NEW APP TELLS YOU WHAT'S OUTSIDE THE PLANE WINDOW

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Have you ever wondered from your window seat at 35,000 feet exactly which town or city, lake or river, hill or mountain, you are gazing at down below?

Of course you have. Well, now there's an app that will help air passengers identify and explore the distinguishing features on the ground as they fly to their destination.

Flyover Country, which is available to buy in the app store now, but is still being developed, will also find relevant Wikipedia articles for users so that they can better understand what exactly is beneath them at any given moment.

Flyover Country

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"I was looking down from an aeroplane window and see this huge landscape and these geological features, and [wondering about] the landscape I was flying over," Shane Loeffler, the brains behind Flyover Country, told the Smithsonian.

The app uses maps and data from a variety of geological and paleontological databases to provide information on points of interest below. On their phone, the user will see features tagged on a map

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that correspond to different locations on the ground.

Flyover Country

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Working with cached maps offline after the user has input their desired flight path, the app does not require the purchase of expensive in-flight Wi-Fi or breach the rules on activating flight mode in the sky.

It is likely to come in handy for social media users who have always been fond of window seat snaps.

Amy Myrbo, a co-developer and geologist at the University of Minnesota, where Loeffler also studied geology, said: “The way Shane put it, the aeroplane seat is sort of a planetarium for the Earth. It’s a great way to inspire people to learn about the sciences.

“We have maybe a dozen more data sources that we’re going to be working with in the coming

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months.”

She hopes the app will give people a sense of the “the connectedness of geology and weather and humans and see the scales of things”.

The view over Greenland from a window seat

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Of course the app only really works if you can see the ground below – so storms and night time are an issue – though users can still read up on what’s below without being able to see it.

The team is also keen for people to use the app on road trips, hikes and bike rides as well as flights.

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