AR Technology and Institutional heritage

A recent boom in augmented reality (AR) technology is leading educational institutions to explore new ways of teaching, where virtual scenes are mixed with real-life locations and objects. However, more research is needed in order to understand when and how AR can be leveraged to increase knowledge rather than merely entertain visitors.
In a new partnership between the **Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County** (which includes the **La Brea Tar Pits** and Museum) and **University of Southern California**, researchers will seek to understand how best to design augmented reality experiences for effective learning.
The project is funded by a new grant from the **National Science Foundation** totaling $2 million.
Emily Lindsey, assistant curator and excavation site director for the La Brea Tar Pits, and Benjamin Nye, the director of learning science at the USC Institute for Creative Technologies, are the principal investigators.
A key aspect of the project is to use AR to provide additional information about what visitors see to help dispel misconceptions. "Augmented reality offers a powerful medium to share how science happens at the La Brea Tar Pits," Nye says. "AR can show hidden worlds connected to what you would normally see with your eyes, such as seeing the pits in different time periods. These can tell the story of not just what we know, but how we know what we know."
"Certain scientific concepts, like the nature of geologic time, have historically been difficult for people to wrap their minds around," Lindsey says. "This partnership allows us to explore the ways that new, immersive technologies can help people understand and connect with these concepts more fully."

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