May the 4th Be With You
Star Wars and UIC
Episode I

Andy Johnson
Director of Research, evl
Professor of Computer Science, UIC
• 1969 Dan Sandin comes to Art Department to bring computers into art curriculum
• 1973 Tom DeFanti comes to Chemistry Department with his GRASS language
• Together they found the Circle Graphics Habitat at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
Electronic Visualization Events in 1975, 1976 – real time interactive computer graphics, video processing, sound synthesis performances
May 1976 – LA
Artist Larry Cuba
needed to create
the pilots briefing –
the only computer
graphics in the
original Star Wars
• Steve Heminover has the original vector general terminal, interface, and PDP-11/45 computer

• Plans for the death star are 2.5 megabytes, smaller than one photo from your smartphone today
• Tom DeFanti joked about getting tenure for Star Wars
• Larry Cuba continued working as a computer-animation artist and promoting the work of west coast experimental filmmakers
• Early 80s evl works with Midway games to allow people to program their own computer graphics at home
• 1987 - The Interactive Image at the Museum of Science and Industry - collaboration between UIC College of Engineering and School of Art and Design
• 1987 - Visualization in Scientific Computing National Science Foundation report in 1987
... almost 50 years later

- Continue working in interactive visualization helping people work more effectively with their data and their colleagues
- Continue working with Tom and Dan
- Continue working across disciplines
- New Data Science undergrad major
- New CS+DES undergrad major
- Graduating students working in universities, laboratories, tech companies, special effects houses, startups