

Chris Roberts

Chief Creative Officer, Cloud Imperium

Chris Roberts is one of the most recognized, well-respected, and successful game developers in the interactive entertainment industry. As a storyteller, game designer, game producer, and live-action director, Roberts skillfully combines vision with technical expertise to consistently create cutting edge, top-grossing and often revolutionary interactive entertainment products.

A gaming wunderkind, Roberts sold his first computer game at the age of 14, and by the age of 20 Roberts had developed three #1 hits in his native U.K.: *Match Day*, *Wiz Adore*, and *Stryker's Run*.



In 1987, Roberts joined Origin Systems, Inc. ("OSI"), which was acquired as a wholly owned subsidiary by Electronic Arts ("EA") in 1992. Roberts was instrumental in OSI's growth from a company with \$4 million in annual revenues to a company with annual revenues of \$50 million.

Roberts' first development project during his eight-year tenure with OSI was *Times of Lore*, which rose to #1 on Ingram's Best-Seller list in 1988. In 1990, Roberts developed *Wing Commander*, which set a new standard in PC games and evolved into a franchise series of game titles, all developed and produced by Roberts. With its cinematic quality, clearly developed storylines and well-known actors, the *Wing Commander* series created a whole new genre within the gaming industry known as the "interactive movie." By 1995, the *Wing Commander* series had generated well over \$400 million in retail revenue, and from 1990 to 1995, the series accounted for more than 60% of OSI's revenue. In addition to selling more than three million units worldwide by 1995, the *Wing Commander* series, including *Wing Commander*, *Wing Commander II*, *Secret Missions I & II*, *Special Operations I & II*, the *Speech Accessory Pack*, *Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger*, and *Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom* won a record setting number of gaming awards. In 1990, *Wing Commander* was named "Game of the Year" by both Omni and Computer Gaming World. A year later, *Wing Commander II* was awarded similar honors, winning "Game of the Year" from Tilt magazine (France) and "Best Action/Adventure Game" from Computer Game Review.

In 1993, OSI released another of Roberts' game titles, *Strike Commander*, a military flight simulator. It immediately became an international best-seller selling more than 500-thousand units worldwide and was EA's all-time best selling PC game until it was eclipsed by *Wing Commander III*, released in 1994. *Wing Commander III* was yet another breakthrough product, combining the latest innovations in computer gaming with several hours of live-action video featuring Mark Hamill (*Star Wars*), Malcolm McDowell (*Clockwork Orange*, *Star Trek: Generations*) Tom Wilson (*Back to the Future I, II and III*) and John Rhys-Davies (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*). *Wing Commander III* won numerous awards, including "Game of the Year" from both Login magazine (Japan) and Interactive Gaming magazine. It was also named

“Action Game of the Year” by both Computer Gaming World and by a peer group of computer game professionals at the Ninth Annual Computer Game Developers Conference.

Roberts was appointed vice-president of new technology at OSI as well as executive producer for parent company, Electronic Arts. As a member of the EA executive development staff, Roberts helped formulate the company's overall interactive movie and flight simulator game development and publishing strategies.

In 1996, with a clear vision of the future of interactive entertainment, Roberts saw a market opportunity in multiplayer gaming and interactive software and left OSI to form Digital Anvil (“DA”). A year later, Microsoft and Advanced Micro Devices (“AMD”) funded DA, and DA agreed to a long-term gaming output deal with Microsoft. DA and the video game software products it created were wildly successful, winning numerous gaming awards, perfecting the use of 35mm film as narrative in interactive game titles, creating an unparalleled digital effects powerhouse. DA also became the first digital entertainment company to develop a game title, *Wing Commander*, into a feature length film, written and directed by Roberts, starring Freddie Prince, Jr. (*I Know What You Did Last Summer*), Saffron Burrows (*Deep Blue Sea*) and Matthew Lillard.

In 1999, DA released *Freelancer*, Roberts’ ambitious, eagerly-awaited interactive space soap opera which swept the official critics’ awards at the 1999 Electronic Entertainment Expo, winning “Best of Show,” “Best PC Game,” “Best Simulator,” and “Outstanding Graphics.” In 2000, DA released *Starlancer* which also won numerous awards, including “Simulation of the Year” in the U.K. As Chairman, CEO and majority shareholder, Roberts guided the Company’s growth to annual revenues of \$14 million and a staff of 110. In December of 2000, Roberts sold DA to Microsoft.

After leaving DA, Roberts spent more than a decade in the Hollywood film industry where he served as producer for a number of productions including the 2004 adaptation of *The Punisher*, *The Jacket*, *Lord of War* and *Lucky Number Slevin*.

Today Roberts is chief creative officer at Cloud Imperium Games, which he co-founded in April 2012. The company’s first title, the crowd funded *Star Citizen*, is currently under development and to date has raised more than \$61 million. The game is recognized by Guinness World Records as the top Crowd Funded Project ever.