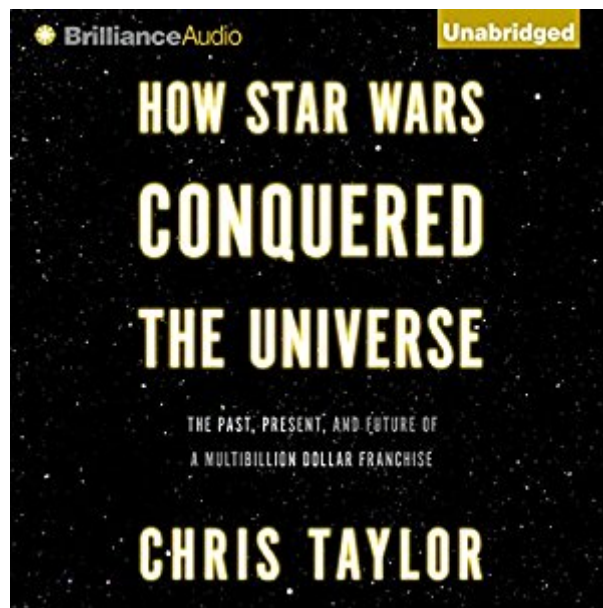


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How Star Wars Conquered The Universe: The Past, Present, And Future Of A Multibillion Dollar Franchise



Synopsis

In 1973, a young filmmaker named George Lucas scribbled some notes for a far-fetched space-fantasy epic. More than 40 years and \$37 billion later, Star Wars-related products outnumber human beings, a stormtrooper army spans the globe, and "Jediism" has become a religion in its own right. Lucas's creation has grown into far more than a cinematic classic; it is, quite simply, one of the most lucrative, influential, and interactive franchises of all time. Yet until now the complete history of Star Wars - its influences and impact, the controversies it has spawned, its financial growth and long-term prospects - has never been told. In *How Star Wars Conquered the Universe*, veteran journalist Chris Taylor traces the series from the difficult birth of the original film through its sequels, the franchise's death and rebirth, the prequels, and the preparations for a new trilogy. Taylor provides portraits of the friends, writers, artists, producers, and marketers who labored behind the scenes to turn Lucas's idea into a legend. He also jousts with modern-day Jedi, tinkers with droid builders, and gets inside Boba Fett's helmet, all to find out how Star Wars has attracted and inspired so many fans for so long. Since the first film's release in 1977, Taylor shows, Star Wars has conquered our culture with a sense of lightness and exuberance, while remaining serious enough to influence politics around the world and spread a spirituality that appeals to religious groups and atheists alike. Controversial digital upgrades and critically savaged prequels have actually made the franchise stronger than ever. Now, with a new set of savvy bosses holding the reins and Episode VII on the horizon, it looks like Star Wars is just getting started. An energetic, fast-moving account of this creative and commercial phenomenon, *How Star Wars Conquered the Universe* explains how a filmmaker's fragile dream beat out a surprising number of rivals and gained a die-hard, multigenerational fan base - and why it will be galvanizing our imaginations and minting money for generations to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When I first heard about Chris Taylor's book, *How Star Wars Conquered the Universe*, I was hesitant to pick it up. After all, I'd read just about all the biographies on George Lucas I could find and considered myself an amateur expert on the history of the film franchise. Ever since my brother and I sat on the floor of the Portland Public library and watched a behind the scenes documentary on the making of the original movie, I was fascinated by the world building behind the movie that's my earliest memory. What could this book possibly tell me I didn't already know? It turns out, quite a lot. Taylor's book opens up with a trip he took to a reservation where *Star Wars* is about to be screened for the very first time dubbed in the Navajo language. This is one small glimpse of the effort he's gone to get the true story of the film franchise. Taylor doesn't just reprint old answers to questions. He digs deeper, sometime uncomfortably pestering people – such as the case of Darth Vader actor David Prowse (now suffering from dementia) – in order to reconcile lingering questions about what really happened. Taylor painstakingly traces the evolution of *Star Wars* script in its many, many iterations; the earliest of which are barely recognizable. For aspiring writers or creators it's worth reading the book for this alone. Seeing how truly bad the greatest narrative franchise could have been (and never reaching the screen), reinforces the fact that great works don't come from sudden flashes of brilliance, but is an agonizing process of reiteration after iteration.

I first became acquainted with *How Star Wars Conquered The Universe* when I heard Chris Taylor interviewed on the excellent *Full of Sith*. I was instantly struck with Taylor's passion, knowledge, and insight into the *Star Wars* universe, and found myself wanting to learn more about this book. Anyone who has paid any sort of attention to *Star Wars* knows that the trials and tribulations of George Lucas to get his space fantasy off the ground and into that zeitgeist of popular culture not so far away were every bit as exciting and chaotic as his protagonist, Luke Skywalker. Just as *Star Wars* delivered on a galactic scale, so to does *How Star Wars Conquered The Universe*. It is safe to say that not only is the book must read material for *Star Wars* fans, but it is an incredible amount of fun as well. Countless books have been published about *Star Wars*, whether it's the making of the film, schematics of particular Corellian vehicles, or legends of the characters we know and love. What

sets How Star Wars Conquered The Universe apart from so many other tomes is the style in which the book is written. Part biography, part history, part cultural analysis, part narrative, part film sociological exploration of the impact of film, and all engaging; the book achieves all of these things in intellectual fashion, without being pedantic or stodgy. If I were designing a film curriculum, this book would be required reading on my syllabus. The opening section, "Introduction: A Navajo Hope", starts off with the story of Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope, translated into the Navajo language, and presented in Window Rock, Arizona. Even the staunchest cynic of the Star Wars phenomenon could not help but be enraptured by the way Taylor engages the reader with the tale.

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