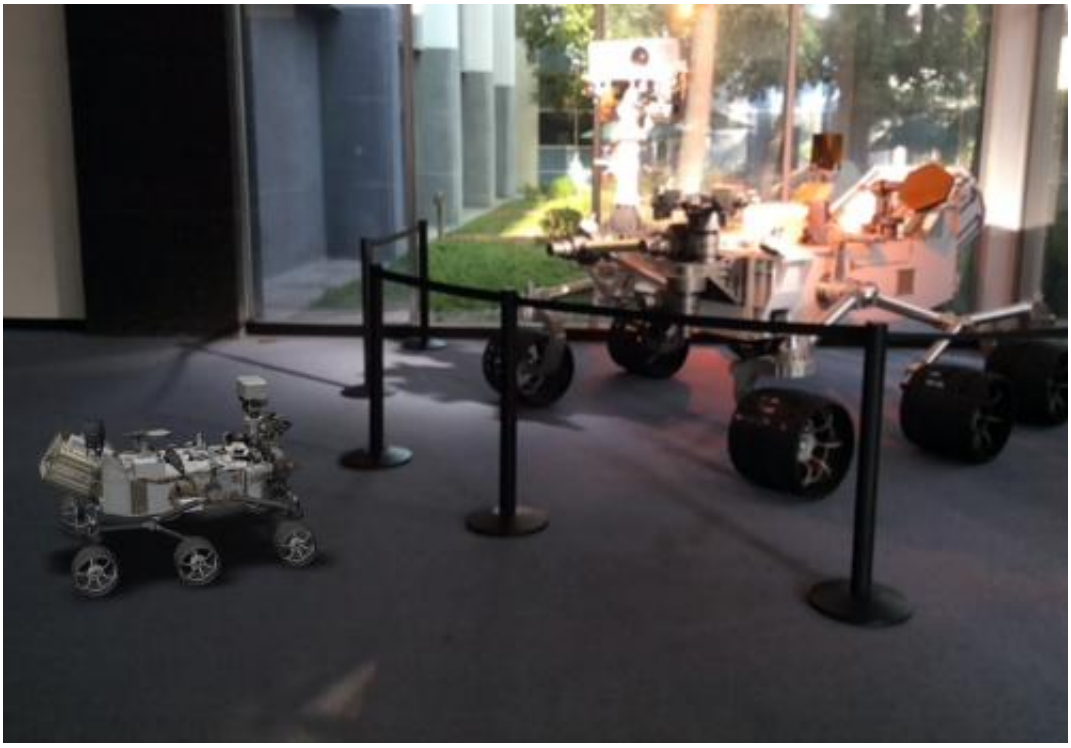
NASA upgrades its 3-D spacecraft app

August 6 2014, by Preston Dyches



A 3D, augmented reality model of NASA's Curiosity rover shares a scene with a real life model of the rover in a view taken with NASA's Spacecraft 3D app. The app has been updated with new models and now lets users take photos without the need for a target image. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(Phys.org) —A new-and-improved version of NASA's Spacecraft 3D app for mobile devices is launching to coincide with the second anniversary of the Mars Science Laboratory Curiosity rover's landing on Mars. In addition, content from the updated app is integrated with a new book of images, published by National Geographic, that chronicles the

rover's journey.

The app is available for download from: http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/apps

The updated app offers four new 3-D models and gives users the ability to see favorite spacecraft anywhere, using their mobile device's camera.

For readers of the new book, "Mars Up Close: Inside the Curiosity Mission," five models of NASA's Mars exploration spacecraft and technologies are waiting to pop off the page: Mars Odyssey, Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, Curiosity, Curiosity's Descent Stage and MAVEN.

Spacecraft 3D is an augmented-reality, or AR, app for iOS and Android mobile devices. Augmented reality overlays visual content, like 3-D spacecraft models, onto the real-world view from a device's camera. To view the app's content, users can print a special target image on a standard sheet of paper. When the device's camera is pointed at the target, the spacecraft chosen by the user appears onscreen as if it were in the scene.

A new feature of the updated Spacecraft 3D app is a manual mode that allows users to view and interact with the 3-D models without the AR target. All the 3-D models, including two newly added models of NASA Deep Space Network antennas, are available to all users through the free app.

"Spacecraft 3D makes it so easy for anyone to experience the magic of these spacecraft and the excitement of space exploration," said Tom Soderstrom, chief technology officer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California, where the app was developed. "We think the app will enhance the experience of learning about these missions, for all ages, for years to come."

Provided by NASA

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