

Seeing Beyond the Naked Eye in a Planetarium

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I have a philosophy that the traditional naked-eye sky, shown in planetariums, should only be an introductory step in portraying the universe. Consequently, over the years I have produced "inter alia" various versions of an enhanced Milky Way (the latest based on Axel Mellenger's panorama), the extragalactic sky and the radio sky for projection on planetarium domes. I also put together a three-dimensional planetarium show – the audience being equipped with ChromoDepth spectacles – which stepped from the solar system to the Cosmic Microwave Background. The advent of digital technology now makes all this much easier. Currently, Labyrinth, a visualisation program developed in house serves much the same function as Hayden Planetarium's Partiview, but also permits rendering and fly-throughs of large-scale structures. It allows viewers to explore local cosmography. Labyrinth can produce images that operate with the 3D spectacles; we have also produced a version of Partiview that does the same.