SOFTWARE & TECH

Star Wars Edge Of The Empire

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Navigating the Outer Rim: A Complete Guide to Star Wars Edge of the Empire

For decades, the **Star Wars** universe has captivated audiences with its epic tales of Jedi, Sith, and galactic conflict. Yet, for many fans, the true heart of the galaxy far, far away lies not in the Jedi Council chambers or on the bridge of a Star Destroyer, but in the smoky cantinas, dusty spaceports, and treacherous smuggling routes of the Outer Rim. **Star Wars Edge of the Empire**, the tabletop role-playing game published by Fantasy Flight Games (FFG), invites players to explore precisely this underworld. It is a game about scoundrels, bounty hunters, explorers, and colonists who operate in the shadows of the Galactic Civil War, carving out a living far from the prying eyes of the Empire. This comprehensive guide will delve into everything you need to know about **Edge of the Empire**, from its unique narrative dice system to its rich setting and memorable characters.

What is Star Wars Edge of the Empire?

Star Wars Edge of the Empire is a tabletop role-playing game that focuses on the fringe elements of the **Star Wars** galaxy. It was the first core rulebook released in FFG's line of **FFG Star Wars RPG** games, which later expanded to include **Age of Rebellion** (focused on military conflict) and **Force and Destiny** (focused on Force-sensitive characters). While all three games share the same core rules and can be combined, **Edge of the Empire**stands apart for its emphasis on self-interest, survival, and making credits by any means necessary. Players typically take on roles like smugglers, bounty hunters, and pirates, plying their trade in the lawless regions where the Empire's influence is weakest.

The Setting: Scum and Villainy in the Outer Rim

The game is set primarily in the Outer Rim Territories, a vast expanse of space that includes iconic locations like Tatooine, Nar Shaddaa, and the asteroid belt of the Hoth system. This is the playground of **Star Wars**' most memorable rogues: Han Solo, Lando Calrissian, Boba Fett, and Jabba the Hutt. In **Edge of the Empire**, the Galactic Civil War between the Empire and the Rebel Alliance is a background element; the players are more concerned with paying off debts, finding the next job, and staying alive. The default assumption is that the characters are out for themselves, though they may form bonds of loyalty or find themselves entangled in larger events. The tone is gritty, morally ambiguous, and rich with opportunities for both high-stakes action and subtle intrigue.

Core Mechanics: The Narrative Dice System

One of the most innovative features of **Star Wars Edge of the Empire**is its custom narrative dice system. Instead of using standard numbered dice, the game uses proprietary dice with symbols that represent success, failure, advantage, threat, triumph, and despair. This system moves beyond simple pass/fail checks and injects narrative twists into every roll.

- Success and Failure determine whether a character accomplishes their primary goal.
- Advantage and Threat introduce positive or negative side effects. For example, a successful blaster shot with advantage might also knock the weapon out of the enemy's hand.
- Triumph and Despair are rare results that can dramatically change the course of a scene. A triumph on a piloting check might allow the character to discover a secret shortcut, while a despair on a social roll could turn a neutral NPC into a bitter enemy.

This system encourages players and Game Masters (GMs) to collaboratively build the story. It is not just about whether you hit the target, but how the story unfolds around that action. The dice themselves are available in physical form or through digital apps, and they are a hallmark of the **FFG Star Wars RPG** experience.

The Obligation Mechanic

Another key rule unique to **Edge of the Empire** is the Obligation mechanic. Every character starts with a certain amount of Obligation, representing debts, secrets, or responsibilities from their past. It could be a debt to a crime lord, a family member in danger, or a bounty on their head. Obligation is a double-edged sword: it adds depth to the character's backstory and gives the GM a tool to create personal hooks. However, if a character's Obligation becomes too high, it can negatively affect their dice rolls or even force them to deal with their problems directly. Players can reduce Obligation by completing story arcs related to their debt, or they can increase it temporarily to gain extra starting equipment or skills. This mechanic ensures that characters are never completely free of their past, driving the narrative forward.

Character Creation: Build Your Scoundrel

Creating a character in **Star Wars Edge of the Empire** is a flexible process that allows you to define not only skills and abilities but also motivations and affiliations. The game provides six starting careers, each with multiple specializations that offer unique talents and skills.

Careers and Specializations

The core rulebook includes six base careers:

1. Bounty Hunter – Track and capture targets using stealth, combat, and investigation. Specializations include Assassin, Gadgeteer, and Survivalist.
2. Colonist – A builder and negotiator, often involved in settling new worlds or running businesses. Specializations include Doctor, Marshal, Scholar, and Politico.
3. Explorer – Scouts, archaeologists, and adventurers who chart unknown regions. Specializations include Fringer, Scout, and Trader.
4. Hired Gun – A mercenary or bodyguard focused on combat. Specializations include Bodyguard, Marauder, and Mercenary Soldier.
5. Smuggler – The iconic rogue who runs contraband, flies fast ships, and talks their way out of trouble. Specializations include Pilot, Scoundrel, and Thief.
6. Technician – A mechanic, hacker, or slicer who keeps the ship running and bypasses security. Specializations include Mechanic, Outlaw Tech, and Slicer.

Players can also choose to cross-specialize as they gain experience, creating truly unique characters. A Smuggler might pick up some Bounty Hunter talents, or a Technician could dabble in being a Colonist leader. The system encourages growth in multiple directions, reflecting the diverse skills needed to survive on the fringe.

Creating a Backstory with Motivation

Beyond stats, each character chooses a Motivation that drives their actions. Examples include ambition, bounty, discovery, or ideology. This Motivation ties directly into Obligation and provides the GM with hooks for personal

stories. A character with a "Discovery" Motivation might be obsessed with finding a lost Jedi artifact, while one with "Ambition" seeks to build a criminal empire. This depth makes every character feel like a living part of the Star Wars galaxy.

Gameplay and Adventures: The Edge Experience

Playing **Star Wars Edge of the Empire** typically involves a group of characters undertaking jobs for various patrons. These jobs might involve smuggling spice, hunting a rogue droid, exploring an uncharted planet, or robbing an Imperial transport. The game is highly sandbox-oriented, meaning the players have a great deal of freedom in how they approach objectives. The narrative dice system ensures that even a simple negotiation can become a memorable scene with unexpected developments.

Sample Adventure: The Long Arm of the Hutt

To give you a taste, consider a classic **Edge of the Empire** scenario: a Hutt crime lord hires the characters to retrieve a stolen cargo of medical supplies from a group of pirates hiding in an asteroid base. The players might choose to negotiate, sneak in, or blast their way through. With the narrative dice, a failed stealth check might result in an advantage (they trigger a alarm, but also discover a hidden treasure room) or a threat (they sneak in but leave evidence that the Hutt later uses against them). The Obligation mechanic could add tension: one character owes the Hutt money, putting extra pressure on the mission's success.

Expanding the Game: Sourcebooks and Supplements

Fantasy Flight Games released a wealth of material for **Star Wars Edge of the Empire** during its print run. Core supplements include:

- Beyond the Rim – An adventure module that sends players on a treasure hunt for a lost Jedi ship.
- Sunrise on the Outer Rim – A collection of locations and adventures in the Outer Rim.
- Fly Casual – A sourcebook focused on expanding the Smuggler and Hired Gun careers, with new specializations, gear, and ship options.
- Dangerous Covenants – A book dedicated to the Bounty Hunter career, including rules for ship modifications, built-in rivalry systems, and new equipment.
- Special Modifications – For Technicians, providing extensive rules for crafting and modifying gear.
- No Disintegrations – Another Bounty Hunter-focused supplement with new adventures and antagonist organizations.

Additionally, there is a **Beginner Game** box set that introduces the rules with pre-generated characters and a mini-adventure, making it perfect for newcomers. The **Game Master's Kit** provides a screen and a short adventure, while the **Adventure Decks** offer modular encounters.

How Edge of the Empire Compares to Age of Rebellion and Force and Destiny

If you are familiar with the other **FFG Star Wars RPG** lines, you may wonder how **Edge of the Empire** differs. While all three use the same basic rules, their focus and character options vary significantly.

- Age of Rebellion is about being part of the Rebel Alliance. Characters have Duty instead of Obligation, and the game revolves around military missions, espionage, and liberating planets. It is more aligned with the Galactic Civil War's larger conflict.
- Force and Destiny is about Force-sensitive characters exploring their connection to the Force, seeking Jedi artifacts, and avoiding the Inquisitorius. Characters have Morality instead of Obligation, and the game is more spiritual and mysterious.
- Edge of the Empire is the most open and self-directed. It lacks the structured military chain of command

of Age of Rebellion or the mystical calling of Force and Destiny. Instead, it emphasizes personal motives and the freedom (and danger) of the fringe. Many players combine elements from all three lines, allowing a Rebel soldier, a Force-sensitive Padawan, and a Smuggler to share a ship and adventures.

Tips for Game Masters Running Edge of the Empire

Running **Edge of the Empire**can be incredibly rewarding, but it requires a different mindset than more traditional RPGs. Here are some tips for GMs:

- Embrace the dice: The narrative dice system thrives on improvisation. When a player rolls advantage or threat, use it to introduce complications or opportunities. Let the story evolve organically.
- Keep Obligation relevant: Regularly remind players of their Obligations by introducing NPCs or situations related to their debts. This keeps the characters grounded and motivated.
- Foster player agency: Since the game is about scoundrels operating outside the law, give players multiple ways to solve problems. Reward creativity, whether it's through combat, stealth, or social manipulation.

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