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Pleistocene meets touchscreen at the Royal BC Museum

Victoria, BC—Thousands of years ago mammoths roamed Southern Vancouver Island, and now visitors to the Royal BC Museum can experience an animated slice of Pleistocene life, including the illusion of mammoths in motion.

Today, the Royal BC Museum launched a new downloadable interactive for iPhone and iPad users, featuring augmented reality (AR). The interactive, called **“Woolly’s World,”** created by Vancouver-based tech firm NGX Interactive, allows visitors to see a variety of Ice Age animals animated in the diorama that is home to the **museum’s** iconic Woolly Mammoth.

“This is a superb example of how cutting-edge technology can help bring the past to life right before our eyes,” **said Royal BC Museum CEO Prof. Jack Lohman. “Augmented reality is just the latest digital innovation at the Royal BC Museum, another way to connect people with our millions of artifacts, specimens and archival records.”**

“The app will spark people’s imaginations and curiosity by transforming a beloved exhibit in a fun new way,” said NGX Interactive Producer Hanna Cho. **“With the right balance of educational content and playful design, the app will let visitors dig deeper into the mammoth’s story through animations, illustrations and sound effects.”**

The interactive allows visitors to view a Short-faced bear, a pair of Mammoths, a Western Heather Vole and a White-tailed Ptarmigan, all animals that would **have coexisted with “Woolly” in the Pleistocene era.** Just as importantly, the app provides visitors with rich, accurate and entertaining textual information **about the animals’ lives.**

The app is geared for kids between the ages of three and seven years old. Parents can share the content with non-readers, and even very young children will be able to manipulate the app to see the animals.

A broad spectrum of Royal BC Museum staff were involved in the development of the interactive, including Curatorial, Learning, Exhibition and Digital teams, ensuring that the interactive is accurate, educational, beautiful and easy to use.

The creation of the augmented reality interactive was generously supported by NGX Interactive and the John and Joan Walton Innovators Fund.



Student feedback contributed to the decision to use AR in the Natural History entrance: visitors felt Woolly might be lonely. Increasingly, digital solutions like AR allow the Royal BC Museum to respond quickly to visitor requests and suggestions.

The Royal BC Museum is exploring other uses for AR throughout the galleries and exhibitions, as it allows staff members to update and add new content to permanent displays without changing the physical features. AR will be featured at the November Happy Hour event, New Ways of Looking: royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/events/calendar/event/59232/museum-happy-hour-new-ways-looking.

To download the “Woolly’s World” interactive app before your visit to the Royal BC Museum, go to www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/woolly.

To see how the interactive app works, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAANdkY8ull>.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province’s human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

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