

WARCRY



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WARCRY SITES



Writing a review on a game such as Imperial Wars is not a simple task. This game cannot be compared to many other games, and to decide what standard it lives up to, or should live up to, is impossible. At a first

look, a confusion dose spreads around your mind. You don't know where to start, or even to look at.

This is an Episodic MetaGame, where you order your moves, and then wait for everyone else to end their turns, or for the time to run out. When that is done, you play the next turn – and view a summary of your past moves to see how things developed.

Everything is static. The 2D graphics are kept very simple. The backgrounds of the planets look more like a screen-picture, and there are very few animations. A glittering star, or a slow-moving gas cloud around the planets could have done the trick, but Imperial Wars is not interested in winning a beauty contest --- it holds a higher purpose than that, and it wants you to explore it.

The objective of the game is to score more than your opponents --- and to do that, you will need to build up your fleet as strong as possible. How you try to reach that objective depends entirely on the class you have chosen. There are 8 different classes to choose from, and each and one of them have specific abilities -- and rules that decide the way they score.

Terminators and Philosophers

All of the classes reflect elements from our own physical world, and it's all done in a sarcastic way. It's like an arm-wrestle between Doctor Who and Pulp Fiction – and the winner being Imperial Wars.

Take Terminators as an example; you can send your robots on an inhabited planet, and basically commit genocide, without getting the UN after you. This will boost your score, which make some Terminator players do this on their own planets.

If you play as a Philosopher, your main goal would be to convert people in joining your spiritual cause. Philosophers are not very Platonic; they and their Minons (not Minoans) are represented as religious fanatics. If you convert enough population to join your cause, they will send you tribute. If they are killed, they became martyrs – and earn you even more points.

Another amusing character is named 'Houri', a word that originates from the Arabic word for Nymph. If you play as Houri, you get the pleasure to can change your class at any time in the game. You can start the game by playing as a Philosopher, and end playing it as a Terminator. This can cause mistrust and speculations among the players, and that's exactly what is supposed to happen.

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Acting like Shakespeare

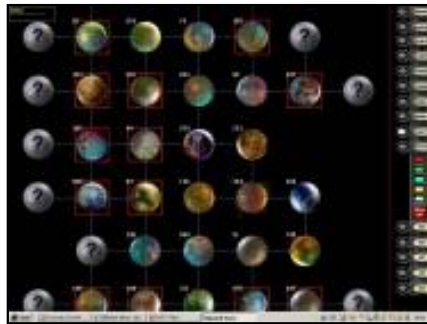
Role-playing is an important diplomacy factor when playing IW. Players can email each other by clicking on an email-button. Each player has his own email account – one click away, and it automatically takes you to your account. Negotiations, threats and pacts are done this way, and it's not unusual to read Shakespeare-copycats-material in emails. You can be anyone you want in IW, and no one will judge you – the players will just play along. Alone-is-strong does not apply to this game.



The music helps the game get that old, special science-fiction cliché. It clings quite well to the graphics, and adds a comfortable atmosphere to the game.

Being a strategist

The strategy looks simple and ordinary. You have a universe filled with planets that are lined up in rows, forming a rectangle. The distance between the planets is equal. If the planets had been thrown in different directions, the strategy would have been more complex and intriguing. There is no tech-tree, and only three improvements can be built on the planets: forts, mines and factories.



The most bizarre thing about the game is the fleet. It is the game that creates the fleet, not the player. Everyone is given a certain number of fleets that can be strengthened or captured by other players. This concrete censorship was obviously imposed for practical reasons, but this is no loss to the strategy value --- it's actually helping the complexity. Having a fleet is now a privilege, not something to be taken for granted. Assaults are not planned only when to take over planets, but also enemy fleets.

The economy in the game is also kept simple, yet it's complex. The currency is called 'Imperial Credits', and allows you to improve the infrastructure and strengthen the fleets. Trading goes in two forms: trading with ships, or mutual understandings -- which are more of a trusting thing. Add a few artefacts and precious stones and you get a complete universal bazaar.

A few problems...

IW can get a little 'buggy', especially if you are running on Win2000. Some bugs close the game, other bugs force you to reboot. This isn't such a big deal, since repeating the orders is only about a few clicks here and there, and you're done. Luckily, tech-support is available 24/7. The server may also be slow sometimes, but it's usually no problem logging in at any hour a day.

Who should play it?

Players who enjoy a strategy challenge will find this game worthy of their time, but Newbies might find this game boring. The lack of interactive animations makes it difficult to entertain certain people. Intelligent Life Games created a unique game, which can be appreciated if is only given the chance -- and it can also get very addicting -- you might even stop smoking. Overall, this is a worthy game that should be given attention. For the hardcore gamers, IW will only be a tea break from the other games, since IW won't get you occupied for more than 1 hour for each turn.

Rating 7/10

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Review of Imperial Wars 12/08/2003