

In a full-immersion, stereoscopic VR presentation, over 350 beautiful species of butterflies from all over the world fly around you in a natural setting. At your command, they land for close examination and provide information about their species and origin.

Participants start from several hundred miles above the slowly rotating Earth. In the eventual application, they will be able to choose where they wish to go, and only butterflies that live in or migrate to that region will appear. For the Digital Bayou, butterflies will descend to Louisiana, and land in a countryside setting outside New Orleans.

Participants are surrounded by hundreds of flocking butterflies. In their hands, they hold a species of flower that butterflies are commonly attracted to. When they point it toward a butterfly and press the controller button, the butterfly lands on the flower. They can then bring the butterfly close for detailed examination. A voice in the headphones specifies the name of the butterfly, its species, its family, its native locale, its migratory habits, and its preferred diet.

Male butterflies are generally more colorful than females, so participants may choose males at first, but when the female is described, the butterfly morphs into its female form. It may also morph into related species to demonstrate the phenomenon of mimicry, or into a seasonal variation of its color patterns. The experience evokes the almost-universal primal memory of childhood, when a butterfly landed near or on us and awakened our sense of wonder at the fragile beauty of nature.

Contributors

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