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Author: Mr. Jason Batt
100 Year Starship, United States

EXPLORING INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL IN VIDEO GAMES: SHAPING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND SUPPORT FOR FUTURE INITIATIVES

Abstract

Interstellar travel is a subject of great interest to scientists and the public alike, and video games have become a popular medium for exploring this topic. From procedurally generated galaxies to rich storytelling, video games have the potential to both accurately represent the scientific and technological challenges of interstellar travel and inspire players to learn more and support future initiatives.

This interactive presentation will explore the trends in the industry and analyze what interstellar travel video games get right and wrong. It will examine the challenges of balancing realism with creative freedom and the trade-off between scientific accuracy and storytelling. It will also analyze specific games and how they handle interstellar travel, from simulating the challenges of engineering to offering a fantastical vision of the future.

The presentation will discuss how games like No Man's Sky and Elite Dangerous use procedural generation to create vast, seemingly infinite universes for players to explore, inspiring a sense of wonder and discovery, but also leading to limitations in terms of scientific accuracy. Games like Mass Effect and the Outer Worlds create rich, immersive worlds with engaging characters and compelling narratives but also take liberties with science and technology to serve the story.

The presentation will also analyze specific interstellar travel video games, such as Kerbal Space Program and Space Engineers, which aim for scientific accuracy and realism, allowing players to simulate the challenges of space travel and engineering. Other games, like Star Citizen and EVE Online, offer a more fantastical vision of interstellar travel, incorporating alien races and futuristic technologies.

One of the key themes of the presentation will be how video games can encourage or discourage public support for interstellar initiatives. By portraying interstellar travel in a positive light and emphasizing the potential benefits, video games can inspire interest in science and technology and encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, if video games perpetuate misconceptions or present a negative view of interstellar travel as a tool of conquest, they may discourage public support for future initiatives.

The presentation will conclude by examining the potential benefits of interstellar travel video games and their role in shaping public perceptions and support for future initiatives. Overall, interstellar travel video games represent a fascinating and growing subgenre, and this presentation will provide an overview of the industry, analyze its trends and examine specific games, and consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of this genre.