

3D Neanderthal comes to a screen near you

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See a 3D Neanderthal walk across your desk with the Museum's new augmented reality (AR) Neanderthal. You need a printer and a webcam to bring him to life.

Ever wondered what Neanderthals looked like? Or how they walked? Well wonder no more with the Natural History Museum website's new augmented reality (AR) Neanderthal.

All you need is a printer and a webcam to see a 3D Neanderthal walk about on your desk, and stop for a stretch, through your computer screen.

It may sound complicated but it's just augmented reality (AR), which merges CGI (computer generated images) with real life images of whatever you point your webcam at.

Neanderthals are our best-known extinct relatives, usually regarded as a

separate species, *Homo neanderthalensis*. They were our closest relatives, living for hundreds of thousands of years, and they died out about 30,000 years ago.

Neanderthals overlapped with us, *Homo sapiens*, particularly in Europe around 35–40,000 years ago, and an intriguing question has been whether they ever interbred with us.

This was answered last year when scientists showed that [modern humans](#) outside of Africa shared genetic information with Neanderthals. This means modern humans probably interbred with Neanderthals soon after they left Africa around 60,000 years ago.

Scientists studying the growth lines in Neanderthal teeth have given us more clues about their life. Similar to tree rings that record yearly growth, Neanderthal tooth lines record daily growth. They reveal that Neanderthals had shorter childhoods and reached maturity earlier than modern humans, something that may have put them at an evolutionary disadvantage to us.

The AR Neanderthal joins an AR Lucy, who belongs to the ancient human species *Australopithecus afarensis*.

An AR Lucy, *Homo erectus* and *Coelophysis* dinosaur feature in the Museum's state-of-the-art interactive film Who do you think you really are? It takes you on a virtual journey through the story of evolution and it shows daily in the Attenborough Studio.

[Neanderthals](#) will be a topic of discussion at an exclusive Museum event tonight with Jean Auel, the author of the best-selling Earth's Children book series. Her books are about the daily lives of ice age Europeans. Auel researches all the science in the books and she will be talking with the Museum's human origins expert Prof Chris Stringer at the event,

Jean Auel in Conversation.

More information: Go to the augmented reality Neanderthal:
www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/life/Neanderthal-ar/index.html

Provided by American Museum of Natural History

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