

# 'Star Wars' creator Lucas opens new HQ

By *srlinuxx*

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A new complex that will house most of "Star Wars" creator George Lucas' empire could be the entertainment industry's most sophisticated digital arts and entertainment center - complete with a stone fountain of Jedi master Yoda at the front door.

Lucasfilm Ltd. on Saturday celebrated the move of the company - and most of its work force - to the Letterman Digital Arts Center. But Lucas said he'll likely keep away from the center and instead focus on developing a final "Indiana Jones" film and smaller film projects.

"In terms of being a corporate executive, I'm pretty much tired," he said. "I'm going to focus on making movies."

Getting into the new complex will be more difficult than a rescue mission on the Death Star. Employees will receive cards that can be used for ATM withdrawals, company store purchases or a cafeteria lunch - and also for airport-like security scans.

Employees will begin arriving in early July, but moves will be spaced out to make sure designers can work seamlessly on film projects.

The 23-acre complex will include the engine for a "virtual studio" that will allow artists, game developers and directors to collaborate on visual effects and digital images. There also are a few old-fashioned movie theaters, including a 300-seat theater and smaller 65-seat theaters that film editors can use to review film cuts.

The campus includes a data network with more than 300 10-gigabyte ports. Fiber-optics cables are connected to every artist desktop, allowing high-resolution images on each computer. In all, there are 600 miles of cable throughout the campus's four buildings.

"The creation of the campus and the technology inside means that fewer and fewer obstacles are in the way of the creative process," said Dennis Muren, Industrial Light & Magic's senior visual effects supervisor and a winner of six Oscars for best visual effects.

Most of the divisions will move to the complex from Marin County - the corporate offices of Lucasfilm Ltd., special effects house Industrial Light & Magic and LucasArts, which produces video games. The center also will house the company's lucrative licensing division.

Lucasfilm will continue to maintain Big Ranch, Skywalker Ranch and the other Marin properties, where any filming will likely take place.

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