

Nestle adds augmented reality to cereal boxes

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This file photo shows Nestle breakfast cereals displayed at a store in Vevey, Switzerland. Nestle is out to boost its share of the global breakfast cereal market with a dose of augmented reality supplied by French technology firm Dassault Systemes.

Nestle is out to boost its share of the global breakfast cereal market with a dose of augmented reality supplied by French technology firm Dassault Systemes.

A marker printed on 26 million Nestle cereal boxes being sold in 53 countries lets people with Web cameras linked to computers play an augmented reality game starring the main character of the animated film "Rio."

Players must lead an animated blue parrot named "Blu" to a big bowl of cereal on screen using the marker from the back of the cereal box.

Webcams read the marker and picture it on screen as a cup that players use to leave a trail of cereal bits for Blu to follow along a path to a giant bowl.

The game built by a 3DVIA branch of Dassault Systemes was not released in the United States, but it was on display at a Web 2.0 Expo that wrapped up on Thursday in San Francisco.

The Rio game launched in mid-March was the third Nestle cereal marketing project for 3DVIA, which specializes in "serious games" designed for major corporations.

The most recent 3DVIA serious game was crafted to train oil rig workers at a major energy company, marketing manager Emmy Jonassen told AFP at Web 2.0.

"Fortune 500 companies like Nestle, Boeing and BMW are realizing the potential of what gaming technology can do for them, whether it is a sales tool, a marketing piece or serious training," Jonassen said.

"Companies save a lot of money by having employees train in the virtual world instead of in the real world."

The first time 3DVIA put [augmented reality](#) markers on Nestle cereal boxes was in France, where the company's share of the cereal market reportedly grew 1.6 percent.

"It helps push cereal boxes off shelves," Jonassen said. "It is a pretty effective tool."

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