

Our favourite gadgets from Star Wars and their real-life counterparts

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The space opera that started a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away has finally come to an end with the release of “Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker” on December 2019. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Star Wars franchise has changed the landscape of Science Fiction movies for good. The fascination surrounding technology shown throughout the franchise has always been high. In 2012, a petition in the USA urging the Government of the country to create a death star of their own had received more than 25,000 signatures and thus required the Government to respond. While the petitioners still wait for the arrival of their very own Palpatine to greenlit their idea, simpler versions of gadgets featured in Star Wars already exist in real life and more are being developed. This article talks about some of them.



Droids

This one is as obvious as Luke and Leia's parentage is if you've seen the prequel trilogy first. From the goofy C3-PO to the battle droids, Star Wars universe has featured an abundance of droids. Even though the world is yet to see killer battle droids in real life, interactive robots are no longer a wonder to mankind. The most advanced one among them would be ASIMO (Advanced Step in Innovative

Mobility), which was created by Honda. ASIMO can perform a series of physical activities due to its superior postural balancing ability. It can interact with human beings and understand commands, even if the command is to bring you a cup of tea. It cannot, however, speak 6 million languages as C3-PO can. Honda eliminated commercial development of ASIMO in 2018 but the robot continues to make public appearances.

Holographic Messages

The Skywalker saga was set in motion when R2-D2 delivered Leia's holographic message to Obi Wan in “A New Hope”. Researchers at the School of Engineering and Informatics of the University of Sussex have developed a hologram that can be touched, felt and heard. Although the developers prefer their

creation be known as a 3D projection rather than a hologram, it still wins the award for closest resemblance to the iconic holographic messages in Star Wars. Whether this tactile hologram will be developed commercially is yet to be seen but it can be safely assumed that humans are not very far away from holographic communication.



Speeder Bikes

The superfast speeder bikes were introduced in “Return of The Jedi” and have been fan favourites since then. More advanced versions were featured in the prequel trilogy and J.J. Abrams's sequel trilogy. In 2017, Russian company Hoversurf introduced Scorpion 3, which is the first-ever fully manned hoverbike of the planet.

Scorpion 3 runs on electricity and functions basically as a drone with a motorcycle seat. It can fly up to 10 meters and has a maximum speed of 50 kmph. The flying bike has already gone into commercial production and can be preordered now. Yes, it is not nearly as advanced as the speeder bikes owned by Star Wars characters, but it's a start.

Bionic Limbs

Two of our favourite Skywalkers owe a lot to bionic body parts. While turning a human into a menacing Sith lord by keeping him alive with bionic limbs brought a part of Star Wars technology to life. Touch Bionics offers the i-Limb hand, which is as close as it gets to Luke's prosthetic arm. The muscle signals in the residual arm of the user can control and move the i-Limb. The fingers are individually powered and the prosthetic arm even provides the users with a choice

of grip. It also comes in the form of prosthetic fingers, known as partial hand solution. Introduced in 2007, i-Limb has always been commercially produced.

Death Stars and Lightsabers (no, LaserSaber is not a Lightsaber) are yet far, far away from modern science. But if there is one thing this space opera has taught us, it's that there is always hope. So, while we re-watch the original trilogy and binge on “The Mandalorian”, we can always hope that our successors might get to fight evil with actual lightsabers and take a ride in the Millennium Falcon someday.

