

For immediate release

The Open University and Powster partner launch ‘Habitat Explorer AR’

London, UK, 14th November 2023 – The Open University and creative studio Powster, a Vista Group brand, have launched a new augmented reality digital activation and educational resource in support of the series premiere of the BBC and The Open University’s co-production Planet Earth III.

Aimed at UK audiences to support The Open University's available learning materials, ‘Habitat Explorer’ allows fans to scroll to various parts of the globe and bring three distinct habitats to life through the magic of WebAR, powered by 8th Wall and designed, modelled, animated, and developed in-house by Powster.

The visual details of the 3D animals and their animated idiosyncrasies offer a closer look at the animals featured in Planet Earth III and accurately educates users about them in their environment, while staying true to the paper aesthetic of the origami style featuring on printed assets.

“Habitat Explorer is the culmination of our efforts to bring learning experiences into people’s homes in an engaging and innovative way,” says Caroline Ogilvie, Head of Broadcast and Partnerships at The Open University.

“Expertise from Dr Miranda Dyson and Dr Vicky Taylor from our STEM faculty allowed Powster to translate fascinating details about these animals and their habitats into a rich and informative experience that successfully delivers the surprise and delight we wanted to achieve. We’re thrilled to see fans of Planet Earth III and their families exploring the worlds of these amazing animals together.”

Michelle Stevens, Commercial Director at Powster, said the project has been rewarding. “It’s been exciting to know that not only are we supporting the learning educational objectives of The Open University to bring these habitats to life, but we are also introducing the magic of AR to the BBC’s audience via this easily accessible and deeply engaging activation.”

Users can explore anything from a forest in South America, to a turtle sanctuary in Australasia and a European grassland through the lenses of their own smartphones or tablets, with no specialised app downloads or equipment required. At the end of the journey, users can choose their favourite habitat, which they can personalise and share to social media in a pledge to help save the planet.

Habitat Explorer is being promoted via a dedicated call-to-action from Sir David Attenborough at the end of each BBC Planet Earth III episode across its eight-week run. Click the link [here](#) to check out the habitats, make your pledge and download your free info pack from The Open University.

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About POWSTER

POWSTER, part of Vista Group International (NZX & ASX: VGL), is a digital creative studio and production company for over 150 movie distributors including the major studios, streamers, broadcasters, brands and major music labels globally. POWSTER is known for not only its movie platform which enables over eight million consumers a week to discover cinema showtimes on official movie websites, but also its creative

and award-winning use of innovative technology. POWSTER develops digital content that is immersive and engaging such as volumetric and augmented reality experiences, interactive music videos, websites, and more. POWSTER has headquarters in both Los Angeles and London. To learn more, visit us at <http://www.powster.com> and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).

About Vista Group International:

Vista Group International Ltd (Vista Group) is a public company, founded in New Zealand in 1996 and listed on both the New Zealand and Australian stock exchanges in 2014 (NZX & ASX: VGL). Vista Group is a global leader in providing tech solutions to the international film industry. With brands including Vista, Veezi, Movio, Numero, Maccs, Flicks and Powster, Vista Group's expertise covers cinema management software; loyalty, moviegoer engagement and marketing; film distribution software; box office reporting; creative studio solutions; and the Flicks movie, cinema and streaming website and app.

About The Open University

The Open University (OU) is the largest academic institution in the UK and a world leader in flexible distance learning. Since it began in 1969, the OU has taught more than 2.3 million students worldwide and currently has over 208,000 students. The OU has had a unique educational partnership with the BBC since 1971 and today focuses on supporting the University's social mission by extending reach and engagement.

Each year the OU co-produces a wide range of television, audio – radio and podcasts, digital and social content with the BBC. Recent series for television include, Wild Isles, Inside Our Autistic Minds, Earth, Windrush: Portraits of a Generation, Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland, Saving Lives in Leeds, A Special School, Women Who Changed Modern Scotland, Parole and Secret Genius of Everything with Hannah Fry. Audio co-productions include All in the Mind, The Bottom Line, BBC Inside Science and More or Less for Radio 4 and on Radio 5Live Sports Desk Special and The Big Green Money Show. The OU playlist on BBC Ideas has generated over 6m views from 56 videos. During the past year OU programmes achieved more than 285m viewing and listening events which prompted more than 525k visits to our broadcast related content, hosted on the OU's [Broadcast and Partnerships](#) website.

Over seventy per cent of directly registered students are in full-time or part-time employment, and 75 FTSE 100 companies have sponsored staff to take OU courses. In the latest assessment exercise for university research (Research Excellence Framework, 2021), over three quarters (76%) of OU research was assessed as 4 or 3 star – the highest ratings available, awarded to research that is world-leading or internationally excellent. The OU's commitment to research and societal impact is recognised too with 82% of its research impact assessed to be world-leading or internationally excellent.

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For further media information about OU co-productions please visit [OU News](#)
For more general enquiries please visit [The Open University](#)

