

## **Stellaris is a grand strategy/RTS game hybrid with many RPG elements.**

### **Stellaris**

- **Grand strategy**

- Empire building, economy/resource management, diplomacy, 4X (explore, expand, exploit and exterminate), big map and many enemy factions.
- One full playthrough takes many hours and most often is played over multiple sittings.

- **RTS**

- No turns, every player plays at the same time, time tracked in in-game days => 1 in-game day = 1 real life second
- Managing everything in real time means, there are not that many of a micromanagement options.
- Many time sensitive decisions to make.

- **RPG elements**

- Game offers RPG elements in terms of both roleplaying and “character” (empire) building via traits/modifiers.
- Before the game starts, player can create own empires.
- Player can choose from many options regarding government, leaders, empire species, ship designs, planet construction or space-borne structures construction.
  - Most of the differences between options come from modifiers – one empire has bonus for war ships and other empire is economy focused.
- Game offers both gameplay-oriented choices as well as “flavour” choices with less impact on gameplay, but very important for player expression – players can control empire of necromants -> not that much different gameplay, has great lore implications.

I played the game since 2018 and have clocked in over 650 hours, but many of these hours are “wasted” for observation of the current game, as it functions as game as a service model – the game felt different to play in the past. This kind of monetization prevents me from assessing the whole game, as there are DLCs I do not own to experience on my own. The biggest (and costliest) DLCs add a new system player can interact with.

Game systems have very “isolated black boxes” structure, where majority of the system is self-contained with limited connections to other systems – for example espionage system is its own minigame that has a very limited impact on the main core systems of the game. I suspect that such a structure is a byproduct of the DLC design as the game should be playable without any DLC, therefore systems are treated as an add-on more than integration in the core structure of the game.

Overall I am the targeted audience as the game offers both tools to build efficient empires, while retaining some roleplaying flavours. Stellaris contains both of my

favourite genres (grand 4x strategy and RPG) and combines them just right, that the player feels there is always some way to improve when trying to figure out the game, but also there is a joy to be found when playing sub optimally. The game is played on two planes, one is the galaxy map and the other is situated in every star system – to fight battles play must send fleets from the galaxy map and the fight happens in the star system view. It provides great range of playstyles, and it takes a great deal of inspiration from different sci-fi franchises – it is possible to play as a Borg or 40k humanity, yet there is no direct mention of either. But as the game is extremely wide and sandbox-y, it is prone to player exploits, weird unintuitive strategies or “cheese”. As a result, there is no competitive scene in this game, but it is more of a laid-back game.