

Oculus Rift users to see Moon live through robot

October 23 2014, by Nancy Owano



A group from Carnegie Mellon wants to send a robot to the Moon to beam live pictures of the Moon to Oculus Rift headset users, reported technology reporter Jane Wakefield of the BBC. And the robot is intended to swing into action as a robot on a mission to transform education about space. The team has a plan to land the robot on the Moon to act as eyes for those still on Earth. A key component to all this is the Oculus Rift virtual reality headset. Andy has motion-controlled vision. With that headset, movements of the user's head will be tracked and sent back to Andy's camera, in order for it to match where the user

is looking.

Wakefield reported that the Carnegie Mellon group is teaming up with Astrobotic, a Carnegie Mellon spinoff, in the business of delivering space robotic products, services, and missions, to compete for the Google Lunar XPrize. As a team they will land a robot on the Moon, move it and send back video to Earth. Eighteen teams are competing to win the Google-sponsored Lunar X-Prize, with \$30 million in prizes. To win the grand prize, \$20 million, private teams (with no more than 10 percent in government funding) must land a robot safely on the Moon, move 500 meters and transmit images back to Earth.

According to the BBC, Astrobotic "is planning on flying with SpaceX - the private space company set up by Elon Musk - using its Falcon 9 rocket to launch the robot. It is hoped that the rocket will take off at the end of 2015."

Daniel Shafrir, part of the Carnegie Mellon team, said in a video, "Put the headset on and you look to your left, you see the vast expanse of space. You look to your right and you see home. You're looking live to see what it's really like on the Moon." said Shafrir. Those who think it is impossible they will ever go there will be in for a memorable experience. "We make it so that once our robot is there, you can go...you drop your Oculus on and take a look around." Shafrir said the only way we are going to get people excited about the Moon is having them feel it; "they have to feel they are on the Moon with us." Shafrir added, "There's something tangible about moving your head one-tenth of a degree to the left and knowing that 240,000 miles away our [robot](#) is moving his head a tenth of a degree to the left too."

He told the BBC the group vision was having hundreds of the robots on the Moon and with Oculus headsets in every classroom, young people can experience what only 12 humans have only experienced thus far.

More information: www.bbc.com/news/technology-29704953

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