History

Dark Galaxy has undergone different iterations over the years however these can be split into 4 distinct phases of code

- Phase 1: Initial Code - Rounds Saturn 1 - 3
- Phase 2: The "New Code" - Rounds Saturn 4-8 + Mars Rounds 1-4
- Phase 3: The "New New Code" - Rounds Jupiter 1-5 and Pluto 1-3
- Phase 4: Sabbatical and the Next Stage - Andromeda and Beyond

Phase 1: Initial Code - Rounds Saturn 1 - 3

After an initial phase of testing Round 1 began on 7th May 2001. AKA Colony Wars as there was in fact no actual combat so all people could do was colonise planets.

Rounds 2 and 3 were more exciting with the introduction of combat and heralded the start of some of the major game alliances along with a number of mass inviting alliances which had 100's of players join as there was no member limit restriction.

In this phase players would start in a system with 3 planets, the home planet plus one slightly better and one slightly worse than the home planet. Other players would start in the same sector and it was a race to build up the other planets around you. If you had enough extra resources you could also take them to trade posts to exchange.

Issues at the time included larger players being able to jump to new systems and take the better planets before new players could get going and also the potential to have your home planet taken and so removing you from the game completely.

At this time it was also possible to rename systems with this being used to spell out messages to other players..

Phase 2: The "New Code" - Rounds Saturn 4-8 + Mars Rounds 1-4

After the first 3 rounds the developers chose to revamp the UI of the game along with the code behind it.

A number of issues had been noted which were addressed due to abuse factors. Out went solely 3 planet systems, out went trade posts due to their misuse and out went mass alliances.

In their place home planets were moved out of the range of other players so even if you lost all your planets you could still try and continue back from your home planet.

Alliance member limits were capped at 100 players and while this could be worked around to some extent by making secondary alliances they would still be able to kill each other if a mistake was made.

Sectors were split into systems including a mix of 1 planet to 5 planet systems. The less planets in the system the better the planets were for abundances and space. This change also increased the number of planets available in a sector and so with the introduction of planet limits the better players would no longer take all planets in a sector, leaving space for new/smaller players to build up.

By this time some of the older alliances had broken up and new ones began to emerge. For the active organised alliances they no longer needed huge amounts of members to do well and so a organised alliances of 30-50 members became more frequent.

Due to the change in travel, in part to protect new starters who signed up late there was only linear travel between galaxies. Only once 1 galaxy was full would the next open, this lead to strategic alliance decisions to avoid/work with other specific alliances without the potential threat of being jumped on from another galaxy due to the travel times. It was quite possible to sign up later but away from the majority of active alliances and so farm your own galaxy without much fighting.

At this time a second server was introduced to allow for increased player numbers and for somewhere to restart if you lost everything in the Saturn server. For this reason the Mars server was generally considered the lesser server and no truly good alliance would play there without being mocked for hiding from the real fights.

Issues in this phase included the fact that fleet scan would show all ships in a galaxy not just the fleet you wanted to scan making it useless and meaning often it was a case of attempting to work out an enemy fleet composition based on radar score or just sending all you had to try and win the fight.

People were also able to block enemy planets by using "the fighter bug", sending 1 fighter each turn so any combat stopped loading/unloading at the planet.

In the end a bug allowing people to abuse the building of destroyers to massively increase their score. This ultimately ended up in the game being stopped for redevelopment.

Phase 3: The "New New Code" - Rounds Jupiter 1-5 and Pluto 1-3

Again a new code base and a change in direction from the previous games.

Home planets were still protected however you were no longer limited to your original starting galaxy as travel was no longer linear.

Galaxies were changed so that the even numbered galaxies had fewer but better planets in making them better to colonise/invade. This meant there was an initial rush by the bigger alliances to claim a galaxy that was empty with the aim of avoiding others until later on when players had built up.

This sometimes worked and sometimes lead to more than 1 large alliance in a galaxy at the start having to fight over a reduced number of planets from an early point in the game.

Fleet scan had been fixed and the combat was changed to be more staged. This meant that for those willing to take the time it was now possible to gather data, predict the outcomes of battles and also use the least amount of ships to counter specific fleets.

Unfortunately this change also had an outcome which was not helpful as eventually the most effective fleet that could be built was made up of mainly a screen of Fighters plus Battleships with some bombers thrown in. Frigates became useless as a way to speed up travel times once Traders were available. Destroyers and Cruisers required research points to build which were better spent on reaching a higher planet limit as the ships would die without really being able to carry out their function.

In the first Pluto round there was also an issue which resulted in several experienced players quitting or going into hiding their names for later rounds. The server had a problem which resulted in turns being frozen. To compensate for this the admins pushed a manual turn update once the game was ready, to bring the turn number to where it should have been. With players being unprepared for this some planned attacks broke down or were countered more effectively as people were still able to add to their queues while the game was frozen.

Phase 4: Sabbatical and the Next Stage - Andromeda and Beyond

Current development started after the end of Jupiter 5 however outside factors over took the creators ability to work on the game. Although some tests were carried out development effectively ceased in 2012.

Scroll forward to July 2019 and a chance question and check on the home page has led to development being restarted and at a faster pace than expected due to the more than anticipated interest from former players.

The galaxies have been redesigned again with a single central galaxy for the bigger players to fight over as the planets are much better than anywhere else.

Combat has also been overhauled and the battles appear more as expected so Fighters plus Battleships are not always going to win every battle.

Every player will now also start with a single outpost free to use which will speed up the initial phase of the game for most players.

A Beta round during the COVID19 pandemic attracted interest from a number of original players and some new ones however this lead to some "tension" in certain parts and ended up bringing the game to a halt once more.

February 2022. With the game stagnating once more but with an almost ready code a daring plan was hatched and the code base and control was passed to a new development team to move the game forward.

After more testing and adjustment as of July 2023 the game launched a new 1 hour turn game with the expectation of more regular games while development to modernise further takes place.

Start your Outposts and watch that space, because that is my planet.