

Star Wars: Where Science Meets

The Museum of Science in Boston opens a new exhibit highlighting the parallels between the technologies shown in the Star Wars double-trilogy and those being used in the real world today.

It may have happened a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, but it was created within our lifetimes and in a land right here on Earth. The *Star Wars* movies are a phenomenon that have inspired generations of both scientists and filmmakers. Now the two are coming together in a unique multimedia exhibit, encompassing 10,000 square feet of space, opening Oct. 27, 2005, at the Museum of Science in Boston.

Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination combines artwork, props, models, film clips and documentary footage from the six *Star Wars* films with interactive, hands-on science and technology exhibits to help visitors explore the parallels between fantasy and real technologies.

On exhibit for the first time, Luke Skywalker's landspeeder (Episode IV) helps introduce visitors to the "Getting Around" Engineering Design Lab (EDL). Here you can learn about real-world speeders and even develop your own floating vehicle. A magnetic testing track incorporates parts of the pod-racing stadium model used in Episode I.

Another EDL, found in the "Robots and People" area, challenges visitors to construct an R2 D2 like robot. Activities throughout the section focus on robot mobility, perception and cognition.

"Science centers nationwide need to find a way to get people excited about exploring technology and engineering," says Ioannis Miaoulis, the president and director of the Museum of Science. "I hope that [this exhibit] inspires future scientists and engineers."

George Lucas, award-winning filmmaker and *Star Wars* creator, adds, "I'm happy that *Star Wars* can help educate people about technology in an entertaining way. Technological innovation and filmmaking have a lot in common; they both begin with imagination and creativity."

At video kiosks throughout the exhibit, filmmakers,

scientists, engineers and technologists "give insight into the important role their imagination played before making their visions a reality," says Ed Rodley, exhibit planner for the museum, "whether it's a memorable character like Chewbacca or a real-world, social robot like Kismet."

The goal of each EDL is to build technological literacy, so components have been designed and grouped to engage visitors to inquire what, how and why, and to explore the benefits – and dangers – of implementing the kinds of future technologies envisioned in the *Star Wars* films. Visitors also will have the opportunity to record their impressions.

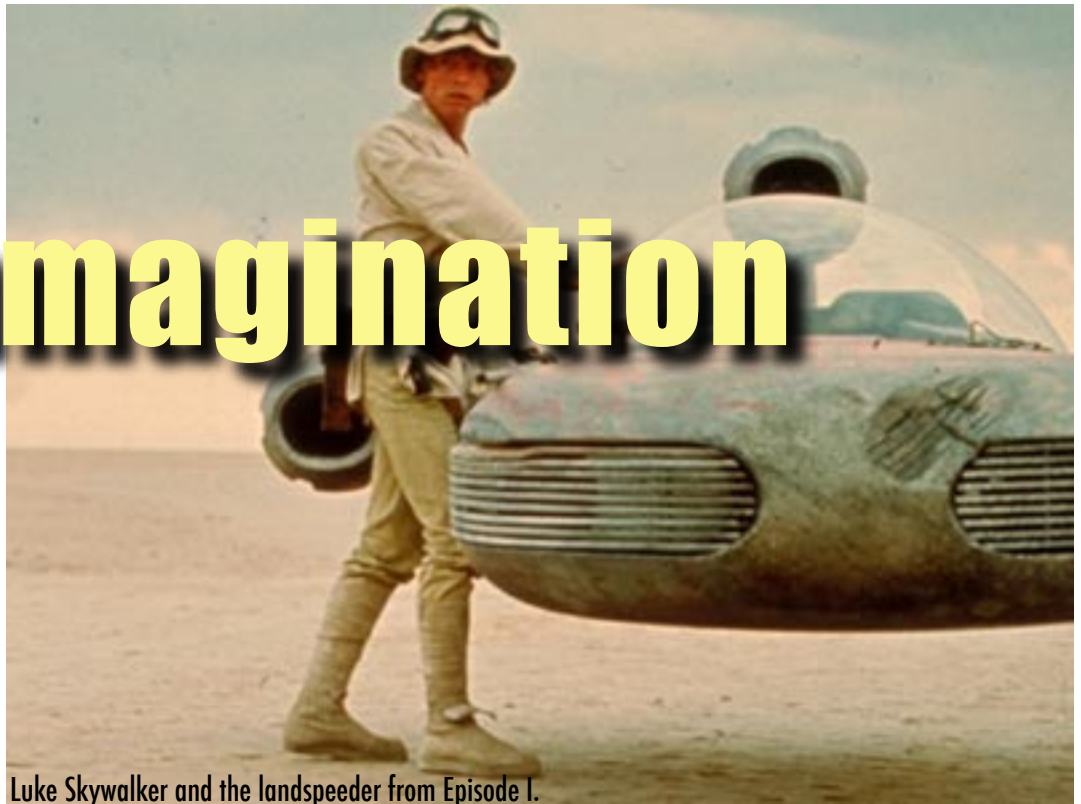
In addition to the EDLs, the exhibit includes two large-scale immersive experiences. In one, six visitors at a time can "jump to light speed" aboard the Millennium Falcon (Episode IV). The cockpit is a full size replica of the ship from the films. Before the four-minute trip to the edge of the Universe begins, a multimedia presentation explores what it would take to break the speed of light.

The second immersive exhibit is a large-scale model of the sandcrawler from Episode IV. Visitors enter its dark, rusted-steel interior where they are greeted by C-3PO. He and a video projection of Dr. Cynthia Breazeal, director of the Robotic Life Group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab, discuss what makes a good robot, taking on issues such as mobility, perception and cognition in robots. Dr. Breazeal uses moments from her career to illustrate

A futuristic city from the newest *Star Wars* films.



the Imagination



Luke Skywalker and the landspeeder from Episode I.

points in the discussion. "I think you could say I first became really interested in robots when I was maybe about 10-years-old," she says. "I saw *Star Wars* ... and I just loved the robots in the movie."

For those who want an enhanced experience of the exhibit, there is the Audio Antenna Multimedia Tour, which combines audio, video and still images. It also has a "bookmarking" feature that allows visitors to highlight specific content and e-mail it to themselves. ASL interpretation, audio-only and captioned audio are also offered. The Audio Antenna Multimedia Tour is \$5 for adults, \$4 for children, seniors and members. The tour is free to those with hearing and/or visual impairments.

Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination, supported in part by funds from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National

Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), will be on exhibit at the Museum of Science in Boston through April 30, 2006, when it will move on to its next venue. Admission will be by timed ticket only and will include a separate ticket for General Exhibit Hall

admission that can be used on the same day of a visit to *Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination* or within six months of touring the exhibit. Prices are \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors (60+), and \$17 for children (3-11). Advance ticket reservations are recommended.

For more information on the exhibition or to reserve tickets, visit starwars.mos.org or call (617) 723-2500, (617) 589-0417 (TTY). Members of the Museum of Science can purchase tickets for the exhibition at a special rate of \$3 for adults, seniors and children. For more information on how to become a Museum of Science Member, call (617) 589-0180 or visit www.mos.org.

More on page 19.

Where To Next?

Future stops on the exhibit's travel itinerary include:

- COSI, Columbus, Ohio – June through Aug. 2006
- Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, Portland, Ore. – Dec. 2006
- California Science Center, Los Angeles, Calif. – Feb. through April 2007
- The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Penn. – June through Aug. 2007
- Fort Worth Museum of Science, Fort Worth, Texas – Feb. through April 2008
- Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn. – June through Oct. 2008

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Advice for Novice Ghost Hunters

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• **Since haunted places often have odors, don't wear perfume,** cologne or other fragrances. "You want to be able to smell what is there," says Litsinger.

• **If you are looking to join an established group,** *Ghost!* magazine advises choosing carefully. "Be cautious of any group that claims to know all the answers and seems more interested in reinforcing their own belief system than in conducting impartial research."



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Special Hotel Package for Out-of-Town Visitors



The Royal Sonesta Hotel, which is next door to the Museum of Science, is offering a special *Star Wars* Exhibit Package, which includes accommodations for one evening

and two VIP admission tickets to the exhibit. The package begins at \$199 (valid weekends only, subject to availability) per room per night from Nov. 4, 2005 through April 30, 2006. Children under 17 stay free in the same room.

Located on the Cambridge side of Boston, the 400-room hotel sits on the banks of the Charles River, overlooking the Boston skyline. Amenities include Sony PlayStation, wired and wireless high-speed Internet access, and complimentary access to the health club and atrium style indoor pool. The hotel provides complimentary daily shuttle service to shopping and historic points of interest in Boston and Cambridge. For more information or to make a reservation visit

www.sonesta.com/boston or call (800) SONESTA (766-3787).

More on page 21.

Historic Moments and Observances with a Genre Twist

October

The first week of October is **World Space Week**, which is celebrated in about 50 nations every year. This year's theme is "Discovery and the Imagination." For more information, go to www.spaceweek.org.

On Oct. 2, 1955, "**Alfred Hitchcock Presents**" premiered. 266 half-hour episodes later, it went off the air in 1962.

Also on Oct. 2, but four years later in 1959, Rod Serling's "**Twilight Zone**" premiered. It lasted only 135 episodes, going off the air in 1964.

On Oct. 14, 1947, **Chuck Yeager** broke the sound barrier -- something thought to be impossible at the time.

Orson Welles scared the nation on Oct. 30, 1938, with his broadcast version of "**War of the Worlds**."



November

Nov. 2 is **Plan Your Epitaph Day**, which occurs every year to coincide with the Day of the Dead. It is "dedicated to the proposition that a forgettable gravestone is a fate worse than death." For more information, go to www.hardiehouse.org/epitaph.



Nov. 4 is not only **Waiting for the Barbarians Day**, but it is the day that **King Tut's tomb** was discovered in 1922.

On Nov. 30, 1982, Michael Jackson released his album "**Thriller**." When the video came out for the title track, many were impressed -- and yes, scared -- by the dancing zombies and Jackson's weird yellow eyes.

December

On Dec. 10, 1955, **Mighty Mouse Playhouse** premiered as a Saturday morning cartoon on CBS. This was really a re-packaging of the old Mighty Mouse cartoons, along with non-series Terrytoons, which first appeared in 1942.

On Dec. 11, 1972, **Apollo 17** landed on the moon. This was the eleventh manned space mission in the NASA Apollo program, and was the sixth and final mission not only of the Apollo program, but of human moon landings.

The most historic day in the history of **human flight** took place on Dec. 17, 1903. This was the day Orville Wright flew for 59 seconds above Kitty Hawk, N.C., the first time that a powered, heavier-than-air machine achieved controlled, sustained flight with a pilot aboard.



**Companion Book
Also Available**

Want to take the exhibit home with you? National Geographic produced a companion book featuring an introduction by Anthony Daniels, the actor who portrayed C-3PO, and a foreword by Ed Rodley, the Museum of Science exhibit planner. The book covers commercial space flight, personal hovercrafts, robot servants and trains that levitate by magnetism – all technologies currently being debated and worked on – as well as the people behind these technologies and what happens when their solutions are introduced into society. You can purchase the book at the Museum and wherever books are sold. Go to this issue's section of www.thegenretraveler.com for a direct link to Amazon. Suggested Retail: \$30.

While In Boston, Also See

Planning a trip to Boston to see *Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination?* You also might want to take in other sights. Here are some suggestions:

- A cobbled square in front of **Faneuil Hall**, a National Historic Site, features magicians, jugglers and other street performers.
- America's largest membership library, **Boston Athenaeum**, has free exhibitions for visitors. www.bostonathenaeum.org.
- Scenic cemeteries include 150-year-old **Forest Hills Cemetery** (www.foresthillstrust.org) with its Victorian sculptures and monuments and the **Old Granary Burying Ground**, where winged skulls adorn gravestones dating back to the 1660s.

The Salem Witch Museum is in nearby Salem, as well. For more information on festivals and events, visit the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau website, www.bostonusa.com.



CONVENTION LISTINGS

All listings are in the US unless otherwise noted.

October 2005

Sept. 29-Oct. 2, 2005:

Archon 29 at the Holiday Inn in Collinsville, Il. Guests include Jody Lynn Nye and Bill Fawcett. Media guests include Marc Singer and Tanya Roberts.

Focus: Science Fiction

For more information:

www.archonstl.org/29/

or call (636) 326-3026.

Oct. 7-9, 2005:

The Fourth Conjecture at the Double Tree Club in San Diego, Calif.

Focus: SF and Fantasy Literature

For more information:

www.conjecture.org.

Oct. 8, 2005:

Model Fest at the Air Victory Museum in Burlington County, N.J.

Focus: Plastic Modelers

For more information:

www.modelfest.info.

November 2005

Nov. 11-13, 2005:

United Fancon XV at the Marriot Hotel in Springfield, Mass. Guests include Patrick Stewart.

Focus: Science Fiction

For more information:

www.unitedfancon.com

or call (781) 986-8735.

Nov. 11-13, 2005:

Vulkon at the Orlando North Hilton in Orlando, Fla. Guests include Patrick Stewart, Linda Park, Anthony Montgomery, Ethan Phillips and Robert Picardo.

Focus: Science Fiction

For more information:

www.vulkon.com

or call (954) 441-8735.

Nov. 18-20, 2005:

Anime USA 7 at the Sheraton Premier at Tysons Corner, Vienna, Va. Guests include Vic Mignogna, Greg Ayres and Monica Rial.

Focus: Japanese Animation

For more information:

www.animeusa.org

or e-mail registration@animeusa.org.

December 2005

Dec. 2-4, 2005:

SMOFCON at the Red Lion Convention Center Hotel in Portland, Ore.

Focus: Science Fiction

For more information:

www.osfci.org/smofcon/

or call (503) 283-0802.

Dec. 3, 2005:

Model Fest at the Holiday Inn in Runnemede, N.J.

Focus: Plastic Modelers

For more information:

www.modelfest.info.

Dec. 4, 2005:

Model Fest at the Holiday Inn in College Park, Md.

Focus: Plastic Modelers

For more information:

www.modelfest.info.

January 2006

Jan. 20-22, 2006:

MarsCon 16 at the Holiday Inn Patriot in Williamsburg, Va. Guests include Order of the Stick's Rich Burlew.

Focus: Science Fiction

For more information:

www.marscon.net

or e-mail www.marscon.net.

Would you like your convention listed here? Standard listings are free of charge. Cons throughout the world are welcome to list. You can add bolding for \$5 (US) and your logo for \$9 (US). Standard listings include date of con, location, up to five guests, con focus, and contact URL, phone number and e-mail address. Each issue includes four months – the three for that quarter, plus the first month of the following quarter. Go to the Advertising section of [www.thegenreTraveler.com](http://www.thegenretraveler.com) for more information and an order form.