

Web site Recreates Apollo 11 Mission in Real Time

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BOSTON (AP) -- Families crowded around black-and-white television sets in 1969 to watch Neil Armstrong take man's first steps on the moon.

Now, they'll be able to watch the Apollo 11 mission recreated in real time on the Web, follow Twitter feeds of transmissions between Mission Control and the spacecraft, and even get an e-mail alert when the lunar module touches down.

Those features are part of a new Web site from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum commemorating the moon mission and Kennedy's push to land Americans there first.

"Putting a man on the moon really did unite the globe," said Thomas Putnam, director of the JFK Library. "We hope to use the Internet to do the same thing." The Web site — WeChooseTheMoon.org — goes live at 8:02 a.m. Thursday, 90 minutes before the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 launch from Cape Canaveral, Fla. It will track the capsule's route from the Earth to the Moon, ending with the moon landing and Armstrong's walk — in real time, but 40 years later.

Internet visitors can see animated recreations of key events from the four-day mission, including when Apollo 11 first orbits the moon and when the lunar module separates from the command module, as well as browse video clips and photos and hear the radio transmission between the astronauts and NASA flight controllers.

The site also connects the mission back to Kennedy, who first set the goal to have a man on the moon by the end of the decade during a May 25, 1961, speech before Congress.

The Web site's name was taken from another speech Kennedy gave in 1962, when he said: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone and one which we intend to win."

Kennedy was assassinated six years before Armstrong set foot on the moon, but the Web site also features photos showing the president's deep interest in the space program, including ones of him watching Alan Shepard become the first American in space.

While the main goal is to offer people a chance to again experience the excitement of the moon mission, Putnam said he also hopes it inspires people to tackle the

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Published on Wireless Design & Development (<http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com>)

issues facing the country today, such as global warming or poverty. "What is the next challenge? What is it that we want to achieve?" he said. "I think President Kennedy would want our leaders today to take on the biggest challenges and set those goals."

On the Net: John F. Kennedy Museum and Library: <http://www.jfklibrary.org>

Source URL (retrieved on 03/07/2014 - 9:27pm):

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