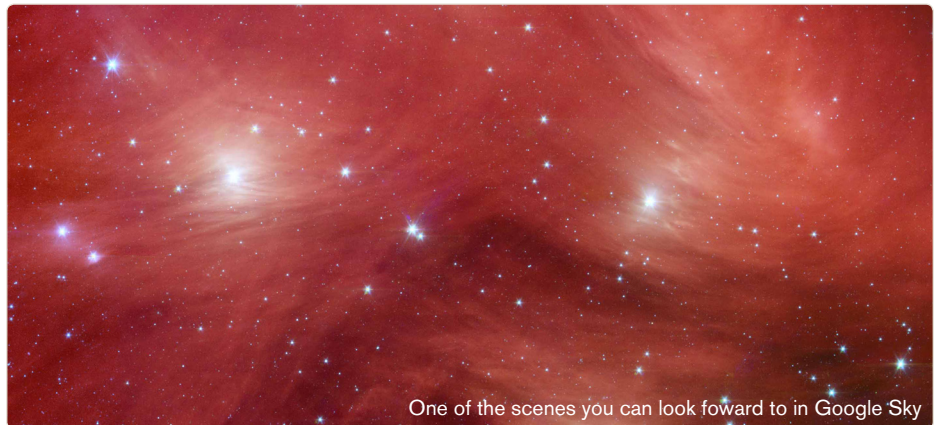
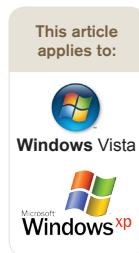




Introducing Google Sky

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In this article we take a look at Google Sky, a free program that can help you learn about the cosmos.



One of the scenes you can look forward to in Google Sky

Tuesday's lunar eclipse was a special not just because it turned the moon red but also because it was an event that made it clear that the Earth we live on is only a small part of a solar system and a universe that is much, much larger. A universe that only astronomers have much of an idea about.

Amateur astronomy has always been considered a nerdy hobby which consisted of old men heading out to the middle of nowhere to sit alone in the dark and focus a telescope on the sky. Understandably, to the majority of us this doesn't make astronomy sound all that appealing and you can therefore understand why we were excited when Google recently announced a new and comfortable alternative. The alternative is called Google Sky and is a recent addition to Google Earth. In this article we run you through how it works and how to install it.

How does Google Sky Work

Google Earth gives you a bird's eye view of almost any location on the planet and Google Sky does exactly the opposite. Google Sky works by stitching together millions of images taken by ground and space based telescopes and gives you access to images from the world's top observatories. This in itself makes the tool amazing as you can see far more than you could hope to accomplish with any backyard telescope.

Running and Installing Google Sky

In order to run Google Earth you most definitely need a broadband connection

(ADSL, ADSL2+ or Cable) as it is a very bandwidth intensive program. This may also make it unsuitable if you have a low download limit. Some slower ADSL plans may struggle to download images fast enough for you to enjoy the experience. Google Earth also prefers your computer to have a graphics card installed. If your computer does not have a graphics card, you may need a Gizmotech to install one for you.

To use Google Sky you will need to download and install version 4.2 of Google Earth from <http://earth.google.com>. Save the installation file to your desktop and then double click it to install the program.

Once you've finished installing, Google Earth should open. If you do not have a graphics card you will need to click the start menu, find "Google Earth" under All Programs and click "Start Google Earth in OpenGL mode".

Using Google Sky

When you open Google Earth a globe of the world will appear. If you haven't used Google Earth before you might want to have a play with the planet before you go any further. To spin the globe simple click and drag using your mouse. Double click on a location to zoom in on it. You can also zoom in and out using the scroll wheel on your mouse or the + and - buttons on your keyboard.

Once you've had a play with the controls and you feel like you know how to drive navigate to your location in the world. You can do this by either typing your location in the "Fly To" box found in the top left hand corner or by scrolling and zooming. Specifying your location on the planet

determines what the start look like in the sky above you. Once you are in your location click the little icon of Saturn in the toolbar running along the top of the screen. Google Sky will open displaying constellation, stars, planets, gaseous nebula, stellar nurseries and even whole distant galaxies.

Once you are in Google Sky have some fun zooming through the cosmos. If you want some structure, try adding and removing the "Layers" in the bottom left hand side. These layers allow you to show and hide different stellar objects. Some layers even allow you to take tours of different types of objects which can be useful if you are a little overwhelmed. Both Google Earth and Google Sky you will see little icons floating around the screen. Clicking on these icons gives you to access to more in-depth information about the object you are viewing.

There is a mind boggling amount of information to be explored in Google Sky and we believe it is set to turn amateur astronomy on its head. If you need assistance getting it set up and installed, please don't hesitate to call Gizmo on 1300 275 449. As mentioned before, Google Sky will work best on a speedy computer with a broadband connection and graphics card so if it's time for an upgrade give us a call.

