Vectrex in 1982 – they were another latecomer to publishing software for the 2600 and only released two games in 1983 for the system.

**Star Trek Online** (PC; Cryptic Studios for Atari; 2010) – MMORPG. Some design elements derived from the theatrical films. Leonard Nimoy and Zachary Quinto (as an emergency medical hologram) provide game narration. Ordering the digital deluxe edition from atari.com included an exclusive “KHAAAN!” Emote: An unforgettable moment from the second *Star Trek* film that allows players to relive Kirk’s fury, with the timeless cry… “KHAAAN!”

**Star Trek Phaser Strike** (MV; Milton Bradley; 1979) – Target shooting LCD game. Licensed from Paramount and released the same year as the first theatrical film (released as *Phaser Strike* after license expired); title uses modern *Star Trek* logo. “Battle attacking Klingon warships!”

**Star Trek: Strategic Operations Simulator** (ARC; Sega; 1982) – licensed from Paramount. At this point, the Star Trek franchise had moved to theatrical films, and this game sought to tap into the popularity of the films, even though the actual game itself had already been around as an unlicensed Star Trek adaptation from the days of mainframe computing. One of the most popular was designed by Don Daglow, who would become CEO of Stormfront Studios, in 1971 on the Pomona College mainframe (DeMaria, 51). It would be adapted in 1985 by Cygnus Software as *Star Fleet I: The War Begins*. Font in marquee title is from *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979) and cabinet art features the redesigned Enterprise from the first two theatrical films. This game premiered just after the theatrical release of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* on 04 June 1982 and was heavily promoted. “Paramount teamed up with Sega for a number of special events, supplying real life *Star Trek* stars including George ‘Sulu’ Takei, who – when not attending *Star Trek* conventions – made arcade appearances across the country” (Burnham, 363). A modified cockpit version of the arcade cabinet allowed the player to sit in the “captain’s chair”. 
As a point of video game trivia, reputedly *Gorf* (1981) by Midway was originally intended to be a tie-in with *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, but when the game designers read the film’s script, they realized that the concept would not work as a video game and changed its title.

**Star Trek: Strategic Operations Simulator** (2600, 5200, C64, CV, TI, VIC20, XE; Sega; 1983) – home port of arcade game

**Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan Video Game Watch** (HAND; Collins) – licensed from Paramount for a retitling of *Space Attacker* by Nelsonic and *Cosmic Wars* by Majestron.

**Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan** (2600; Sega; 1983) – mentioned in the August/September 1983 issues of *Video Games Player* but never developed.

**Star Trek III: The Search for Spock** (2600; Sega; 1983) – mentioned in the August/September 1983 issues of *Video Games Player* but never developed.

**Star Trek V: The Final Frontier** (PC; Mindscape; 1989) – consists of various arcade style games loosely combined together to form a sort of action/adventure game.

**Star Wars** (ARC; Atari; 1983) – First-person flight sim using vector graphics. Produced in a regular upright model and a cockpit version with stereo surround sound. Released two months after *Return of the Jedi* in theaters (Sellers, 132). Features authentic audio effects digitized from the film including voice samples of Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, Han Solo, and Obi-Wan Kenobi in addition to the *Star Wars* theme song. Originally began as a game called *Warp Speed* designed by Ed Rotberg. When Rotberg left Atari, his game was overhauled to produce *Star Wars*; according to Rotberg, most of the game elements he created were changed, except for the game controller (DeMaria, 90). The player has to dogfight with TIE Fighters en route to the Death Star, using a yoke controller scheme instead of the typical joystick, and then has to fly the trench run from the film. The trench was somewhat different from that of the film, and as the game became more difficult, an intermediate level was put in that involved a run across the surface of the Death Star to reach the trench. High scoring players were inducted into Princess Leia’s Rebel Guard. Atari produced a promotional theatrical style poster for the game (sold to arcade operators at 10 for $20).

In an internal memo dated 15 December 1982, Lucasfilm responded to Atari’s initial proposal for the game, providing a list of 7 points to eliminate inconsistencies between the game and the *Star Wars* universe, including an explanation of how X-Wings are piloted, the mechanics of stars, an in-game rationalization of how deflector shields are charged, and clarification of terms such as “parsecs” and “warp drive” (which is, as the memo points out, a term from *Star Trek*).

In the prototype phase, Atari conducted some focus group testing on 24 January 1983. 3 groups of players – 15-19 year-old males, 20-35 year-old males, and 17-30 year-old females – provided some interesting feedback about the game. Although the reception was generally positive, especially to the digitized voice samples, they did raise the question as to “why the game is being designed so long after the movie release date”. All groups saw this game as appealing most to
male gamers. Another request was for a “sit-down cabinet to add to the realism and fantasy element” and the game was eventually released in both cockpit and upright cabinet styles.

According to an interoffice memo dated 02 August 1983, Atari may have been considering a Star Wars II game that would have essentially been linked games, in a sort of primitive multiplayer system, to give players a squadron attack experience.

While working on The Temple of Doom, Spielberg borrowed the coin-op from the Lucasfilm offices (given as part of the licensing deal with Atari) and eventually ordered one for his own Los Angeles office (Smith, 21).

*Star Wars* (HAND; Tsukuda; 1983)

*Star Wars* (NES; Namco; 1987) – Sidescrolling platformer. Released only in Japan for the Famicom. Loosely based on some events that take place in the 1977 film, taking several drastic liberties with the overall story and character meetings, for example, mixing in Hoth from The Empire Strikes Back and planets such as Kessell and Iscalon.

*Star Wars* (PBL; Sonic (Spanish division of Sega); 1985 or 87?)


*Star Wars* (PBL; Data East; 1992)

*Star Wars* (ARC; Sega; 1993) – set during events in Return of the Jedi

*Star Wars* (Atari ST; Broderbund; 1988) – was it released? Supposedly based on Death Star trench sequence

*Star Wars* (GB, GG, NES; Lucasfilm Games for JVC Digital Studios; 1991) – game follows the plot of the movie; however, areas have been expanded or reworked. For example, on the Game Gear version, the player starts as Princess Leia looking for R2-D2 in the Rebel Blockade Runner. Some of the Tatooine sequences are skipped, Luke finds R2-D2 in a Jawa Sandcrawler, the game shifts into first-person for an escape through an asteroid field outside of Tatooine, and Luke deactivates the tractor beam on the Death Star.

*Star Wars: The Arcade Game* (2600, 5200, C64, CV, XE; Parker Bros.; 1983) – port of the arcade game by Atari. The Colecovision version gives the best graphical representation of the arcade conversion. Plays an approximate, but nevertheless recognizable, version of the *Star Wars* theme song.

*Star Wars Arcade* (S32X; Sega; 1994)

*Star Wars Battlefront* (PC, PS2, XB; LucasArts; 2004) – Marketing campaign tied to release of original trilogy on DVD. Mobile version released in 2005.
**Star Wars Battlefront II** (PC, PSP, XB; LucasArts; 2005) – Development accelerated to take advantage of marketing for *Episode III*. Iconic battles from the original trilogy are playable. Developer Free Radical was working on a third installment to the series, but the status is unknown as the company has shut down; some character images were leaked to the internet, including a Sith version of Obi-Wan. *Battlefront III* would have featured a high-res, new-gen version of the Battlefront proprietary engine, allowing players to segue from ground to air combat.

**Star Wars Battlefront II: Renegade Squadron** (PSP; LucasArts; 2007) – features the planet Boz Pity, referenced in *Episode III* but never seen.

**Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron** (DS, PSP; LucasArts; 2009) – “In the single-player campaign of Elite Squadron, players will take on the role of X2, a clone trooper spawned from Jedi Master DNA and tasked with taking on his evil twin brother, X1.” Players can also access ground vehicles and spaceships. DS supports 4 person multiplayer, PSP supports 16 person multiplayer. This game progresses through both the original trilogy and the prequel films. Some playability issues involving one pad to control both player movement and the camera, poor collision detection, and AI problems.

**Star Wars: Bounty Hunter** (GC, PS2; LucasArts; 2002) – this title marks the first collaboration between LucasArts, ILM, and Skywalker Sound (the shared resources were limited to in-game cinematics rather than a true sharing of technical expertise). Players take control of Jango Fett.

**Star Wars Chess** (PC, SCD; Software Toolworks; 1993) – version of *BattleChess*.

**Star Wars: The Clone Wars** (GC, PS2, XB; Lucas Arts, Pandemic; 10/28/2002)

**Star Wars: Clone Wars Adventures** (PC; Sony Online for LucasArts; 2010) – family-friendly MMORPG aimed at kids. Free to play (although premium content will require a subscription fee or Sony Station “cash” for special in-game items). Features Star Wars themed mini-games, including customized lightsaber battles, speeder bike racing and even a collectible card game, online chat, and ability to interact with characters from the television show (many voiced by the same actors).

**Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Path of the Jedi** (WEB; 2008) – hosted on Cartoon Network’s website, this game allows the player to control the Twilight, the ship used by Anakin Skywalker, through eight space missions against the Droid Army. Side-scrolling shooter.

**Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Lightsaber Duels** (Wii; LucasArts; 2008) – uses characters (such as Anakin Skywalker, General Grievous, Ahsoka Tano, and Asajj Ventress) and locations (including Tatooine and Teth) from the Star Wars animated feature film (and subsequent television series) set between Episode II and Episode III. Designed specifically to take advantage of the motion-sensing controller on the Wii (although not the MotionPlus attachment). Visual look of game is based on the CGI look of the characters (not the live-action films). Voice actors from the film and television series reprise their roles.
**Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Jedi Alliance** (DS; LucasArts Singapore; 2008) – while based on the CGI television show (derivative of the film properties and set between Episodes II and III), this title is interesting because of the close collaboration between LucasArts Singapore and Lucasfilm Animation. Not only are both under the Lucas umbrella but also they are housed literally in the same hall, which lead to sharing of assets, ideas, and talents. Having both staffs working together means greater collaboration between the two properties. Third-person action-adventure game where the player controllers two characters working in combination. Wireless play enabled. Voice actors from the film and television series reprise their roles. The narrative is a story exclusive to the game.

**Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Path of the Jedi** (WEB; 2008) – hosted on Cartoon Network’s website, this game allows the player to control Ahsoka Tano through a variety of multistage missions divided into three chapters: Shadow of Grievous, Assassin’s Snare, and Ambush on Vassek. Features characters and locations from the animated feature film and television series. Side-scrolling platformer.

**Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Republic Heroes** (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; 2009) – set between seasons 1 and 2 of the television show (which is set between Episodes II and III of the prequel trilogy). With the exception to DS (being developed by the Lucasfilm Animation Singapore games team in conjunction with The Clone Wars production staff at Lucasfilm Animation), all of the console versions follow the same storyline. Jedi and Clones battle the Separatists and defend the Republic. Players can choose to play Jedi or Clone Troopers. Voice talents from the series will reprise their roles. The television show uses newsreel style “from the frontlines” report that helps bring the viewer up to speed on the show, and the game utilizes a similar feature to keep the player knowledgeable of specific objectives as well as general events in the Clone Wars universe. Visual design evocative of show’s animation style. Moving from scene to scene employs the wipe edit popularized by the films. Player cannot control camera, which can result in some frustration; continue points appear as glowing lights every 20 steps or so of movement.

**Star Wars: Dark Forces** (APL, PC, PS; LucasArts; 1995) – followed by sequel and novelizations of game. Main character Kyle Katarn, created specifically for the game, was so well-received that he was worked into more of the Star Wars canon. Instead of licensing the, at the time very popular, Doom engine, LucasArts creates its own “Jedi” engine for the game.

**Star Wars: Death Star Escape** (HAND; Tiger; 1995)

**Star Wars Demolition** (DC, PS; LucasArts; 2000)

**Star Wars Droids – Escape from Aaron** (PC, 1988) – based on Droids cartoon. Mix of RPG, puzzle solving, and platforming.

**Star Wars: Droidworks** (PC; 1998) – educational title for children. Assembled droids are put into learning-based missions.
Star Wars Electronic Battle Command (HAND; Kenner; 1979)

Star Wars Electronic Laser Battle (HAND; Kenner; 1979)

Star Wars Empire at War (PC; LucasArts; 2006) – RTS. Followed by a sequel, Forces of Corruption.

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (Atari 2600, INTV; Parker Bros.; Spring 1982) – licensed from LucasFilm Ltd. and considered the first official video game licensing of a film property. See discussion in Chapter 1. Player controls a snowspeeder to repel AT-AT attack on Hoth. Game plays recognizable version of the Star Wars theme song.

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (AMI, C64, PC, ST; Domark; 1988)

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (GB, NES, SNES; Lucasfilm Games for JVC; 1992) - player is Luke Skywalker and uses the blaster, lightsaber and force power skills. Locations include Hoth, Echo Base, Dagobah, Bespin, and Cloud City. Notable characters include Darth Vader, Boba Fett, R2, Yoda, and Obi-Wan.

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (HAND; MGA; 1991)

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (MOBILE; G5 Software for THQ Wireless; 2007)

Star Wars: Episode I (PBL; Williams; 1999) – the final game produced by Williams Electronics Games, Inc. after deciding to cease pinball operations

Star Wars: Episode I – Anakin’s Speedway (PC; LucasArts; 1999) – for children

Star Wars: Episode I – Battle for Naboo (N64, PC; LucasArts; 2000)

Star Wars: Episode I – The Gungan Frontier (PC; LucasArts; 1999) – for children

Star Wars: Episode I – Jar Jar’s Journey (PC; LucasArts; 1999) – for children

Star Wars: Episode I – Jedi Power Battles (DC, GBA, PS; LucasArts; 2000)

Star Wars: Episode I – Obi-Wan Adventures (GBC; LucasArts; 2000)

Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace (PBL; Williams; 2000) – hybrid

Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace (PC, PS; LucasArts; 1999) – conscious decision by LucasArts to only release for these two platforms due to the cost of N64 cartridges.

Star Wars: Episode I – Pit Droids (PC; LucasArts; 1999) – for children
Star Wars: Episode I – Racer (APL, DC, GBC, N64, PC; LucasArts; 1999) – much like Parker Bros. had done in distilling an entire Star Wars movie into one key scene (the snowspeeder vs. AT-AT battle on Hoth), Racer reduces the entire first prequel to the pod races. In the US, the N64 was bundled with the racing game in a special Star Wars limited edition.

Star Wars: Episode I – Yoda’s Challenge (PC; LucasArts; 1999) – for children

Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones (GBA; THQ; 2002)

Star Wars: Episode II – The New Droid Army (GBA; LucasArts; 2002)

Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith (DS, GBA; Ubisoft; 2005)

Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith (PS2, XB; LucasArts; 2005) – released on May 5, 2005, two weeks before the film. The game followed the movie’s storyline, integrating 12 minutes of film footage into scenes in the game. Included an alternate ending, which involved Anakin killing Obi-Wan; after Obi-Wan’s death, Anakin proceeds to kill Darth Sidious, and takes over the galaxy. Interactive environments. Cooperative multiplayer. Unlockable bonus missions.

Star Wars: Flight of the Falcon (GBA; THQ; 2003)

Star Wars: Force Commander (PC; LucasArts; 2000) – first Star Wars RTS.

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; developed and published by LucasArts; 2008) – Star Wars: The Force Unleashed is a multi-franchise project developed and published by LucasArts along with Dark Horse Comics, Lego, Hasbro, and Del Rey; LucasArts also collaborated with Industrial Light & Magic on the title. It is canonized as official, Lucas-approved Star Wars fiction. It consists of a video game, a tie-in novel, action figures, a comic book, a reference book and a role-playing game supplement, and other items. The game takes place 7 years after the rise of the Galactic Empire, after the end of Star Wars: Episode III but before Episode IV. A player controls Starkiller, Darth Vader’s secret apprentice, sent by Vader to hunt down Jedi (after the first mission on the Wookie homeworld of Kashyyyk where the player controls Vader, who discovers his apprentice as a young boy). Other planets like Felucia II, from Clone Wars, and Raxus Prime, from Episode III, are playable locations. Actor Sam Witwer provides voice and likeness for the Apprentice. Catherine Taber as Princess Leia. Uses the third-party Euphoria engine combined with those of Havok and Digital Molecular Matter. This is the first Star Wars game designed by LucasArts expressly for the current generation of consoles and thus functions as a type of test for what the most advanced technology for the time can do.

According to game producers Haden Blackman and Brett Rector (in The Art and Making of The Force Unleashed), selecting and developing the locations for the game was an intense and lengthy process that included considerations such as: a mix of new and familiar locations and to include places from both trilogies; each location had to be recognizable as a Star Wars world or site; a depiction of the rise of the Empire and the evolution of the galaxy during the dark times
between Episodes III and IV, so many of the locations needed to support an Imperial presence; from an art standpoint, each location needed to look and feel different; and each location needed to be a compelling Force playground for core gameplay, including worlds with lots of destructible objects and naturally recurring dangers, such as cliffs, toxic rivers, or jets of carbonite gas.

Reflecting its status as a part of the Star Wars saga, The Force Unleashed was featured during Spike TV’s Star Wars presentation in April 2008, which marked the first time that all six movies were presented together on a basic cable network. Viewers saw special The Force Unleashed segments, each with an exclusive announcement or new game play footage. A demo was made available for the PlayStation Network and Xbox Live Arcade and broke the record for fastest time to 1 million downloads. The PS2 version includes a “Jedi Trials” section of various tests of skill in the Jedi Academy on Coruscant. The PSP version includes “historical missions” and a multiplayer Duel mode. The Wii version has a different Duel mode and makes use of motion control for lightsabers and Force pushes. The game will also allow for downloadable content through the PlayStation Network and Xbox Live. Playable character models will include Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Ki-Adi-Mundi, and Kit Fisto; these can be used in the campaign mode. A second download includes a new single-player mission modeled after an exclusive level found on PSP and PS2 versions of the game. A cell phone version by Universomo was released by THQ Wireless in September 2008.

Despite mixed reviews, the game sold 1.5 million copies in less than one week upon initial release. It became the fastest selling Star Wars game and sold 7 million units worldwide. It won the WGA Award for outstanding achievement in writing for videogames. The Ultimate Sith Edition combines the basic game with all subsequent DLC.

Speaking about GameStop’s promotion of game exclusives: “LucasArts has a very collaborative relationship with GameStop,” explained Mary Bihr, vice president of global publishing at LucasArts. “We work together to select the best programs to support the launch of a product. Often, because of the strength of our brands, we can work on special offers that give our fans something special if they preorder at GameStop. [We’ve] created action figures that celebrate our game, such as the special The Force Unleashed action figure given away exclusively at GameStop” (Oxford, 6).

This game originally began as a new Star Wars concept called Smuggler, working an illegal trade in an Imperial-dominated galaxy, which morphed into Scum and Villainy, which in turn changed during planning into The Force Unleashed. The Force Unleashed also drew upon ideas from another unproduced game, Rebel Warrior, with the player assuming the role of a Wookie leading a campaign of insurrection on Kashyyyk; Lucas vetoed the idea on the grounds that the Wookie language would not work well for a game interaction.

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II (DS, PC, PS3, Wii, X360; LucasArts; 2010) – story continues as players once again assume the role of the devastatingly powerful Starkiller, Darth Vader’s secret apprentice, and is set during the largely unexplored era between Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith and Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope. At the opening of
the sequel, a clone of Starkiller (or is he really a clone?) escapes from a holding cell on Kamino, the water planet seen in *Attack of the Clones* (the planet Dagobah is also a destination). After his escape, Starkiller goes to track down his love interest, Juno Eclipse, from the first game, while rebel chief Rahm Kota plots to use this “new” Starkiller as a weapon against the Empire. Although Starkiller dies in the “good” ending of *The Force Unleashed*, the developers enjoyed the character so much that they wanted to bring him back (and briefly considered using the “evil” ending, which ultimately produced some DLC content instead) and came up with this narrative twist. Force powers are expanded on, and Starkiller can now wield dual lightsabers.

In addition to the AI system being rewritten, the game engine has been upgraded, with an overhauled streaming system, new lighting, and physics.

According to the game’s executive producer and lead writer, Haden Blackman, “We’re constantly referencing other movies and games when we’re trying to get a point across. We have a kind of short hand. If I say, ‘I want his reaction to be like Roy Scheider in *Jaws* when he first sees the shark’ everybody knows what I’m talking about. There’s a moment we touch on in the story – this is one of my favorite moments – when Starkiller has a vision of Juno and she passes right through him and fades away. And I wanted his reaction to be reminiscent of the moment in *Poltergeist*, where the mother of Carol Anne, the girl who’s disappeared, feels her daughter pass through her. She closes her eyes and can smell her daughter around her. I wanted to get that same emotional punch” (Stuart, 4).

**Star Wars: Galactic Battle** (HAND; Tiger; 1995)


In 1988, Trintex (which would later become online service provider Prodigy) approached Lucasfilm Games about designing a *Star Wars* game for a million people. Unfortunately the idea for such an MMO was ahead of its time and beyond the scope of the existing technology, much like Lucasfilm’s idea for *Habitat*.

**Star Wars Galaxies Trading Card Game: Champions of the Force** – the first online version of the Star Wars trading card game. *Nightsister’s Revenge* expansion released.

**Star Wars: Imperial Assault** (HAND; Tiger; 1995)
**Star Wars Intimidator** (HAND; MGA; 1995)

**Star Wars: Jedi Arena** (Atari 2600; Parker Bros.; 1983) – Overhead view of one or two Jedi using their lightsabers to defend against a training droid and reflect its attacks to the opponent. Uses paddles. Plays *Star Wars* theme.

**Star Wars: Jedi Knight – Dark Forces II** (LucasArts; 1997) – player resumes the role of Kyle Katarn. Player could use both Light and Dark Force powers, but eventually had to make a choice that narratively resulted in one of two distinct endings. Followed four months later (1/31/1998) by *Mysteries of the Sith* expansion pack. Features Mara Jade, who was first introduced in the Expanded Universe.

**Star Wars: Jedi Knight – Jedi Academy** (APL, PC, XB; LucasArts; 2003) – debate as to which ending of game should be regarded as canonical

**Star Wars: Jedi Knight II – Jedi Outcast** (APL, GC, PC, XB; LucasArts; 2002)

**Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter** (PS2, XB; LucasArts; 2002) – featured new Jedi starfighter from *Episode II* even though the film was several months away from theatrical release.

**Star Wars Jeopardy** (PC; LucasArts; 1999)

**Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic** (APL, PC, XB; LucasArts; 2003)

**Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords** (PC, XB; LucasArts; 2004) – a sequel was proposed but discarded after development of story, environment/world design, and creation of characters, items, and quests.

**Star Wars: Lethal Alliance** (DS, PSP; LucasArts; 2006) – players must steal the Death Star plans.

**Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi** (PS; LucasArts; 1997) – first fighting game in the *Star Wars* franchise, something players had been actively calling for, but were disappointed due to horrible control issues. Shortly after the Battle of Yavin, the Emperor employs the services of a deadly young woman named Arden Lyn, master of the ancient martial art of Teras Kasi, to eliminate the key heroes of the Rebellion, requiring Luke Skywalker and others to face her and her evil allies directly in a number of locales from the various worlds visited in the original trilogy.

**Star Wars Math: Jabba’s Game Galaxy** (PC; LucasArts; 2000)

**Star Wars Monopoly** (PC; 1997)

**Star Wars: The New Emperor** (PC; LucasArts; 1997) – put into development but unreleased. Narratively situated after the end of *Return of the Jedi*. C-3PO is sent around the galaxy as a spy to investigate rumors of a new Emperor. Planned use of bluescreen for live-motion capture. Projected canceled due to overruns on *Grim Fandango*. 
Star Wars: Obi-Wan (XB; LucasArts; 2001) – initially positioned as a follow-up to Jedi Knight, but switched to a parallel of Episode I’s timeline, ending with the Darth Maul duel. Originally in development for PC but canceled.

Star Wars: The Old Republic (PC; Bioware for LucasArts; 2011) – MMORPG set 300 years after the period of the Knights of the Old Republic games. Players can choose to play as Jedi, Sith, or a variety of other Star Wars character types (Imperial Agent, Jedi Consular, Sith Inquisitor), including determining their path down the light or dark side of the Force. Four basic classes each feature an Advanced option, allowing for eight possible choices. Customizable starships are available to players as rewards earned at higher levels. Features PvP action localized to certain worlds.

Star Wars Racer Arcade (ARC; Sega; 2000)

Star Wars: Rebel Assault (APL, 3DO, PC, SCD; LucasArts; 1993) – released only on CD; considered a killer app for promoting CD-ROM drives. First Star Wars title to feature full motion video. Uses some digitized speech, sound effects, and music from the movies. Levels include Beggar’s Canyon, Hoth, and the assault on the Death Star. See chapter 2 for additional information.

Star Wars: Rebel Assault II (APL, PC, PS; LucasArts; 1995) – subtitled The Hidden Empire

Star Wars Rebellion (PC; LucasArts; 1998)

Star Wars: Republic Commando (PC, XB; LucasArts; 2005) – Game artist Greg Knight: “We took film elements and tried to reimagine them from the perspective of a stormtrooper.” A proposed sequel, Imperial Commando, was canceled with only concept paintings produced.

Star Wars: Republic Commando – Order 66 (Mobile; THQ Wireless; 2005)

Star Wars: Return of the Jedi (AMI, C64, PC, ST; Domark; 1988)

Star Wars: Return of the Jedi – Death Star Battle (2600, 5200, XE; Parker Bros.; 1983) – Space shooter wherein the player must guide the Millennium Falcon through waves of TIE Fighters (and the occasional Imperial Shuttle carrying Darth Vader) before proceeding to the Death Star (which, although in the process of being constructed, still can fire a lethal death ray). Two-player mode, and some graphical enhancements (such as with warp speed), added for the 5200 version.

Star Wars: Return of the Jedi – Ewok Adventure (2600; Parker Bros.; 1983) – unreleased prototype. Originally called “Revenge of the Jedi: Game I”; a prototype box with this title exists (cover painting commissioned by Parker Bros. from Tim Hildebrandt). Player controls hang-gliding Ewok fighting the Empire on the Endor moon. According to programmer Larry Gelberg, his decision to introduce some innovation in the control scheme of the game (essentially appropriating the standard method used in flight sims, pushing forward on the joystick would
cause the glider to dive down, pulling back would pull the glider up) caused the game to be shelved as the management could not figure out how to play the game during the testing phase. Gelberg’s recollection of the licensing and development cycle is particularly interesting:

PB had negotiated with Lucasfilm for rights to build video games based on the upcoming Return of the Jedi film. So Ray “Raymo” Miller, Michelle (don’t recall last name) from Marketing, and I flew out to San Rafael, signed all kinds of non-disclosures, and got to read the script while the film was in production. - well, a “safe” version of the script - one without the Luke/Leia sibling connection (but we deduced that over Mai-Tais that night). We got to see some concept artwork and production stills. We then went back and came up with 3-4 game concepts. I kind of latched onto the Ewok hang-gliding thing since I had been hang-gliding once or twice and thought it was really cool. As we all know now, there is only about 2-3 seconds of Ewok hang gliding footage in the movie, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Raymo came up with the Breakout-style Death Star Battle game.

One of the restrictions that Lucasfilm put on us was that we weren't allowed to kill Ewoks; that's why when they get shot out of the sky, they shake themselves off and go find another hang glider. Pity. I would really have liked to kill Ewoks. (Stilphen, 3)

**Star Wars: Return of the Jedi** (HAND; MGA; 1991)

**Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith** (Mobile; THQ Wireless; 2005)

**Star Wars: Rogue Leader – Rogue Squadron** (GC; LucasArts; 2001)

**Star Wars: Rogue Squadron** (N64, PC; LucasArts; 1998) – incorporates elements from the Expanded Universe with the inclusion of the First Battle of Mon Calamari from the comic book series *Dark Empire*.

**Star Wars: Rogue Squadron III – Rebel Strike** (GC; LucasArts; 2003)

**Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire** (N64, PC; LucasArts; 1996) – canonized as official, Lucas-approved *Star Wars* fiction. Franchise of the game expanded through a novel, comic books, a soundtrack, and many toys.

**Star Wars Starfighter** (ARC; Tsunami Visual Technologies, Inc.; 2003)

**Star Wars: Starfighter** (PC, PS2; LucasArts; 2001)

**Star Wars: Starfighter Special Edition** (XB; LucasArts; 2001)

**Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing** (PS2; developed and published by Lucas Learning; 2001) – PC version cancelled. *Star Wars* version of *Mario Kart*. 
**Star Wars: TIE Fighter** (APL, PC; LucasArts; 1994) – The sequel to *X-Wing* picks up just after the Battle of Hoth from *The Empire Strikes Back*. Working for the Empire – the first such game that allowed the player to do so - the player completes various tasks around the galaxy before turning to the dominant narrative concerning a growing internal threat to the Empire from two rogue Admirals, one who sells his services to the Rebellion and the other who attempts to overthrow the Emperor. The story progresses through events to end just before the Battle of Endor in *Return of the Jedi*. *TIE Fighter* includes a number of cameo appearances, including Emperor Palpatine (the player can complete certain special mission objectives to gain favor with the Emperor) and Darth Vader (who joins the player for one mission). Followed by two expansion packs: *Defender of the Empire* and *Enemies of the Empire*.

**Star Wars: Trench Run** (CELL; Infrared5 for THQ Wireless Inc.; 2009) – iPhone App, utilizes tilt controls. Features two main play scenarios: flying in the trench, and dogfighting with TIE fighters high above the Death Star surface. 3-D graphics based on the original *Star Wars* movie. Authentic *Star Wars* music and sound effects combined with real movie footage for complete immersion into the *Star Wars* universe. Mission Mode features storyboards, music and dialogue from the original *Star Wars* movie.

**Star Wars Trilogy** (PBL; Sega; 1997) – Special Edition version released in 1998

**Star Wars Trilogy Arcade** (ARC; Sega; 1998)

**Star Wars Trilogy: Apprentice of the Force** (GBA; Ubisoft; 2004)

**Star Wars: X-Wing** (APL, PC; LucasArts; 1993) – Set a few months prior to the events in *Star Wars: A New Hope*. The player is involved with helping the Rebel Alliance conduct salvage operations, gather intelligence, and ambush Imperial forces. The action moves to the interception of the Death Star plans, prompting the player to help deliver the plans to Princess Leia. From there, the player joins the search for the location of the Death Star. In expansion packs for the game – *Imperial Pursuit* and *B-Wing* – the player must help the Rebel fleet evacuate their base on Yavin IV after the destruction of the Death Star and then protect the fleet as it searches for a new base. The game concludes with the rebels moving into the Hoth System, thereby setting the stage for the events in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

**Star Wars: X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter** (PC; LucasArts; 1997) – originally conceived as a multiplayer fusion of the first two games in the series, it eschewed the strong story elements in favor of multiplayer gameplay and a disconnected series of single player missions. Many fans complained about the lack of narrative and LucasArts introduced the *Balance of Power* expansion pack, which includes a series of both Imperial and Rebel missions along with cut scenes in the style of the first two games.

**Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance** (PC; LucasArts; 1999) – takes place before and during *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. The player is Ace Azzameen and initially involves transport missions. Eventually Ace freelances for the Rebel Alliance. As the story progresses, the player shifts to the role of Lando Calrissian, flying the Millennium Falcon in the game’s final missions that recreate the Battle of Endor.
**Star Wars: Yoda Stories** (GBC, PC; LucasArts; 1997) – The first *Star Wars* title aimed specifically for young children. GBC version released in 2000.

**The Stepfather** (WEB; 2010) – photorealistic point and click. Used to promote home video release.

**Stranglehold** (PC, PS3, X360; developed Midway Chicago and Tiger Hill Entertainment, published by Midway for PS3 and X360, by ND GAMES for PC; 08/2007) – John Woo collaborated with developers on this title. His film *Hard Boiled* included on a special collector’s edition of the PS3 title ($69.99 MSRP, $10 more than the regular edition), utilizing the extra space on the Blu-Ray disc to store a high-def version of the film (Blu-Ray offers 50GB of storage to the 9GB on a DVD). PC version ported from X360. A new triad gang, the Golden Kane, starts to openly threaten the Dragon Claw and its leader James Wong. His daughter Billie Wong once had a relationship with Inspector Tequila and became pregnant. One day both Billie and her child are kidnapped by the Zakarov Syndicate. Tequila starts investigating against the orders of Captain Ed Lee. Chow Yun-Fat reprises his role as Inspector “Tequila” Yuen, providing likeness and voice work, and players can engage in many of his signature moves (including rail sliding, two pistol shooting, and slow motion called “Tequila Time”). Promotional items sent to gaming journalists included a pair of cigarette lighters mocked up to look like realistic Berettas.

**Street Fighter – The Movie** (PS, SAT; Capcom; 1995) – a game based on a film based on a game (the first such instance, too). Features digitized graphics from film. FMV.

**Stuart Little: The Journey Home** (GBC; Activision; 2001)

**Stuart Little 2** (GBA, PC, PS; Infogrames; 2002)

**St. Valentine’s Day Massacre** (2600; Twentieth Century Fox) – had Fox actually developed this 1967 gangster picture into a game, it would have prefigured much of the influence of gangster oriented games to come.

**Suburban Commando** (AMI, C64, PC; Alternative Software; 1993) – Hulk Hogan vehicle

**The Sum of All Fears** (GBA, GC, PC; Ubisoft; 2002) – cover art for GC does not show film’s theatrical poster unlike GBA and PC versions. PS2 release cancelled.

**Superman III** (XE; Atari; 1983) – proposed title; box created but game remained undeveloped

**Superman Returns** (DS, PS2, XBOX, X360; Electronic Arts; 11/2006) – having missed the theatrical release of the film, the game was released to coincide with the home video release of the film. “Inspired by the blockbuster movie and more than 60 years of the DC Comics universe” (according to the game manual), the game enhances the basic plot of the film with additional villains from the comic book, explained between missions through cut scenes that indicate how these villains appear in relation to the events that transpired in the film. Because
Superman is essentially invulnerable, gameplay revolves around using his powers to prevent Metropolis (which has a health bar) from being destroyed. Player can choose the *Superman Returns* style of Superman or one of several other costume variations from the comic book. Missions based on scenes from the film are interspersed at preset intervals in the game; these are all in-flight missions in which the player must dodge obstacles and reach a goal before time runs out. Some film imagery and dialogue featured in the game as narrative waypoints. For the console versions, Kevin Spacey, Brandon Routh, and Kate Bosworth all reprise their roles from the film. According to Metacritic, the DS version was considered one of the worse releases of 2008 for the device. Sales of this title, at 400,000 units, were considered a commercial disappointment.


*Super Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (SNES; developed by Sculptured Software, Inc. and LucasArts Entertainment Company LLC for JVC Musical Industries, Inc.; 1993) – Side-scrolling platformer with flying missions. Player controls Luke Skywalker (initially using lightsaber and blaster, with Force powers added later) through nine stages of the Hoth mission, before switching to Han Solo for three stages of the Rebel Base, and then back to Luke for three stages on Dagobah. In the final mission, Cloud City, control alternates between Han Solo and Chewbacca for the first three stages, and Luke for four through seven. Some key imagery from the film is recreated in cutscenes. There are some departures in the game from the original story in the film, notably at the end when Luke somewhat defeats Darth Vader (although Han Solo is still frozen in carbonite and taken away by Boba Fett). Rereleased in 2009 for the Wii Virtual Console.


*Surf's Up* (GC, PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Ubisoft; 2007) – aimed at a younger audience

*Sword and the Sorcerer* (2600; Coleco) – only announced

*The Taking of Beverly Hills* (PC; Off the Wall for Capstone; 1991) – based on Columbia Pictures film

*The Tale of Desperaux* (DS, PC, PS2, Wii, X360; Atari; 2008)


*Taxi Driver* (XB; Papaya Studio for Majesco; 2006) – third-person action game. Licensed through Sony Pictures Consumer Projects. Announced in 2005 and scheduled to release with the 30th anniversary of the film in 2006, the project was canceled in January 2006.
Ken Gold, vice president of Marketing for Majesco, said, “We look forward to developing a game that remains true to the spirit and style of the movie, and embodies a total entertainment experience.”

“We’re excited to be working with Majesco on a game for Taxi Driver,” stated Mark Caplan, Executive Director, Interactive, Sony Pictures Consumer Products. “We’re confident they, together with Papaya Studio, will create a game that successfully makes the transition from film to the video game world.”

“The game picks up where the movie left off,” said Papaya Studios in a statement. “As Travis reminisces about his bloody rescue of the young prostitute Iris, it seems the violent catharsis and recovery that ended the film has turned his life around. However, a terrible sequence of events finds him unable to stop the murder of someone very special to him. His ensuing quest for revenge finds Travis Bickle once again on an inexorable path towards violence. Players will fight their way through the mean streets of New York City in Travis’s bid for vengeance, to bring the ruthless rain that will clean the scum off the streets once and for all” (Thorsen, 1).

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (GBA; Ubisoft; 2007) – based on CGI film, plays differently from consoles

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (GC, PC, PS2, Wii, X360; Ubisoft; 2007) – based on CGI film

*The Terminator* (PC; Bethesda Softworks; 1990)

*The Terminator* (GEN, GG, SCD, SMS; Probe Software for Virgin Games; 1992)

*The Terminator* (NES, SNES; Mindscape; 1992/1993)

*The Terminator: 2029* (PC; Bethesda Softworks; 12/31/1992)

*The Terminator: Dawn of Fate* (PS2, XB; Paradigm Entertainment for Infogrames; 10/02/2002) – action takes place in 2027 and functions as prequel to 1984 film. Introductory FMV recreates certain combat scenes from the film. Player controls Kyle Reese and two other characters in missions to aid John Connor in his assault against Skynet and the time travel machine. The look of the future world draws heavily on the visual design of those scenes from the film. The game also licensed the soundtrack from the original *Terminator* motion picture.

*The Terminator: Future Shock* (PC; Bethesda Softworks; 1995)

*The Terminator: Rampage* (PC; Bethesda Softworks; 1993) – FPS

*Terminator: Salvation* – (ARC, PC, PS3, X360; Warner Bros. Interactive; 2009) – rated Teen for violence. While various cast members contributed voice work, Christian Bale refused to lend his likeness or voice to the game. Narratively set two years before the theatrical film. Third-person shooter that includes vehicle-based chase scenes. A light-gun arcade game was also released. Released in conjunction with the film. The game is set in the year 2016, which is two
years before the events of the movie. Developed by GRIN Studios, published by Equity Games, co-published by Evolved Games and distributed by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment. According to *Salvation* film director McG, when it came to input on the game, he provided “A lot, the video game follows the Barnes character. We’re monitoring the game, and it has a great deal to do with this story. […] And that video game better be good, or I’m gonna be pissed” (Shuman, 1). Two main characters from the movie, Blair Williams and Barnes, are central characters in the game and feature both the voice and likeness of the actors.

The Halcyon Co., which owns the rights to the *Terminator* franchise, allowed the game developers to work under the same roof as the film crew. “It meant that the game developers, art directors and designers could literally sit in the same production studio as the film guys,” said Cos Lazouras, Halcyon Games development vice president. “They worked collaboratively side by side. They had access to [the film’s director] McG, who was intrinsically involved in the game.” According to Lazouras: “Games based on movies often aren’t very good for a number of reasons and the last outing of *Terminator* games was no exception. However, *The Chronicles of Riddick*, a previous game I worked on also proved that games based on movies do not necessarily have to suck. When we, at Halcyon games, and the game’s developer GRIN, approached the design and direction of *Terminator Salvation* it was paramount that if the intellectual property was stripped out it would still be a fantastic game in its own right. We had no interest in developing a game that solely utilized the marketing of the film, but instead the brand was applied to greatly enhance the gameplay experience, atmosphere, and scenario. The playthrough of the game is driven by the plot and characters, which obviously need to be supported with cutscenes. However, excluding the intro, all cinematics are created using in-game assets and GRIN’s proprietary engine to retain the flow between gameplay and narrative. The game is not open world but it does take place in a massive and greatly varied environment” (Shuman, 3).

**Terminator 2: The Arcade Game** (AMI, GB, GEN, GG, PC, SMS, SNES; Acclaim; 1991) – home port of arcade game.

Relation to Film: Users play as reprogrammed Cyberdyne Systems Series 800 Model 101 Terminators (the model played by Arnold Schwarzenegger in the film series), assisting John Connor's resistance in destroying SkyNet, then protecting the young Connor from the T-1000 sent to kill him in the past. Locations seen in the film, such as the future battlefield and the “present day” Cyberdyne building, serve as backdrops for the shooter action. Many enemy T-800's, all looking like Schwarzenegger, attack the player in various levels.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The image of a Terminator endoskeleton from the film dominates the box cover alongside the image of a leather-clad and sunglass-wearing Schwarzenegger hefting a rifle, as seen in many of the film’s promotional materials.

Summary: A simple bit of gameplay with minimal plot, *T2: The Arcade Game* is a light gun rail shooter with one or two players controlling Arnold-model Terminators. Players must shoot Terminator endoskeletons, Hunter-Killer aircraft, and missile tanks on the future battlefield, being careful not to shoot the human soldiers in the process. The bulk of the game takes place in the machine-dominated future, with the human forces making their final attack on SkyNet.
Eventually, players get sent back to the past (the film’s present) to protect John Connor and get to shoot up the Cyberdyne building and the T-1000. The endgame sequence changes depending on how much of Cyberdyne players destroy. If players blow up enough equipment, they are told that Judgment Day has been averted, but if they have not destroyed enough, then they get the message that Judgment Day may still happen. In either case, the T-1000 is the final boss, and that fight features several key moments from the film, such as freezing it with liquid nitrogen, splitting its head in two with shotgun blasts, and knocking it into molten metal with a grenade launcher.

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (ARC; Midway; 1991) – shooter

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (PBL; Williams; 1991) – first pinball game to use a video mode, which is a mini-game played on a dot-matrix display (DMD) and incorporated into the action and scoring of the traditional pinball game. Promotional flyer for the game advertised that it “brings to life the history-making feature film with a dramatic score, staggering light and sound effects, breathtaking graphics, and speech from the one and only Arnold Schwarzenegger!” When a player earns an extra ball, the DMD graphic stating to “shoot again” is a clip of the T-1000 opening a door and getting blasted with a shotgun by The Terminator. One of these was offered as a contest prize by Williams Electronics Games in conjunction with *Starlog* magazine.

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (HAND; Acclaim) – LCD platformer. The player must fight the T-1000 in the steel mill. Packaging advertises “Based on the Blockbuster Movie!” MSRP $19.99. 24 of these were offered as contest prizes by Acclaim Entertainment in conjunction with *Starlog* magazine.

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (GB; B.I.T.S. for LJN; 1991) – different from console versions

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (AMI, C64, GEN, GG, PC, SNES, ST; LJN for Ocean; 1991)

Relation to Film: Starting with the T-800, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger in the film, appearing in the film’s present day, the game follows the film’s basic plot point for point, visiting nearly every important location, such as the truckstop, the Voight residence, the shopping mall, the mental hospital, Dyson’s home, the Cyberdyne building, and the steel mill. Cut scenes between levels use dialogue similar to that in the film as well as digitized portraits of the actors.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box front cover features the image of Schwarzenegger as he appears for most of the film, dressed in leather, wearing sunglasses, and sitting astride a motorcycle. The image is the same as one used in promotional materials for the film, but unlike in most of those, the rifle he holds in his right hand is not visible. The back cover, in addition to screen shots from the game, shows a still from the film of the T-1000 exploding, right before it falls into the molten metal.

Summary: While initially appearing as a typical platform shooter, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* makes some interesting changes to the usual platform patterns. The player’s main mission is to protect John and Sarah Connor from the T-1000 (which pops up periodically, essentially as a
repeating mid-level boss) and other enemies; secondarily, the player must destroy certain items to insure that Cyberdyne never develops SkyNet, and hence Judgment Day will not come to pass. Besides being essential to the plot, the Connors also perform key roles in the gameplay; for instance, John is necessary to open electronic locks, and Sarah shoots enemies on her own.

Except for explosives, the player’s shots will not hurt the Connors, but they are vulnerable to all enemy fire. If one of the Connors is reduced to zero health, the player may resuscitate the fallen human by sacrificing the T-800’s health. Some vehicle levels feature a top-down perspective, and health cannot be regenerated on these. The player has only two lives, and the second life starts out at fifty percent health (this is explained in game terms as the auxiliary power source kicking in); health boosters are available, though. Players have access to two primary attacks with infinite uses: a kick and a low-powered pistol. Secondary weapons have limited ammunition, except for the punch, and the player can only carry one secondary weapon at a time, making weapon management a priority (i.e. you don't want to pick up a shotgun when you’re already carrying a minigun, or the more powerful weapon will be lost). Otherwise, the usual platform shooter elements appear, such as weapon and ammunition upgrades, health packs, and explodable crates that drop ammunition or weapons.

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (GG, NES, SMS; Software Creations for LJN; 1991) – 6 levels plus bonus rounds. 18 NES cartridges were offered as contest prizes by Acclaim Entertainment in conjunction with *Starlog* magazine.

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (PBL; Williams; 1991)

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day – Chess Wars** (PC; Capstone; 1993)

**Terminator 3: The Redemption** (GC, PS2, XB; Paradigm Entertainment for Atari; 9/2/2004) - *The Redemption* somewhat closely follows the plot of the *Terminator 3* film, and players again control the Arnold Schwarzenegger model Terminator. In an interesting twist for those familiar with the plot of the film, *Redemption* actually takes a couple of liberties and introduces new plot points that expand on the original story. There are also a couple of other key gameplay elements from the film in *Redemption*, such as the POV “scan mode”. In the *Terminator* films, the vision of the Terminators is represented through a HUD containing statistics and information, including an infrared mode. In *Redemption*, scan mode translates into a temporary shift in the display that mimics this mode from the film (and increases the amount of damage to enemies). The game recreates several chase scenes from the film. The game mixes its own computer-generated scenes in with real film footage, which can be accessed through a special menu (the quality of the sampled scenes is much lower than that of the DVD). Arnold Schwarzenegger lends his likeness and vocal talents to the game, though in a strange twist he apparently only does about half of his character’s dialogue.

**Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines** (PBL; Stern; 2003)

**Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines** (GBA, PS2, XB; Atari; 2003)

**Terminator 3: War of the Machines** (PC; Atari; 2003)
*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2600; Wizard Video; 1983) – Player controls Leatherface to become “the homicidal, chainsaw wielding maniac of your nightmares!” A controversial release at the time.

*The Thing* (PC, PS2, XB; Black Label Games; 2002) – sequel to John Carpenter film. See discussion in Chapter 3.

*The Three Stooges* (ARC; Mylstar; 1984) – Based on the shorts and feature-length films that feature the characters of the same name.

*The Three Stooges* (C64; Cinemaware; 1988)

*The Three Stooges* (NES; Activision; 1989) – ported from Cinemaware release

*The Three Stooges* (GBA, PS; Cinemaware; 2002)

*The Three Stooges: Treasure Hunt Hijinks* (PC; eGames; 2008)

*Thunderbirds* (GBA; Vivendi Universal; 2004) – based on live-action film

*Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas: Oogie’s Revenge* (PS2, XB; CAPCOM for Buena Vista; 10/10/2005)

*Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King* (GBA; TOSE for Buena Vista; 10/10/2005)

*TimeCop* (SNES; Victor Interactive; 1995) - Platforming action across multiple historical periods (fifteen levels). This game acts as a sequel to the film. The original inventor of time travel captures Max Walker (Jean-Claude Van Damme) as Max arrives from correcting alterations to the past and challenges him to a duel across time. The game employs digitized characters (somewhat uncommon for console titles of that era) as stills of the actors, recorded via bluescreen, were used to create all characters and their animations. The game also featured some use of digital vocals.

*Tom and Jerry: The Magic Ring* (GBA; NewKidCo) – based on 1992 direct-to-video animated movie

*Tooth Fairy* (WEB; 2010) – Tooth Sleuth

*Top Gun* (HAND; Konami)

*Top Gun* (ARC; Konami; 1987) – released for the Nintendo Vs. System. A first-person aircraft shoot-em-up game that was based on the film.

*Top Gun* (C64, PC, NES, ST; Ocean Software; 1986) – sold 2 million copies on the NES.
Top Gun (MOBILE; Freeverse; 2009) – iPhone App. Gameplay reminiscent of Afterburner. Maverick returns as an instructor to the player. Features 10 main missions. Player controls the F-22 via tilt on the iPhone’s accelerometer. Features the film’s original theme song and a cover of the popular “Danger Zone” tune.

Top Gun (PS3; 2010) – available via PlayStation Network. Features seven gameplay modes – two for single and five for multiplayer (e.g., team deathmatch, capture the flag) – and the campaign an outline of the movie: players leave flight school to shoot down enemies over the Indian Ocean.

Top Gun, Airstrike 3 (HAND; Konami)

Top Gun: Combat Zones (GBA, GC, PS2; Titus Software; 10/21/2001) – Despite the Paramount license, Top Gun: Combat Zones has little relation to the 1986 blockbuster film from which it also borrows the font and style of the title. Strictly arcade action without any story to the air combat simulation, although Maverick is listed as having the default high scores.

Top Gun: Danger Zone (PC; Konami; 1991)

Top Gun: Fire at Will (PC, PS; MicroProse; 1996) – flight sim

Top Gun: Firestorm Advance (GBA; Titus Software; 2002)

Top Gun: Guts & Glory (GB; Konami; 1993)

Top Gun: The Second Mission (NES; Konami; 1990)

Top Gun: The Second Mission (HAND; Konami)

Torrente (PC; Cinemaware and Virtual Toys for O3 Entertainment; 2001) – player can switch between 1st or Third person as well as English or Spanish. Based on the film Torrente: El Brazo Tonto de la Ley (1998). Anti-hero.


Total Recall (HAND; Acclaim) – “Based on the Schwarzenegger Action-Adventure”; features likeness from theatrical poster

Total Recall (AMI, C64, NES, ST; Acclaim; 1990) – Acclaim used in-theater displays to promote the video game.

The Towering Inferno (Atari 2600; US Games; 1982)

Toy Story (GB, GEN, PC, SNES; Traveller’s Tales for Disney Interactive; 1996)

Toy Story Racer (GBC, PS; Traveller’s Tales for Activision; 2001)
**Toy Story 2** (GBC, PS; Traveller’s Tales for Activision; 1999)

**Toy Story 2 Action Game** (PC; Disney Interactive; 2000)

**Toy Story 2: Buzz Lightyear to the Rescue!** (DC, N64; Activision; 1999)

**Toy Story 3** (WEB; 2010) – Online games available on Disney website ahead of theatrical release. Simple games that can be easily controlled via keyboard: Woody’s Wild Adventure, Woody’s Big Escape, Aliens’ Game, Sarge’s Game, Jessie’s Game, Buzz’s Game, Woody’s Game, Rex’s Game, Hamm’s Game, Slinky’s Game, Toy Story Mania!, and Facebook Claw Game.

**Toy Story 3: The Video Game** (DS, PC, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Disney Interactive; 2010) – released 4 days before the film. Players can choose Buzz, Woody, or Jessie and control that character through key moments from the film, interacting with new and returning characters while visiting locations seen in the film. A new “Toy Box” mode allows players to engage with Andy’s toys in unscripted ways, creating their own stories and earning rewards to be used in the game.

**Toys** (GEN, SNES; Absolute; 1993)

**Transformers: The Game** (PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, X360; Activision; 2007) – special “Cybertron Edition” for the X360 in special packaging, extra content, and bonus disc featuring talent interviews and behind-the-scenes looks at the making of the game. Shia LaBeouf and Megan Fox provided their likenesses and voices, and the voices of Peter Cullen and Frank Welker (Optimus Prime and Megatron in the 1980s television series; Cullen reprised his role in the film, but Welker was replaced by Hugo Weaving as Michael Bay felt that Cullen’s voice had aged too much and no longer matched the new design of Megatron) as well as Keith David (Barricade) and Mark Ryan (Iron Hide).

LaBeouf said, “From the moment I first saw Activision was on set to create video games based on the film, I wanted to be part of this project. I’ve played the game, and it’s awesome. Fans will be able to choose a side – the Decepticons or the Autobots – and explore, and destroy, the world from the movie” (Gaudiosi, 1).

Activision’s Daniel Suarez, who executive-produced the game, said that director Michael Bay and his creative team, headed by production designer Jeff Mann, provided the game developers access to the conceptual material, including the film’s computer graphics to get a sense of scale and movement for the characters.

**Transformers** (DS; Activision; 2007) – came in two editions: Autobot and Decepticon. Play through story as side indicated by edition.

**Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen** (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Activision; 2009) – play as “Autobots or Decepticons, select any available mission and pick from the largest, most
diverse range of playable Transformers - each with their own distinct abilities and weaponry. Set in unique environments across the globe such as Cairo and Shanghai, the game allows players to instantly switch between vehicle and robot modes as they drive, fly, fight and blast their way through intense, pressure-packed levels. After engaging in single player action, players will be able to go online and battle friends in all-new multiplayer modes.”

Veteran game director Joby Otero, chief creative officer at developer Luxoflux Studios, said upgrading the genre's quality has become a primary goal in recent years: “I think Hollywood is communicating with the games industry on a different level now. There’s a recognition that a game’s quality can impact the overall franchise. I think part of the reason is that more of the key creative decision makers grew up as gamers themselves. There’s an understanding of how wrong these things can go” (AP, 1).

(T)Raumschiff Surprise - Periode 1 (PC; Sproing for Take Two; 2004) – point-and-click adventure based on German film. Actors provide voice work.

Trespasser: Jurassic Park (PC; DreamWorks Interactive for EA; 1998)

TRON (ARC; Bally Midway; Summer 1982) – based on Disney film. First arcade game licensed from a film. Player controls Tron through four distinct subgames across 12 levels: Lightcycles, Grid Bugs, Tanks, and the MCP Cone. All four games must be completed before you can advance to the next level. See discussion in Chapter 1.

TRON (HAND; Tomy; 1982) – released in July

TRON (X360; Disney Interactive; 2008) – The 1982 Midway game distributed through Xbox Live. Offers competitive or co-op play to go for the highest score and a mode that features enhanced graphics.

TRON: Deadly Discs (Atari 2600, INTV; Mattel; 1982) – Single-player shooter featuring Tron in an arena setting, using his throwing disc to fight waves of video warriors. INTV version includes aRecognizer boss character. The game was in production at the same time as the movie; the design for the game was based on storyboards and production stills from the film. A version was also produced for the Mattel Aquarius. Predates Discs of TRON in terms of release (although that arcade game was part of the original TRON coin-op but removed). Overlay for controller depicted flying discs. Box features representations from film. The game sold 300,000 copies out of an 800,000 print run (originally to be 350,000 but revised upward by Mattel’s Marketing division). The player has the option of using one or two controllers to direct movement and firing.

TRON 2.0 (PC, XB; Monolith for Buena Vista Interactive; 2003) – First-person shooter with action elements. Xbox version subtitled “Killer App” but bears no relation to the GBA version. Sequel to theatrical film. The game takes place 20 years later after Alan Bradley, the creator of the original Tron program, disappears. The player takes the role of Alan’s son Jet, who enters the world in search of his father. The player must battle digital opponents using guns, rods, grenades, missiles, and the iconic TRON disc. Occasionally the action switches to lightcycle...
races. The game’s look is stylized after the movie. The game includes the voice acting of many actors and actresses who were part of the original movie cast.

**TRON 2.0: Killer App** (GBA; Digital Eclipse for Buena Vista Interactive; 2004) – situated narratively between theatrical film and 2.0 game. Player controls Tron (voiced by Bruce Boxleitner, who also voices Alan Bradley) and investigate security breaches within the game world. Mercury from the previous game reappears.

**TRON: Maze-A-Tron** (INTV; Mattel; 1982) – Single player shooter. Game was in production at the same time as the film. Game play divided into two sections, one involving resetting RAM chips inside a circuit maze and the other battling the Master Control Program (MCP) by shooting matching numbers. Overlay for controller depicted the MCP’s face. Box features TRON as he looks in the film but the rest of the imagery is from the game itself.

**TRON: Solar Sailer** (INTV; Mattel; 1982) – Another hybrid of maze and shooter, the player again is tasked with defeating the MCP, first by shooting enemies in a grid and then by guiding a data unit through a pseudo 3D tunnel to collect transmissions in order to find the Solar Sailer. Features voice synthesis (including Tron, Yori, Alan, BIT, and the MCP), a major selling point for the game and the associated voice peripheral hardware, and an unlicensed portion of the film’s score. French, Italian and German translations of the dialogue were recorded but never used. Game development was delayed and the final product was rushed to meet the release date of 15 October. Overlay released for controller.

**TRON: Evolution** (Propaganda for Disney Interactive; 2010) – fills the gap between the original 1982 film and its 2010 sequel. Narratively the game takes place from 1975 through 2012. Game opens as a utopia, which is destroyed and evolves into the world of **TRON: Legacy**. **TRON 2.0** (as well as certain levels from **Kingdom Hearts 2**) and the **TRON: Ghost In The Machine** comics may be canonical, but they won’t be recognized in **Legacy** or **Evolution** as that content is now regarded as a separate universe. Identity discs in the game now have a number of functions, including projectile, bomb, and grapple. A vehicle designed for the game appears in the film. With the game’s plot being the film’s backstory, the latter will play to the former not just with dialogue, but visuals. The game developers said they would like players to watch the film and understand why **Legacy**’s world is the way it is. Parkour style movement combined with capoeira combat means the action moves fluidly as long as the player is appropriately powered up (through dropped power-ups or contact with white lines in the environment) or misses a move. The game is a hybrid of single and multiplayer action to complete the story; the multiplayer action may be skipped in an offline mode (replacing the action with bots), but internet-enabled gameplay forces the player into online matches, and items and experience transfer between both modes (with a level 20 cap for offline players and 50 for online).

In the case of **Evolution**, Propaganda Games worked directly with the head writers of **TRON: Legacy** and saw a great deal of pre-production work for the film.

**True Lies** (GB, GEN, GG, SNES; Acclaim; 1994)
The Twilight Saga: The Eclipse Movie Game (MOBILE; Summit Entertainment/RealNetworks; 2010) – iPhone App trivia game with over 400 questions for single or multiplayer.

Twilight: The Movie Game (MOBILE; GameHouse) – iPhone App

The Twilight Saga: New Moon Movie Game (MOBILE; GameHouse) – iPhone App. Deal was signed during before first movie, but RealNetworks did not get a game out until the second film. This app was downloaded over 2 million times.

The Twilight Saga: Memory Quest (MOBILE; Summit Entertainment/RealNetworks; 2010) – iPhone App. Puzzle game. Players can try three different modes of match-three and memory gameplay over 90 levels.

Twilight Eclipse: The 8-Bit Interactive (WEB; 2010) – unofficial interactive game using YouTube annotations in a choose your own adventure style to link to video choices.

Underworld: The Eternal War (PS2; Lucky Chicken for Play It; 2004)

Universal Soldier (GB, GEN; Code Monkeys for Accolade; 1992)

Universal Studios Theme Park Adventure (GC; Kemco; 12/18/2001) – technically not based on any particular movie, but instead an entire studio’s theme park, this title references several rides which themselves are based on film properties, including Backdraft, Back to the Future, E.T., Jaws, and Jurassic Park.

Underworld: The Eternal War (PS2; Lucky Chicken for Play It; 2004)

UP – The Videogame (THQ; 2009) – rated Everyone 10+ for cartoon violence.

The Untouchables (AMI, C64, NES, PC, ST; Astros Productions for Ocean Software; 1989) – side-scroller

The Untouchables (NES; Special FX for Ocean of America; 1991)

Vampire Hunter D (PS; developed and published by Jaleco; 2000) – based on novel and anime by Hideyuki Kikuchi

Van Helsing (GBA, PS2, XB; Saffire Corporation for Vivendi Universal; 2004) – voice talent from film, including Hugh Jackman

A View to a Kill (C64, MSX; Domark; 1985)

Vinasu Senki (NES; developed and published by Varie; 1989) – based on 1989 anime

Wallace & Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit (PS2, XB; Konami Digital; 2005)
Wallace & Gromit Fun Pack (PC; BBC Multimedia; 1996) – based on first three short films

Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo (GC, PC, PS2, XB; BAM!; 2003) – Project Zoo takes Wallace and Gromit on a chase after Feathers McGraw, the exceptionally evil penguin burglar from The Wrong Trousers, who has kidnapped Wallace and Gromit’s adopted pet polar bear, Archie, from the zoo. The visuals of Wallace, Gromit, and Feathers McGraw have been faithfully rendered with regard to their plasticine models. Though subtle lighting nuances have been lost, their overall design, as well as the way they move, is quite true to that of their stop-motion counterparts. This is especially important for Gromit and Feathers, as these characters have no voices and must rely on their physicality to emote.

WALL*E (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Heavy Iron for THQ; 2008) – hit targets to activate platforms and progress through environments while solving puzzles; includes some racing stages. The cutscenes closely follow the movie and include added scenes and dialogue. The PS3, X360, and Wii have nine explorable worlds; the PS2, Windows, and PSP versions have 18 worlds; the DS version has 14. Features realistic physics interactions. Audio design of game created by Star Wars sound veteran Ben Burtt, who voices the title character in both the film and the game. controls. The PS3 and X360 versions feature a co-op mode using WALL*E and EVE, while the Wii version offers three head-to-head multiplayer modes.

Quite a number of web-based mini-games were made available through the website for the film: Scrap Shoot, Trash Tower, Pop!, Say It like WALL*E, Pinball, Space Race / Space Ball, Space Escape, Treasure Round-Up, and Cup Shuffle.

Walt Disney’s Alice in Wonderland (GBC; Digital Eclipse for Nintendo of America; 2000)

Walt Disney’s The Jungle Book (GB, GBA, GEN, GG, PC, NES, SNES; developed and published by Virgin Interactive; 1994) - Guide Mowgli through the jungle to safety over eleven chapters to face the tiger Shere Khan. Baloo, Kaa, and King Louie appear in supporting roles. Incorporates some music from the movie. Some of the game play is not derived from the movie. GB version features six levels of horizontal and vertical scrolling action and a different story from the console versions.

Walt Disney’s The Jungle Book: Groove Party (PC, PS, PS2; Ubisoft for Disney Interactive; 2000)

Walt Disney’s The Jungle Book: Rhythm ‘n’ Groove (PS, PS2; Ubisoft for Disney Interactive; 2000)

Walt Disney’s The Jungle Book: Mowgli’s Wild Adventure (GBC)

Walt Disney Pictures Presents Enchanted (DS; Altron for Disney Interactive; 2007)

Walt Disney Pictures Presents Enchanted: Once Upon Andalasia (GBA; Disney Interactive; 2007)
WANTED: Weapons of Fate (PC, PS3, X360; Universal Interactive; 2009)

WarGames (A8, C64, CV; Coleco; 1984) – Coleco obtained the rights for this film-to-game adaptation through an exclusive licensing agreement with MGM/UA with the aim “to create a game that would reflect the spirit of the film while appealing to a fairly sophisticated video game player” (Bay, 11). While the game is one of war simulation, the idea here is to prevent the war from happening by deploying resources in a defensive configuration and creating a condition of cease fire. It is an interesting premise, particularly for a game released during the height of the Cold War and into a video game landscape where Missile Command and its ilk had already depicted nuclear combat. Programming began with the game designers and artists working on target locations and a reasonably accurate map of the United States. From there, the programmers took four months to code the game. This game can be played with the regular ColecoVision controller, the Super Controller, and the Roller Controller. Overlays for the controllers are provided.

WarGames (PC, PS; Interactive Studios for MGM Interactive; 1998) - RTS

WarGames: Defcon 1 (PS; MGM Interactive; 1998)

Warlock (GEN, SNES; LJN; 1994) – Action-Adventure; Side-Scrolling

Relation to Film: The game appears to be set in the same world as the film, but the story has nothing at all to do with the film or its plot. The main antagonist is supposed to be the Warlock from the film, as a digitized image of Julian Sands in costume is part of the opening sequence, and the in-game character wears a lot of black and has long, blonde hair.

Packaging (Sega Genesis): The box and manual covers feature the same image as used in most of the promotional posters, right down to the warning above the title itself: “Beware the ultimate evil of…” The film is not referenced at all in the game manual.

Summary: The user takes control of a modern day Druid who seeks to defeat the evil Warlock by claiming six magical runestones before he can. According to the game manual and the game’s opening sequence, the Druids have fought against the Warlock since ancient times, who appears once every millenium when the stars and moon align in a certain way. Gameplay consists of simple run, duck, jump, and shoot controls, but the game becomes more complex because of spellcasting and the player's magic orb. The orb floats around the player’s head and can be sent flying in any direction to pick up items or attack enemies, which can prove useful since the player’s magic blast only discharges in four directions. The user also has access to various magic spells, such as smart bombs, healing, protection, and time reversal. These spells have limited uses and must be found in the game world, usually sitting on the ground. The player progresses through each level, fighting insects, undead, and demons, trying to find the runestones needed to stop the Warlock. After collecting all six, the user can face the Warlock in the Underworld for a final battle.
War of the Worlds (2600; Twentieth Century Fox) – announced at 1983 Winter Consumer Electronics Show and mentioned in Creative Computing (April 1983). Fox went so far as to actually produce box art drawing on the 1953 film.

Warpath: Jurassic Park (PS; Black Ops for EA and DreamWorks Interactive; 1999)

The Warriors (PS2, PSP, XB; Rockstar Games; 2005)

The Warriors (X360; CXTM; 2009) – Sidescrolling fighter being developed for the 30th anniversary of the film.

War of the Worlds (2600; Sega; 1983) – announced only

Watchmen: The End is Nigh (PS3, X360; Deadline Games; 2009) – Brawler where the player controls Rorschach and Nite Owl. Prequel to film. Cooperative mode features two player splitscreen. Second episode of game planned for release of film on home video. End is Nigh script written by Len Wein, at DC Comics, who was an editor on the original Watchmen comic.

Waterworld (PBL; Gottlieb; 1995)

Waterworld (GEN, SNES, VB; Ocean Software; 1995) – the Virtual Boy version is the only film related title released in the US for this ill-fated system in 3D gaming (in Japan there was one additional film-to-game title), and it differs from the other console versions. A 3DO version was referenced on the 3DO Buffet sampler disc.

Waterworld (PC; Intelligent Games for Interplay Productions, Inc.; 12/31/1997) – subtitled “The Quest for Dry Land”. Players can experience never-before-seen footage from the film and interact with its character via original video scenes featuring the actual cast, costumes and set. The combat adventure storyline for the game was created by the film’s original screenwriter and enhanced with a 40-piece orchestra score.


Wayne’s World (PC; developed and published by Capstone; 1993) – point-and-click adventure

We’re Back! A Dinosaur’s Tale (GEN, GG, SNES; Hi-Tech Express; 1993/94) – based on We’re Back! A Dinosaur’s Story (1993). Possibly began as a NES title.

Westworld 2000 (PC; Brooklyn Multimedia for Byron Preiss; 1996) – “A new 3D shooter that picks up where the movie left off.” (box quote from PC Gamer)

Where the Wild Things Are (DS, PS3, Wii, X360; 2009)

White Men Can’t Jump (JAG; Tri-Mark International for Atari; 1995) – very loosely based on the film.
Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (AMI, APL, C64, PC, ST; Silent Software for Buena Vista Software; 1988) - Jessica Rabbit has been kidnapped and Roger must rescue her by exploring Toontown. Levels 1 and 3 are racing involving Benny the Cab, level 2 takes place in the Ink & Paint Club where Roger must collect pieces of the will left by penguin waiters, and level 4 is the boss battle in Judge Doom’s warehouse.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (GB, NES; Rare for LJN; 1989) – Sidescrolling adventure where the player is Eddie Valiant, accompanied by Roger Rabbit, searching Hollywood, Toontown, and other areas to find the pieces of the missing Acme will. Valiant must protect Roger from the weasels. Top-view worldmap for navigation.

Wild Wild West: The Steel Assassin (PC; developed and published by SouthPeak Interactive, LLC; 1999)

The Wild Thornberry’s Movie (GBA, PC; THQ; 2002)

William Shakespeare’s Hamlet: A Murder Mystery (PC; Pantheon Productions Inc. for E.M.M.E. Interactive; 1997) – first-person puzzle game. Includes 40 minutes of clips from the Kenneth Branagh version. The game has two modes: “to be” or “not to be”, one of which gives the player access to the unabridged text of the original play, with additional commentary on the play, references to the Renaissance era, and clues to some of the puzzles of the game.

The World is Not Enough (GBC, N64, PS) – Bond franchise

Willow: The Computer Game (AMI, PC, ST; MidNite Entertainment Group Inc. for Mindscape; 1988)

Willow (ARC; Capcom; 1989)

Willow (NES; developed and published by Capcom; 1989)

Wizard of Oz (CV; Coleco; 1983) – announced but never released. Licensed from the film.

The Wizard of Oz (SNES; Seta Corporation; 1993) – likely began as a NES title.

The Wolfman: Legend of the Full Moon (WEB; 2010) – promotional tie-in with the release of the 2010 film on home video. Game is administered through Facebook.

X2: Wolverine’s Revenge (GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB; Activision; 2003) – Hugh Jackman as Wolverine used on box, but character in game voiced by Mark Hamil and looks based on one of several (user-selectable) comic book costumes. Patrick Stewart reprises his role as Professor X. Instruction manual bundled with free ticket for X2 movie.

X-Men: The Official Game (GC, PC, PS2, XB, X360; Activision; 2006) – serves as tie-in to third X-Men film but functions as a bridge between second and third films; playable characters
are Wolverine, Iceman, and Nightcrawler, the latter notable since he did not appear in the third film. Cutscenes are done in the style of (non-animated) comic book frames.

**X-Men: The Last Stand** (Mobile; Activision; 2006) – also known as “The Mobile Game”. Related to the third theatrical film

**X-Men Origins: Wolverine** (DS, PC, PS2, PS3, PSP, Wii, X360; Raven; 2009) – rated Teen for “blood, mild language, tobacco reference, violence”. **Uncaged Edition** for PS3 and X360 offers some additional content and is rated M for increased levels of violence, making it more violent than the source film, which was PG-13. As many reviewers note, the gameplay is very reminiscent of *God of War*.

“Movie games have a bad history,” said Jeff Poffenbarger, senior producer at Raven Software. “There is a stigma to movie games, for a thousand different reasons. They come out and they don't live up to the hype people create. For us, it was all about creating the definitive Wolverine experience, not recreating the movie. [...] The movie actually broadens the appeal. The recognition is there. For us, we like the Wolverine we see in the movies, and the Wolverine in the comics” (Lang, 1).

**X-Men Origins: Wolverine** (MOBILE; EA Mobile; 2009) – Promotional materials pitched the game to players in this manner: “DARE TO PLAY AS WOLVERINE in this action-adventure combat game inspired by the new movie, X-Men Origins: Wolverine, only in theaters! Forge your way through 7 thrilling levels of traps to take on an army of foes. Fight soldiers specialized in baton, assault and marksmanship using your signature moves such as the Claw Thrust and Cross Hack. Collect power-ups to enhance your strength as you battle against archenemies.”

**XXX** (GBA; Activision; 2002)

**Yellow Submarine Demo** (5200; Atari; 1983) – unreleased prototype. Use joystick to move the Yellow Submarine from the animated film in all eight directions, which is the extent of the gameplay in this demo.

**Zathura** (PS2, XB; 2K Games; 2005) – GBA version cancelled

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