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[Nexus: The Jupiter Incident](#)

Be all that you can be!

You may think that I am out of my mind to analyze such an old game; strange how we start thinking on another time scale whenever we talk of computer games. Anyway, the reason I'm putting this game under a microscope is because I feel like it has been the most underrated game of 2005 when in fact it should have been in the top five. Why do games that are supposed to be hits fall into oblivion? Is it bad publicity or even the lack of publicity whatsoever? Or maybe they just arrive at the wrong time when the market is saturated by some other genre? We will probably never know, but this is the main reason I'm bringing this baby in the spot light. You have to take a second look. We may never know all the motives that render a game forgotten, but I know at least one in the case at hand. This particular title has changed its name twice. Hold down to your seats because I'm about to say the first and true name of [Nexus: The Jupiter Incident](#)... the suspense is killing me... just a little longer... Imperium Galactica 3. Yes, this is the awful truth. This masterpiece was supposed to be the long awaited sequel to the great; you guessed it, Imperium Galactica 2. For some odd reason, like money, the project got scrapped and picked up again under a different name, Galaxy Andromeda. I can see why this specific title didn't work... The final version that would eventually hit the shelves on Earth is of course Nexus: The Jupiter Incident. This is like dodging buyers: when they saw the people have an interest in the game, they changed the name and then once more to make sure nobody has followed them. Sure nobody bought the game - they didn't know what to buy. **Story:** I have to admit that the story is not the strongest point in the game, but at least it's not about mega corporations in the future fighting for supremacy. One thing is for sure, it has an original script with powerful-beyond-imagination alien races, strange artifacts, a ship no one knows where it came from and manipulative aliens (part II). The game plot revolves around your character, Marcus Cromwell, who for most of the time will be in command of one or more ships, in a war that doesn't really concerns him. It's impossible to sketch an outline plot because it's very complex and has a lot of twists and turns which I don't want to spoil for the majority of you that haven't even heard of it. **Gameplay:** Nexus: The Jupiter Incident doesn't really fall under any genre, but for a nice convention we will call it an RTT, as in Real Time Tactics. It's a bit like the Sudden Strike and Blitzkrieg series, the difference here being that the action takes place in space. It's not an RTS (Real Time Strategy) because it doesn't involve any kind of construction of peasants or other equivalents, not even bases or other units. At the beginning of any mission, you receive a number of ships which will compose, in time, your fleet. Sometimes you'll receive ships during the mission as well, but that's a rare case. I said that it's not indigenous to any usual genre because you can't really find anything similar to it and to make things even more complicated (in a good way), there are some RPG elements between the missions. You are able to make some improvement and upgrades to the fleet ships; those choices are extremely important for the upcoming missions because they can really influence the outcome of the battle. Let's separate and analyze these two aspects of the game. *The RPG section:* this part takes place in a very intuitive panel. Every ship gets a certain number of points which can be used to acquire some parts or upgrades. This way, the vessels gets more and more powerful after every successful battle and even the commanders, including you. The selection the player makes here gets the job done in the next missions and even a misplaced gun can make all the difference in the Universe. *The Battles:* If the talk about the [RPG](#) elements didn't catch your eye, this certainly will. The battles are simply beautiful, almost cinematic. If you were to transfer the image from the monitor to a TV, a bystander wouldn't be able to tell the

difference. What you have to understand from the very beginning is that the ships have mass, lots of mass. They turn very slowly because... well because they are BIG. This aspect makes the battles take a long time; a mission could take up to one hour to complete (if you get it right after some trial & error attempts). The player can control one or several ships at a time in two ways. One is fairly simple and it involves a handful of buttons like "Go To", "Attack", "Destroy Hull" and so on. However, we are interested in the second approach, which is much more complex. Players have the possibility to independently control every subsystem of the ship(s), thus expanding to countless tactical strategic moves. In this manner you are able to practically shoot every weapon you have, at a different ship (provided that they are in range), at the same time. Of big help here is the pause option which can make your life a lot easier; without this it would be virtually impossible to control more than one ship at a time. Other systems that can be controlled are the engines (usually every ship has two engines, primary and a back-up), the shields and some peripherals like "Data Scanner". You have subsystems, but the enemy has subsystems as well, protected by a shield, most of the time. Actually, the entire game is about bringing the other bastard's shield down; after that, all you have to do is just destroy its hull. Fighters and commandos provide another twist in the strategic value of the game. Almost every ship can be equipped between missions with squadrons composed of the above troops. The **fighters** can be separated in two groups: for destroying subsystems and for defense against other enemy spacecrafts. The commandos are used to board ships that were rendered defenseless in a battle. You only have to worry about losing the main ship, all other vessels (with very few exceptions) being expandable. It is not recommended, however, to lose too many ships because they are transferred from one mission to another, with the proper upgrades, thus improving the chances in the future. If you think the plot doesn't give too many chances of exploring your inner strategist, you are wrong. Even if you try to start the same mission twice and complete it in the same way, there are no chances of pulling that off. The things that can go wrong and a small random factor inserted in the enemy's AI, make the single player campaign worth replaying over and over again. **Concept:** This game proves that producers can think outside the box and they don't have to abide by the general rules. Their excuse: years and years in development, taking in consideration the community input, making practically a unique game, in a class of its own. **Video:** The first version of this game, Imperium Galactica 3, was optimized for Matrox Parhelia and it looked pretty darn good too. Matrox took a dive, but the extensive work over the years made this title one of the most optimized game I have ever seen. It runs on a GF 4 MX the same way it runs on a FX 6600, the difference being the DirectX version used. On a higher setting, Nexus shows his true face, modeled by bump mapping, alpha blending and pixel shaders. The explosions are spectacular. I can almost imagine some geek (like myself) saying something like this in a brainstorming session: "What if we were to put nuclear explosions in space?" I think that says it all about graphics... **Sound:** There isn't any sound in space, but we couldn't play a mute game so we have explosions, beams of energy, engines and small arms fire. The acting isn't brilliant but it's good enough not to bother me too much. What I loved most are the inter-mission briefings, most of them making you angry because you are treated like an incompetent commander, making you want to prove otherwise. **Multiplayer:** This is where the true quality of a commander is shown. The confrontation between two Humans is something to remember. After some time, you learn what to expect from the AI, but the human factor is fantastic. You never know what is going to happen. The beauty of spontaneous thoughts... **Conclusion:** Nexus: The Jupiter Incident is without a doubt the best strategy game of 2005; all others couldn't hold a candle to it. Simply put, I think it should be in the top five strategies of all time. It's up to you to decide if I'm right.