



Cosmic Eye: Video by Perth astrophysicist Danail Obreschkow goes viral

720 ABC Perth By Emma Wynne

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YOUTUBE: Watch Danail Obreschkow's viral video Cosmic Eye

A Perth astrophysicist says he is surprised but delighted to find a video he made four years ago has suddenly gone viral online, clocking up 36 millions views in a week.

Cosmic Eye is a three-minute video that zooms out from a woman's face to eventually reveal a view of the universe one billion light years from Earth.

Danail Obreschkow — a University of Western Australia (UWA) astrophysicist who specialises in the creation of stars — is the man behind the video, which he created using a smartphone app.

He said the video was posted on Facebook by The Science World on April 11 and was quickly shared around cyberspace.

Dr Obreschkow said the video had been online for four years and until now had attracted little attention.

He said the video was initially created to use in a class at UWA.

PHOTO: A smiling woman's face is the start of a journey through space in Cosmic Eye (Danail Obreschkow)

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"I was teaching an arts class ... a bunch of 200 non-scientists, and I thought I wanted to do something a bit nice and trendy to explain to them the different scales of the universe," he said.

He said attempts to share it with a wider audience at the time were fruitless.

"I even remember us paying a PR guy from the United States who spreads YouTube videos," he said.

"I paid a couple of hundred dollars and nothing really came out of it apart from a few hundred views."

From little things, big things grow

Dr Obreschkow said The Science World team were equally surprised by the video's success; their Facebook page has more than 700,000 followers.

"I think they post a science video every day and normally they get between 10,000 and 13,000 views," he said.

"This time they got 1,000 times more."

He said he thought the appeal of the video was its simplicity.

"You don't really need to know anything about science or anything about the universe," he said.

"You just watch the video and you get an appreciation for how big things can be and how small things can be.

"I think it triggers quite a lot of emotion with people."

A star is born

Dr Obreschkow is a member of the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research and spends his days studying the rotation of galaxies and the ways stars form in galaxies.

"About one new star is born every year in the Milky Way," he said.

"Across the universe many stars are born every second.

"It's quite interesting to study how these stars come about, because every star weighs potentially millions of times the mass of Earth."

He said the creation of stars might be the subject of his next video.

"What you see in the current video is everything at the same time ... but you don't see how things change over time," he said.

"I could make a new video that shows you how all these things evolve in time.

"That would be quite fun."

Topics: astronomy-space, social-media, internet-culture, information-and-communication, science-and-technology, human-interest, university-of-western-australia-6009, perth-6000

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PHOTO: Dr Danail Obreschkow created the video using a smartphone app. (Supplied)