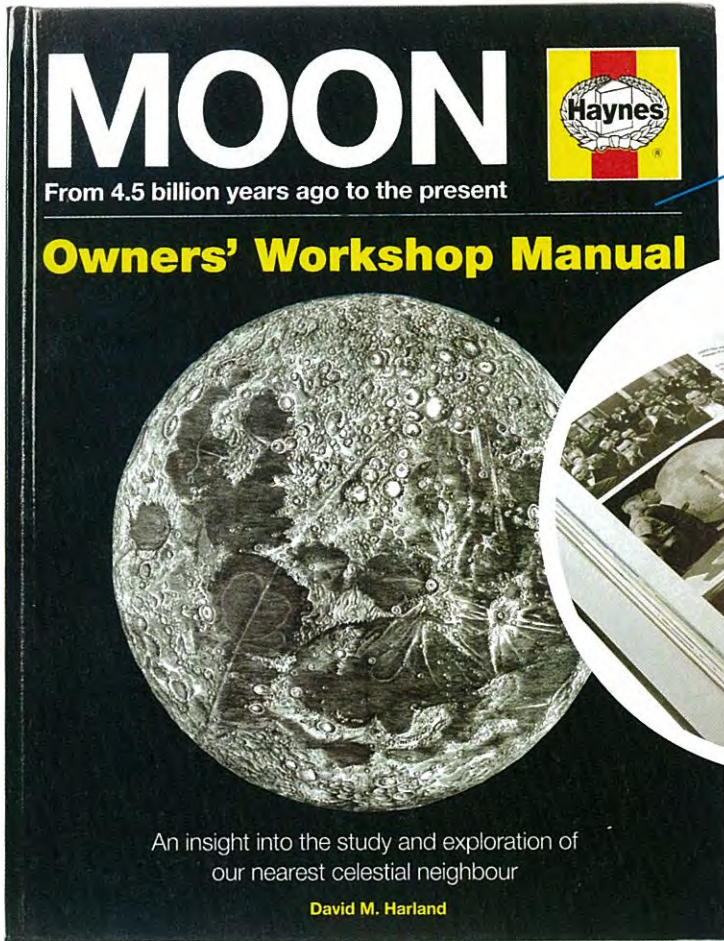




In the shops

The latest books, apps, software, tech and accessories for space and astronomy fans alike



Book Haynes Moon Owners' Workshop Manual

Cost: £22.99 (approx. \$33.20)

From: Haynes Publishing

If you're passionate about the exploration of the Moon's past, present and future, we're confident you'll enjoy *Haynes Moon Owners' Workshop Manual*. Featuring up-to-date information on the rovers and orbiters that are currently on the lunar surface, this 'manual' is a very clever spin-off from the practical vehicle manuals made by the same publisher.

In true Haynes Manual style, this hardback book is adorned with photographs and annotated line drawings of the spacecraft designed to observe, take measurements and get humans to the Moon. The book wouldn't be complete without covering the Apollo Moon landings, which have their own dedicated sections, accompanied by photographs of these iconic moments in history. What we've learned about the Moon from the several missions that we have sent to its surface is also included in the text, providing an up-to-date overview of what we know about our natural satellite.

The *Haynes Moon Owners' Workshop Manual* is perhaps too light on text, but this does serve to make the book a lot more digestible to read and one that's ideal for the coffee table. An engaging narrative made it difficult to put down and enabled it to match up to the excellent standard of Haynes Manuals in general.



App Space Images

Cost: Free

From: iTunes & Google Play

Fans of the breathtaking images found on NASA's website, and brought to us by the agency's fleet of space telescopes, will love Space Images, which has been devised by staff at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The app works with NASA's website, which carries the same name, to enable you to discover the latest images and videos of our stunning universe - from stars to galaxies and nebulae to supernovae. Space Images keeps you up to date, on the go. To ensure that no one misses out, Space Images is downloadable to Apple and Android devices and is available on iTunes and Google Play. Downloading the app to an iPhone 6 is quick and easy and Space Images runs smoothly overall. As well as imagery, the app features videos, which sadly don't stream very well without a strong internet connection, and we did experience a great degree of stuttering and slow loading. However, given that the app is free, we certainly can't grumble too much! Space Images provides the option to rate space images and save an image of your choice to your device's background - an option that we loved and we're sure you will too!



Software Virtual Planetarium

Cost: \$39.95 (approx. £26)

From: Name A Star Live

Virtual Planetarium includes interactive sky maps and a large library of imagery, along with information on the Solar System and details on the most recent astronomical events. It is ideal for budding astronomers who are keen to find their way around the night sky while learning more about our solar neighbourhood - often through the medium of movies. You can run Virtual Planetarium on both Windows and Mac OS X systems. We enjoyed the unique Space Weather programme that allows you to explore forecasts of the aurorae and solar flares from our nearest star. Movies of the Aurora Borealis and animations that show how and why this phenomenon occurs are also included, along with a pair of 3D glasses to view the three-dimensional images.

We took advantage of a clear evening in June to see how the integrated 'Sky Tonight' star charts performed. Loading the star maps, which have a very basic design, we could use them to find constellations in the night sky with ease. After hitting 'Play', the sky chart scrolled automatically across the map on our screen to give us an overview of the night sky and its observable objects at that time. We were also able to find planets and deep-sky objects without too much trouble, which we followed up using a telescope. Given that its graphics are quite basic, the software takes up a surprisingly large amount of storage on both Windows and Macintosh machines. Nevertheless, Virtual Planetarium is an adequate guide for the budding astronomer.



Planetarium Universe2go

Cost: £79.00 / \$99.00

From: universe2go.com

With an appearance akin to that of a virtual reality headset, Universe2go features a compartment where you're able to slot your Android or iPhone, which should be preloaded with the Universe2go app. Using your phone's gyroscope and GPS, the headset 'knows' which direction of the sky you're looking at in real time. The app also has the capability of placing a target in your field of view, which guides you in aiming your sights on specific night-sky objects, and locking on a target provides a small pop-up window that provides fast facts on the object. Locking on to constellations and objects for a few seconds will also kick-start audio explanations on what you're observing - ideal features that make learning and navigating your way around the night sky a breeze.

Universe2go offers different viewing modes that encompass observing for beginners and experts, and it also explores the mythology behind the names of the constellations, planets and deep space objects. Of course, you can use the app without the headset, but this defeats the object of having a hands-free observing experience. We enjoyed the ability to simply use head movements to flick through the app menu, but found that it took quite a bit of getting used to before we could comfortably switch it in and out of modes.

The setup of Universe2go is relatively straightforward yet effective all the same. Usable even when it's cloudy outside or if you're indoors, Universe2go is a fantastic spin on regular astronomy apps - we envision many manufacturers catching onto this genius invention in the future.