= Star Wars : Jedi Knight (series) =

Star Wars : Jedi Knight is a first @-@ person shooter and third @-@ person shooter video game series set in the fictional Star Wars expanded universe . The series focuses primarily on Kyle Katarn , a former Imperial officer who ultimately becomes a member of the New Republic and an instructor at the Jedi Academy .

The Jedi Knight series began in 1995 with the release of Star Wars : Dark Forces for DOS , Macintosh , and PlayStation . This was followed in 1997 by Star Wars Jedi Knight : Dark Forces II for Microsoft Windows , in which Katarn learns the ways of a Jedi . In 1998 , Star Wars Jedi Knight : Mysteries of the Sith was released as an expansion pack for Dark Forces II , this time giving the player control of Mara Jade as well as Katarn . In 2002 , Star Wars Jedi Knight II : Jedi Outcast was added to the series . Jedi Outcast was developed by Raven Software and powered by the id Tech 3 game engine . It was released for Windows , Mac , Xbox and GameCube . Star Wars Jedi Knight : Jedi Academy followed in 2003 on Windows , Mac and Xbox . It was powered by the same game engine as its predecessor . Jedi Academy was the first game in the series where the player does not control Katarn at any point , although he is featured prominently in the storyline .

The games in the Jedi Knight series have received generally favorable reviews . Multiple publications have commented on the quality of the series as a whole , with GameNOW describing it as " consistently great . " The use of the lightsaber in the series , a prominent gameplay element in all but the first game , has received specific praise for its implementation .

= = Games = =

Star Wars : Dark Forces was developed and published by LucasArts , and released in North America on February 28 , 1995 for MS @-@ DOS and Macintosh , and on November 30 , 1996 for PlayStation . It was the first officially produced first @-@ person shooter set in the Star Wars universe .

Star Wars Jedi Knight : Dark Forces II was again developed and published by LucasArts , and released in North America on September 30 , 1997 for Microsoft Windows .

Star Wars Jedi Knight : Mysteries of the Sith is an expansion pack for Dark Forces II . Developed and published by LucasArts , it was released on February 24 , 1998 for Microsoft Windows . The expansion includes a single @-@ player mode and fifteen multiplayer maps .

Star Wars Jedi Knight II : Jedi Outcast was developed by Raven Software for the PC and Mac , and Vicarious Visions for the Xbox and GameCube . LucasArts published the PC version worldwide and the Xbox and GameCube versions in North America , Activision published the Xbox and GameCube versions in Europe , and Aspyr published the Mac version worldwide . The PC version was released in North America on March 26 , 2002 , the Mac version on November 5 , and the Xbox and GameCube versions on November 19 .

Star Wars Jedi Knight : Jedi Academy was developed by Raven Software for the PC and Mac , and Vicarious Visions for the Xbox . LucasArts published the PC and Xbox versions in North America , Activision published them in Europe , and Aspyr published the Mac version worldwide . Jedi Academy was released on September 16 , 2003 for Mac , on September 17 for Windows , and on November 18 for Xbox .

= = Overview = =

= = = Gameplay = = =

The Jedi Knight series is composed primarily of first / third @-@ person shooter gameplay elements , with a number of variation on the norms of the genre within each game . All of the games use a level based system which contains a series of objectives that must be completed before the player can continue . From Dark Forces II onwards , the games have included lightsaber combat

and the use of Force powers , which have been tweaked and modified as the series has progressed .

 In the first game , Dark Forces , the focus is on combat against various creatures and characters from the Star Wars universe , and includes environmental puzzles and hazards , whilst following a central storyline outlined in mission briefings and cutscenes . For combat , the player may use fists , explosive land mines and thermal detonators , as well as blasters and other ranged weapons , with the gameplay leaning more towards ranged combat .

 In Dark Forces II , the player has the option of a third @-@ person view , plus an option to switch automatically to third @-@ person when the lightsaber is the selected weapon . Three types of Force powers are introduced in this game : Light powers provide non violent advantages , Dark powers provide violent ones , while Neutral powers enhance athletic abilities . The game has two endings , depending on whether the player chooses to focus on the Light Side or the Dark Side .

 Unlike its predecessor , Mysteries of the Sith has a single , morally positive course , as the player progresses through the game in a linear fashion . The game includes most of the enemies featured in Dark Forces II , plus some new monsters . The player has access to Force powers and projectile weapons such as a blaster or railgun , as well as a lightsaber .

 Jedi Outcast 's gameplay is similar to that of its predecessors , with some small additions , such as access to gun turrets , or the use of combos unique to each of the three lightsaber styles in the game ; fast , medium and strong . As with Dark Forces II and Mysteries of the Sith , the use of Force powers is restricted by a " Force Meter " , which depletes when the powers are used .

 Jedi Academy features very similar gameplay to Jedi Outcast , although one new feature is that the player may customize their lightsaber at the outset of the game . Later , the player has the option of choosing dual sabers , or a " saber staff " , similar to Darth Maul 's double ended lightsaber in The Phantom Menace . Instead of moving linearly from one level to the next , the player chooses from a selection of different missions which can be played in any order . The game also introduces player @-@ controllable vehicles and vehicle @-@ based levels .

 Starting with Jedi Knight , a multiplayer mode has been included in every game , in which up to eight people can compete with one another via a LAN or up to four people online . In Jedi Knight , the player creates an avatar , and then selects a ranking , with higher rankings having access to more Force powers . There are two types of multiplayer game available ; " Capture the flag " and " Jedi Training " . Mysteries of the Sith includes fifteen multiplayer maps , four of which only allow players to battle with lightsabers , and a ranking system that tracks the player 's experience . The multiplayer mode allows the use of pre @-@ set characters featured in both Jedi Knight and Mysteries of the Sith , as well as characters from the Star Wars films , such as Luke Skywalker , Darth Vader and Boba Fett . In Mysteries , the " Capture the flag " mode is altered , with the gradual reduction of the Force powers of the player who is carrying the flag .

 Jedi Outcast features several multiplayer modes , which , in the PC and Mac versions , can be played over a LAN or the internet . Multiplayer mode is limited to two players on the Xbox and GameCube versions of the game . Game modes include " Free @-@ For @-@ All " , " Team Deathmatch " , " Capture the Flag " , " Power Duel " and " Siege " , all of which can be played with other players , bots , or both . Jedi Academy introduces several multiplayer modifications , such as Movie Battles II which allows players to take part in lightsaber duels that featured in the Star Wars films . Movie Battles also lets players choose different classes of character , ranging from Jedi Knight to Wookiee . Another popular modification , Evolution of Combat , allows players to use more movie @-@ realistic saber combat along with other additions such as a movie accurate class system featuring tens of new characters .

= = = Story = = =

 The Jedi Knight video games are set in the Star Wars universe . For the majority of the series , the player controls Kyle Katarn , who begins as a mercenary , eventually learning the ways of The Force , becoming a Jedi Master and teaching at the Jedi Academy .

 Prior to the events of Dark Forces , Katarn was a student studying to follow in his father 's career of

agricultural mechanics . However , while at an academy , he was told by officials that the Rebel Alliance had killed his parents . His anger led him to enlist in the Imperial army , where he soon met Jan Ors , an undercover double agent working for the Alliance . Ors uncovered the real information about Katarn 's parents ; they had actually been killed by the Empire . Shortly thereafter , Ors ' cover was blown , and she was taken prisoner . Katarn helped her escape , thus ending his career with the Empire . He then became a mercenary , and due to his hatred for the Empire , regularly took on jobs for the Alliance .

In the first level of Dark Forces , which is set prior to A New Hope , Katarn recovers the plans to the Death Star , a heavily armed space station capable of destroying entire planets . The Rebel Alliance uses the plans to find a weakness in and then destroy the Death Star . Katarn then aids the Rebels in stopping the threat of the Imperial " Dark Trooper " project . Despite the successful missions on behalf of the Alliance , however , Katarn does not join their cause . Dark Forces II begins several years after the destruction of the second Death Star in Return of the Jedi , when Katarn is informed of the exact details of his father 's death . His father , Morgan Katarn , had discovered the location of " The Valley of the Jedi " , a source of great Force power , but a Dark Jedi named Jerec murdered Morgan in an attempt to find the location . Katarn travels to the Valley of the Jedi while learning the ways of the Jedi himself . Eventually , he confronts and defeats Jerec , avenging his father 's death . However , Katarn still does not join the Jedi Order , instead using his powers for the New Republic , and taking on an apprentice with a similar history to himself ; Mara Jade . During this time , Katarn learns of a Sith temple on the planet Dromund Kaas . There , Katarn is corrupted by the Dark Side of the Force . However , Jade is able to convince him to return to the Light and they leave together .

This incident causes Katarn to distance himself from the Force and return to mercenary missions with Jan Ors . In Jedi Outcast , Ors is captured by Desann , a former pupil of Luke Skywalker who has turned to the Dark Side . Katarn believes Desann to have killed Ors , and so he returns to the Valley of the Jedi in an attempt to reconnect to the Force so as to stop Desann . Eventually , it is revealed that Ors ' death is a ruse by Desann for the express purpose of having Katarn return to the Valley , so Desann may learn of its location . Desann , in league with the Imperial Remnant , uses the power of the Valley to endow his troops with Force power , before using them to launch an attack on the Jedi Academy . However , Katarn defeats Desann and discovers his true path , becoming a tutor at the Academy . In Jedi Academy , Katarn takes on two students : Jaden Korr and Rosh Penin . The protagonist of the game is Jaden , who is dispatched on various peace @-@ keeping missions across the galaxy , sometimes with Katarn , sometimes alone . Jaden eventually encounters a Sith cult led by Tavion (Desann 's former apprentice) who plans to restore the Sith to power by using stolen Force energy to resurrect an ancient Sith Lord , Marka Ragnos . After learning that Rosh has betrayed the Jedi and joined Tavion , Jaden may either kill him and turn to the Dark Side or let him live and remain on the Light Side . If Jaden chooses to free Rosh , he ultimately faces and defeats both Tavion and the spirit of Ragnos . If he chooses the Dark Side , he kills Tavion , fights and defeats (but does not kill) Katarn , and then flees with Tavion 's staff , which is capable of absorbing the Force . The game ends with Katarn setting out in pursuit of Jaden .

= = Development = =

Production of Star Wars : Dark Forces began in September 1993 , with Daron Stinnett as project leader and Justin Chin as lead writer . The developers wanted to adapt the first @-@ person shooter format to include strategy and puzzles , which at the time , had never been done . Dark Forces thus features numerous logic puzzles and parts of the game requires a strategic method to progress , often involving manipulation of the environment . This style of gameplay has remained constant in all Jedi Knight games . Another aspect that has remained the same since Dark Forces is the use of John Williams ' soundtrack from the Star Wars films . In Dark Forces the music was implemented using iMuse , software that alters the music depending on what is happening at any given moment in the game . Lucasarts developed the Jedi game engine to power Dark Forces , adding features to the first @-@ person shooter genre that were uncommon at the time , such as multi @-@ level floors and free look , as well as athletic abilities such as running , jumping , ducking

and swimming . Original plans for the game had Luke Skywalker as the main character , but due to the limitations this would impose on the story , the developers designed a new character , Kyle Katarn .

Even before the release of Dark Forces , Justin Chin had planned out Katarn 's role in Dark Forces II , indicating that Katarn would face a " big trial " in a game that would be a " rite of passage . " Chin became project leader for Dark Forces II . In the game , the digital audio from Dark Forces was replaced with CD audio . Dark Forces II adds two " Jedi " aspects to the series ; the use of The Force and the lightsaber . The Force plays an integral role in how the player plays the game . The method of allocating credits to Force powers was designed with an RPG style in mind , allowing the player the choice of which powers to improve . Chin said in an early interview that progress through the game is based upon the abilities the player develops . A new game engine , the Sith engine , was developed for Dark Forces II , which uses both 3D graphics and sound . It was one of the first games to adopt the use of 3D graphics hardware acceleration using Microsoft Direct3D . Another development was that Dark Forces II moved on from the static images between levels used in Dark Forces to full motion video cutscenes . The characters are represented by live actors while the backgrounds are pre @-@ rendered . The cutscenes included the first lightsaber footage filmed since Return of the Jedi in 1983 . Dark Forces II also introduced multiplayer gaming to the series , allowing players to play online or via a LAN .

Nearly four years after the release of Dark Forces II , LucasArts announced at E3 2001 that Jedi Knight II : Jedi Outcast would be released in 2002 . Unlike previous games in the series , Jedi Outcast was not developed in @-@ house by LucasArts , but by Raven Software . The subsequent success of Outcast led LucasArts to continue the partnership with Raven , leading to the development of Jedi Knight : Jedi Academy a year later ; " With the overwhelming success and critical acclaim of Star Wars : Jedi Outcast , continuing an alliance with Activision and Raven Software was a clear and very easy decision , " said then @-@ president of LucasArts , Simon Jeffery . Jedi Outcast and Jedi Academy are both powered by the Quake III : Team Arena game engine , with modifications for the use of a lightsaber and The Force . Jedi Academy is the only game in the Jedi Knight series that does not give the player control of Katarn at any point . Instead the focus is on Jaden Korr , a student of the Force under Katarn . The decision to change protagonist was made by the developers for gameplay reasons .

== Reception ==

The Jedi Knight series as a whole has been well received . The series itself has been described as " highly acclaimed , " and has been noted by IGN as one of few Star Wars themed video game franchises that is of consistently high quality on the PC . GamersMark.com called the series " rather entertaining , " whilst GameNOW rated it as " consistently great . "

Individually , each game in the series has been generally well received . In 1995 , Dark Forces became LucasArts ' highest sell @-@ in with more than 300 @,@ 000 copies accounted for at launch . Games in the series have achieved consistently favorable review scores from most publications , and hold high aggregate scores on both Metacritic and GameRankings . The only exceptions are the PlayStation version of Dark Forces , which was perceived to have graphical problems and the GameCube version of Jedi Outcast , which was seen as considerably inferior to the PC and Xbox versions .

Games in the Jedi Knight series have also received specific commendation and awards . Dark Forces II was judged the best game of the year for 1997 by five publications , and was number one in PC Gamer 's " 50 best games ever " list in 1998 . Jedi Outcast was a finalist in the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences " Interactive Achievement Awards " in the 2002 Game of the Year category . The game also received commendations from PC Gamer and Computer Gaming World .

Gameplay aspects of the series have also been well received . The lightsaber charted at number 7 in UGO Networks 's countdown of the 50 best weapons in video games . The publication commented that using such a weapon in a game was " extremely satisfying , " and stated that lightsaber usage had been refined as the series continued .

Kyle Katarn has also received a positive reception . IGN placed him as their 22nd top Star Wars character , praising him as " a gamer 's reliable blank state , " a feature which they felt made him one of the most " human " Star Wars characters . They also stated that Katarn 's endearence with fans was because of his " mishmash of quirks and dispositions . " In GameSpot 's vote for the all @-@ time greatest videogame hero , Katarn was eliminated in round two when faced against Lara Croft , garnering 27 @.@ 5 % of the votes . In round one he defeated Dig Dug , with 67 @.@ 6 % of the votes .