

## 5 Sci-Fi Video Games

Out of all the entertainment genres available to us today, perhaps it is the marriage of video games and science fiction that offers the most scope for real depth and playability – a true match made in heaven. The ability to enter and explore these worlds that are otherwise alien to us keeps fans coming back for more, while the writers and developer's only limit is their imaginations. Since the first sci-fi releases hit the early consoles, the storylines, graphics and gameplay have gone from strength to strength, transporting us to other planets, alternative universes, into the not too distant future and to galaxies far, far away. Here then, is but a microcosm of the sci-fi gaming world for you to scan.

### **Fallout**

Initially introduced what seems like a lifetime ago in 1997 (and actually having roots as far back as 1988), the Fallout series has come a very long way. Set in a post-apocalyptic future, the first game is a role-playing point-and-click survival adventure with a turn-based combat system that looks and feels as dated as you might expect. Fast forward to the imminent release of Fallout 76, and you'll be experiencing a very different beast entirely. Fallout 3's shift to a first-person shooter has breathed new life into a franchise which has spawned four canon games and five spin-offs, including table-top versions and a potential movie in the works. Praised for an immersive world, solid storylines and rich atmosphere, each game was largely met with a positive reception. However, some fans would disagree, critical of the direction the franchise has taken since its POV change in 2008. Still, buzz around the forthcoming (and first multiplayer game of the series) is reaching fever pitch and it's looking like a return to form.

### **Star Wars Battlefront II**

Video games and Star Wars go together like peanut butter and jelly, with the sci-fi behemoth's love affair with the gaming community producing literally hundreds (if not thousands) of games across multiple consoles and platforms. The Battlefront series is arguably one of its most popular offerings, or at least it was until the recent debacle surrounding the EA Battlefront 2 (2017) version. Fans became rightly frustrated over the spiraling in-game costs to reveal content and largely boycotted its release. However, it's still an incredibly beautiful slice of the Star Wars universe, stunningly depicted, with top-drawer voice talent and the first video game to be included as canon. Aside from the usual multiplayer blast-fest, the campaign follows Empire Inferno Squad commander Iden Versio and her team in the aftermath of the Battle of Endor. It took a critical bashing upon its release though as vitriolic gamers made their voices known with negative review bombing. If EA games manage to sort their shit out for the next one – they could have a masterpiece on their (greedy) hands.

## **The Last of Us**

Much like the Star Wars universe, a zombie apocalypse just seems to lend itself to the video game industry, and 2013's *The Last of Us* is no exception – albeit with a more original premise. Players take control of a smuggler, who - instead of the usual blood, brains and guts gore fest of other games in the genre - must escort a teenage girl across a post-apocalyptic version of the United States, while the population are infected with a mutated fungus. At the time of writing, the only negative aspect about this story and character-rich playable movie was that it was tied to a release solely on PlayStation. Praised for the development of relationships in-game, as well as subtext, graphics, the fresh combat system and the depiction of non-sexualized female characters, *The Last of Us* held the record for the most “game of the year” wins of all time – until the release of *The Witcher 3* in 2015. Collecting more awards than you could shake a severed arm at, it's only a matter of time before *The Last of Us* is coming to a cinema near you. Now, if they could release it on PC – that would be just great, thanks.

## **Beyond: Two Souls**

Boasting the veritable voice and acting talents of Ellen Page and Willem Dafoe (they shot the game using motion capture over the course of a year), *Beyond: Two Souls* is an interactive adventure game that was actually given a release at a film festival. Debuting in 2013 on the PlayStation 3, the story follows Jodie, a young girl who has a psychic connection with an incorporeal entity known as Aiden. While Jodie exists in the world as we know it, Aiden appears to be on another plain, having the ability to walk through walls and interfere with people's minds. When things go south and Aiden nearly kills a kid, Jodie's parents decide it's high time to leave her in the care of a specialist. Enter Willem Dafoe's Dr. Nathan Dawkins, and the lines between life and death will become very blurred indeed. Players interact with their surroundings making for a truly cinematic experience, but while the game was praised for the acting chops of Page and Dafoe (as you might expect) and the fact that it was highly appealing to non-gamers, those looking for more playability found themselves short-changed.

## **Horizon Zero Dawn.**

Set in the far future sometime in the 31st century, *Horizon Zero Dawn* is one of the most visually stunning video games you're ever likely to play. You take control of Aloy, a young female hunter exploring a beautiful open world, where humans have – for some unknown reason – regressed back to the stone age. However, this world also just happens to be overrun with beast-like machines, who you'll need to hunt in order to survive. While most of these creatures live amicably with their human neighbors, some have become “corrupted” and will attack on sight. Think *Apocalypto* meets *Terminator 2*. Using basic Paleolithic tools and weaponry like bows and spears, or utilizing stealth tactics and setting traps, Aloy must engage these sentient beings in order to find and craft resources and learn about her mysterious life. Largely well received with positive reviews, *Horizon Zero Dawn* attracted praise for its immersive environment, intelligent combat system and creative storyline, as well as an atmospheric soundtrack and depth of gameplay.

