

Datcenters in Movies

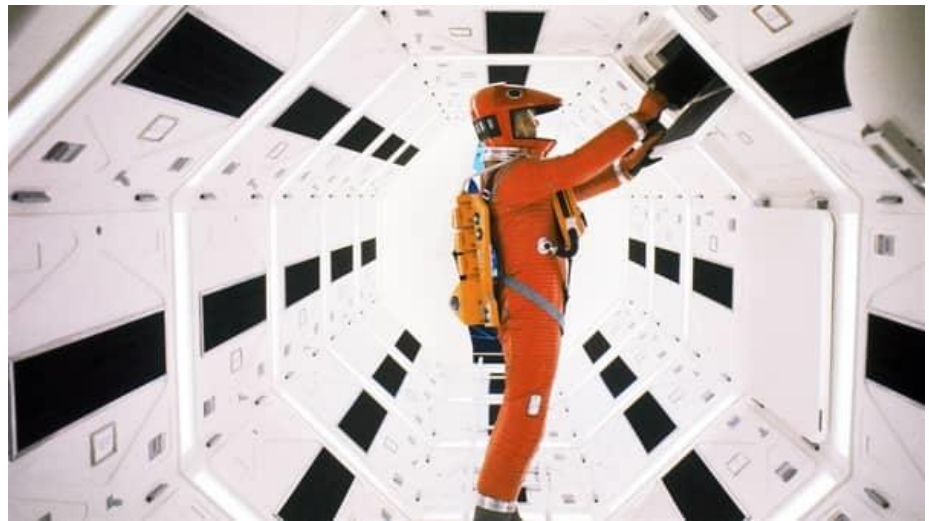


Technology, including special effects in movies, as truly evolved. How have datacenters evolved in movies – not just as a background prop but as a central feature? We highlight a few movies below...

[2001: A Space Odyssey](#), 1968

Keir Dullea, Gary Lockwood, William Sylvester – A quest to find mankind's origins with help from supercomputer H.A.L 9000

The main character must disassemble the AI villain inside the datacenter. And, while datacenters did not make it to space by 2001, that technology is



well underway for the near future. The movie is iconic in [reflecting much of the technology](#) we take for granted today.

[WarGames](#), 1987

Matthew Broderick, Ally Sheedy, John Wood – A young man finds a backdoor to a military central computer and game play is blurred with reality and the potential threat of WWII.

Okay, fair enough, no datacenter. But, it gets an [honorable mention](#) at that start of this evolution because President Reagan asked how plausible the plot was and signed the first computer security [directive](#) by a president, “National Policy on Telecommunications and Automated Information Systems Security” in response.

[Hackers](#), 1995

Jonny Lee Miller, Angelina Jolie, Jesse Bradford – Hackers are blamed for a virus that will capsize five oil tankers

This movie influenced and perpetuated the myth that hackers are so smart that it is pointless to fight them. The datacenter servers were blue boxes lit up with lasers. As all technology insiders know, datacenters are not (currently) designed for aesthetic appeal.



[Entrapment](#), 1999

Sean Connery, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Ving Rhames – An insurance agent tracks down an art thief

They sneak into a server room, break open a cabinet and steal millions from a stock exchange by connecting a few patch cables. The scene is [often cited as one of the worst](#) "hacking" scenes in movies. The alarm is set once the cable touches the laptop and not the server.

[The Matrix](#), 1999

Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss – Inside a simulated reality, the Matrix, machines use people as an energy source. Reeves leads a rebellion against the machines.

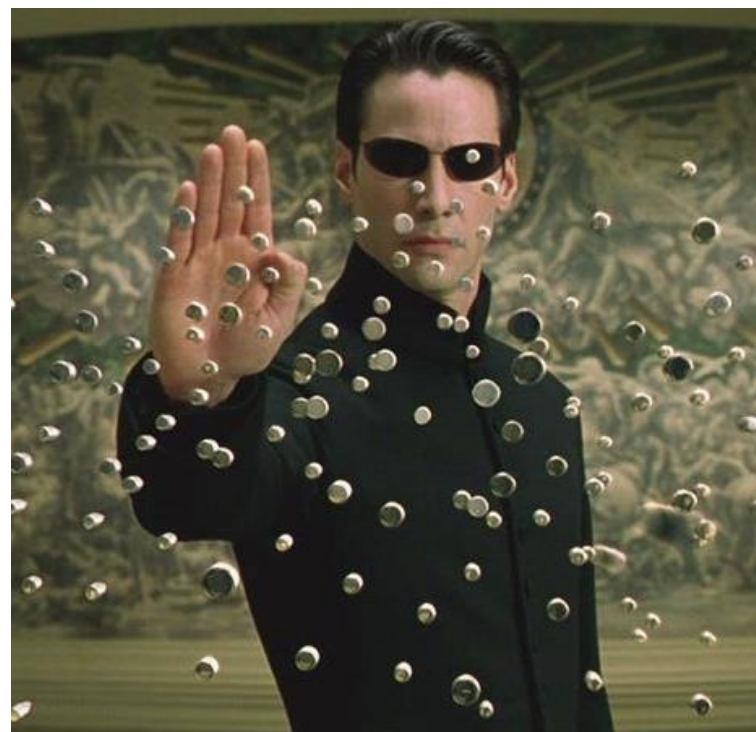


Humans are the perfect battery for this datacenter. And fortunately, the energy required to keep these people living and incubated is lower than the energy generated to power the datacenter. Released the same year as Entrapment? From raising questions about the role of AI and the direction of technology, the Matrix definitely [brings the cool factor](#) to the techie.

[Ocean's Eleven](#), 2001

George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts – Danny Ocean and his 10 accomplices plan to rob three Vegas casinos simultaneously

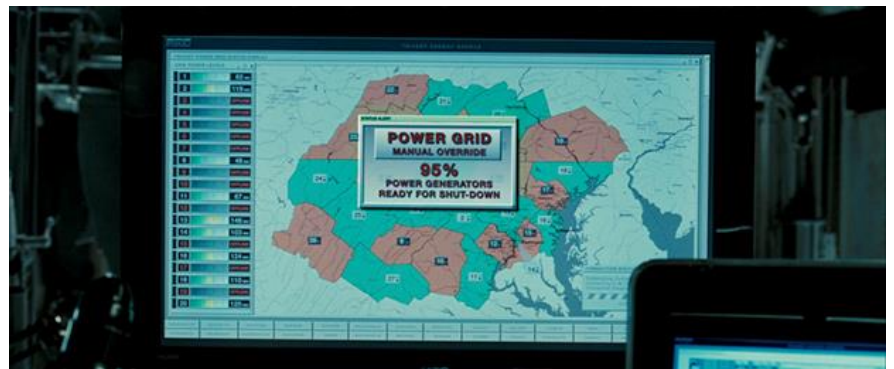
With directions to the server room written on his hand, techie Eddie then deftly finds the cable he needs among numerous identical server



cabinets. He clips a device to the cable and the casino security camera system is now available via remote laptop. The hack may be far from realistic, but the classical datacenter with traditional racks is spot on.

[Live Free or Die Hard](#), 2007

Bruce Willis, Justin Long, Timothy Olyphant – The Russians are hacking into critical US infrastructure and must be stopped.



Russian hackers access numerous critical systems from a single dashboard. A few taps of the keyboard results in aggressive breaches. If viewers can suspend reality enough to appreciate that McClane can [hang off the tail of an F-15 fighter jet](#) while the pilot ejects, the security gaffs are easy to buy. As one [reviewer](#) acknowledged, “It’s hard to imagine him owning a PC, let alone cruising the Internet in search of blog tidbits or pornish delights. But if he did, we can only imagine him picking up a computer and hurling it to the floor when for some reason he had trouble paying bills online or balancing his checkbook. In other words, his short-tempered everyman has been dragged snarling and fretful into the computer age, and there’s some fun to be had from him.” A blistering [review](#) of technical aspects of the movies includes, “Hackers are wizards with unlimited power who can do anything the plot is calling for at the moment: reroute the gas mains, shut down the electrical grid, change stock prices, take over your GPS system, hack into your hamster and turn it into a time bomb (ok, I made this last one up) – you name it. They can shut down the country and bring about the end of civilization and the only person who can stop them is a grizzled, cynical cop who doesn’t know much about computers but can kick



serious ass.” Fair. I think most people watch these movies for exactly that.. but, I digress.

[Avatar](#), 2009

Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver – A paraplegic Marine dispatched to the moon Pandora is torn between following orders and protecting the world.

The movie generated more data than any other movie in history and the complexity of the data center, technology, and effects is well worth the read – we include a separate article below

[Iron Man 2](#), 2010

Robert Downey, Jr., Mickey Rourke, Gwyneth Paltrow – superhero Iron Man

This [marketing datacenter movie](#) includes a cameo appearance by [Oracle](#) CTO [Larry Ellison](#) and [Oracle Exadata servers](#).

Definitely datacenter realism. Definitely a [great public relations](#), marketing expense. BTW, we make short videos that are much more affordable than movies if you would like to promote your company name. We could even throw in a superhero.



[Tron: Legacy](#), 2010

Jeff Bridges, Garrett Hedlund, Olivia Wilde – The son of a virtual world designer looks for his father and gets lost in the digital world

The data center has no hot aisles, and the protagonist plugs directly into a server. The servers are spaced apart making it difficult to envision connecting them. As one review [explains](#), “Most data centers have hot and cold aisles which help regulate temperature and keep things from overheating. In *Tron: Legacy*, protagonist Sam Flynn breaks in to the ENCOM data center so that he can upload a program to their servers. The room has a visually impressive style, with each cabinet standing on its own and all of the cabinets facing the same direction. While it’s certainly interesting to look at, a set up like that would really mess with airflow and temperature.”

[Skyfall](#), 2012

Daniel Craig, Javier Bardem, Naomie Harris – Bond investigates an attack on M16

Chris Crosby, CEO, Compass Datacenters, Skyfall was the “[data center movie of the year](#).”

[Paranoia](#), 2013

Liam Hemsworth, Gary Oldman, Harrison Ford – An employee must spy on a corporate rival to obtain trade secrets

The employee sneaks into a datacenter to steal trade secrets. He lifts a fingerprint image from an iPad that was scanned from a spoon, flashes images from his phone to get access to a secret room, and shuts down power in the building by pressing a button on his watch. But, the datacenter and servers look realistic!

[Transcendence](#), 2014

Johnny Depp, Rebecca Hall, Morgan Freeman – A scientist's drive for AI takes on dangerous implications when his own consciousness is uploaded into a program

Transcendence features a [\\$38M datacenter powered by solar panels](#) and built five stories underground, for security and to control temperatures. The movie highlights green technologies and is similar in construction to the NSA data center and SubTropolis Technology Park's LightEdge data center.



[Space Jam: A New Legacy](#), 2021

LeBron James, Don Cheadle, Cedric Joe – Famous basketball player's son is kidnapped by rogue AI. The entire movie plot takes place in a datacenter, Serververse.

No longer a backdrop, datacenters play leading role in many movies today.