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GROUNDBREAKING VIRTUAL AQUARIUM PROJECT LAUNCHES THE HUB

The addition of the new interactive HUB to World Ocean Explorer will provide visitors with a welcoming space to engage with the virtual aquarium's exhibits while highlighting educational concepts and organizational themes.

Try it today at worldoceanexplorer.org/hub.html

UNITED STATES - The [World Ocean Observatory](http://worldoceanexplorer.org) (W2O) announces the launch of an integral feature of World Ocean Explorer: THE HUB. The central, organizing space and portal to all other aspects of the virtual experience, THE HUB is not only a beautiful entryway into all of the exhibits within the World Ocean Explorer virtual aquarium, but will also contain stand-alone interactive features, 3D models, infographics on all things ocean, and much more.

THE HUB will introduce visitors to the full catalog of 3D virtual exhibits contained within World Ocean Explorer®. World Ocean Explorer is an educational, interactive 3D platform for ocean exploration and discovery. A cutting edge virtual aquarium, Explorer is designed to increase ocean literacy and interest in ocean fields of study through a web-based interactive experience. Users enter through THE HUB and can walk through to visit exhibits, interacting with 3D models of species and environments rarely seen in physical aquariums. Explorer connects users with the Ocean Literacy curriculum and content related to the Next Generation Science Standards while investigating various ocean locales aboard a manned submersible, collecting data and images, and bringing them back to the classroom for discussion and further learning.

THE HUB is now integrated with DEEP SEA, the premier exhibit of World Ocean Explorer created in collaboration with Schmidt Ocean Institute and launched in March of 2022. DEEP SEA showcases high-resolution video, models, and descriptive materials of newly discovered deep-sea ocean species and environments observed during science expeditions aboard research vessel *Falkor* with the underwater robot (ROV) SuBastian.

Explorer allows users to investigate a variety of ecosystems and exhibits that cannot be observed in a traditional aquarium setting. Developed using Unity gaming software to bring three-dimensional ocean literacy and marine science education to a worldwide audience of educators, students and individuals interested in the full spectrum of biodiversity and related value provided by the ocean—the largest, most essential natural system on earth.

“World Ocean Explorer is a transformational tool for understanding how the ocean works,” said Peter Neill, Director of the World Ocean Observatory. “It does not have the physical scale of a real aquarium space, but it is as wide, deep and dynamic as the ocean itself. There is no cost;

there is no barrier to entry. Explorer offers a field trip without having to leave the classroom or one's home."

"The virtual aquarium," Neill continued, "is applicable to formal and informal education, and is based on the seven [principles of Ocean Literacy](#). We are grateful to foundation support that allowed us to build out THE HUB, and to the vision of Schmidt Ocean Institute for seeing the value in Explorer and collaborating with the W2O to bring the deep sea to the surface through the spectacular, premier virtual exhibit of World Ocean Explorer: DEEP SEA."

World Ocean Explorer® provides an immersive experience designed to excite students ages 10 and up about scientific ocean exploration and to promote ocean literacy worldwide. From students to gamers, educators to enthusiasts, Explorer is a multi-exhibit platform where users can jump from one exhibit to the next. Future exhibits in development will include POLAR REGIONS, CORAL REEFS, FRESH WATER, COASTAL RESOURCES, SCIENCE AT SEA, and more.

W2O is especially grateful to the The Seth Sprague Educational and Charitable Foundation for believing in the vision and mission for World Ocean Explorer and supporting the creation of the dynamic HUB space.

You can view the [trailer](#), [press kit](#) and [social toolkit](#).

Visit THE HUB at <http://worldoceanexplorer.org/hub.html>

Visit DEEP SEA at <http://worldoceanexplorer.org/deep-sea-aquarium.html>

The main Explorer page can be found at WorldOceanExplorer.org

ABOUT THE W2O

The World Ocean Observatory (W2O) is a leading organization advocating for the health and sustainability of the ocean through an accessible worldwide network of communication. Through education, partnership, information exchange, public connection, and relentless communications, W2O is committed to building an expansive global community of *Citizens of the Ocean* to promote and conserve marine resources for the future of all mankind. Online at worldoceanobservatory.org.