

SOSx Mobile FAQ



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Curious about the SOS Explorer Mobile app? We have you covered.

Q: *What is this app? How do I use it?*

A: The NOAA Science On a Sphere team in Boulder, CO, developed a flat-screen virtual globe version of [SOS](#) (a room-sized animated globe) in order to get their vast [dataset catalog](#) out to the world. The flat-screen version of SOS is called SOS Explorer™ and it is now available as a free mobile app, SOS Explorer Mobile.

Q: *Where does the **data** come from?*

A: The datasets found on this app are visualizations that have been created from environmental satellites and computer models made by scientists at NOAA, NASA, and academic institutions. The info button for each dataset will give you more information about the dataset you're looking at, including details about the source. We are also working to develop materials for you to use with this app to help you learn even more. Check out our [uses and resources page](#) for a list.

Q: *Where do I find education or **teacher materials** for this app?*

A: We have designed some [Phenomena-based Learning Modules](#) that are NGSS paired AND [Guiding Questions with Supplemental Materials](#) to use as a jumping off point for an activity, discussion, or investigation. See more on our [Resources](#) page.

Q: *I have **SOSx Lite** (the desktop version of this) and can't find the materials anymore. Do they still exist?*

A: Yes. We have decided to retire this version of SOS Explorer due to the unruly download size that was causing problems and suggest that you use SOS Explorer Mobile instead! Therefore, we no longer support it, however, we are happy if you still use it! You can find SOSx Lite Resources page [here](#) and the Content page [here](#).

Q: *My screen is small and the **buttons are tiny** and I can't press them easily. Can I change that?*

A: Go to Tools> Settings> User Interface Scale. Adjust the slider bar to the left to make UI smaller and to the right to make it bigger.

Q: *I am having **trouble getting any datasets to load**. What should I do?*

A: SOSx Mobile is a streaming application, therefore you must have a decent Internet connection. Make sure you are connected to WiFi. Close and restart the app. If still not working go to Tools> Settings> press Purge Cache. If you're sure you've done all of these, try uninstalling and reinstalling the app.

Q: *The datasets seem to be playing fine except when I play with the **animation controls**. When I slide the frame slider or press the go to last frame button, it doesn't update the image.*

A: You may be experiencing some buffering issues. Be patient and try to scrub the image (move the frame slider back and forth) until hopefully the image catches up.

Q: *After loading a movie with **audio**, I'm not hearing anything.*

A: Make sure your ringer is on (if you're on a phone) and your volume is up.

Q: I rotated the **Earth into a strange position** and haven't been able to get it back to a normal Earth position. How do I fix it?

A: You can rotate the Earth with two fingers or triple tap the screen with one finger to reset the view.

Q: Where does the **latitude and longitude** information come from:

A: The last place where you touched the sphere is reported under lat, lon at the bottom middle of the screen.

Q: Where do I **find information** about the datasets I am loading?

A: In the top left corner, where you see the dataset loaded, press the **i** button to access the dataset description.

Q: How much **space or storage** does this app take up on my phone?

A: 70 mb plus whatever data you download that can be cleared through the Settings > Clear Cache. The app's cache is set to take up no more than 10% of your available space. If you have less than 500 mb available on your device, the cache is disabled.

Q: How do I find out more **about SOS Explorer**?

A: SOS Explorer is a flat-screen version of our room-sized animated globe, Science On a Sphere. If you want to learn more about our team's products go to sos.noaa.gov.

Q: I'm having trouble **mirroring my iPhone on my AppleTV**. What am I doing wrong?

A: AirPlay can definitely be finicky. I've found it helps to start SOS Explorer first and then swipe down from the top to enable AirPlay once the application is already started. If you start AirPlay first and then launch SOS Explorer sometimes you just get a black screen.

Q: How can I **contact** you?

A: Fill out the **feedback** form in the app accessed by the "hot button" on the bottom of the screen.

Q: How do I make a dataset **slowdown/speed** it up?

A: Under the animation control window, there is a small arrow that opens a frames per second dropdown where you can choose an appropriate speed.

Q: Can I **add my own content**?

A: No, not on the app; however, if you want to contact us about the possibility of getting an exhibit quality version of SOS Explorer where you can add your own content, find out more at sos.noaa.gov.

Q: Are there **real-time** datasets available?

A: The only real-time data that you can currently see in our app are the static clouds that load upon loading and unloading datasets. Otherwise, real-time data - like we have on SOS and SOS Explorer Exhibit - is a tricky (currently not yet invented) task for a streaming data app. We hope to be able to add this soon. We have real-time datasets both on Science On a Sphere and SOS Explorer (exhibit version), find out more at sos.noaa.gov.

Q: How could I get a bigger, **commercial version** of this?

A: We have a room-sized sphere called Science On a Sphere, and a flat-screen exhibit quality version of this app called SOS Explorer. You can learn more about both by visiting sos.noaa.gov.

Q: Is this compatible with **VR**?

A: Not yet. Coming soon!

Q: Where is the **User License Agreement**?

A: [SOS Explorer Mobile License Agreement](#).

Q: What **permissions** are required to run this app?

A: The app shouldn't request any special permissions.

Q: Is it **secure**?

A: Absolutely. Under no circumstances will it ever refuse to open the pod bay doors.

Q: **How long is the data held** for and if the app is removed is the data collected removed with it at the time of removal or is there contact methods to remove data collected through your app?

A: Our privacy policy is located here: <https://sos.noaa.gov/noaa-privacy-policy/> No personally identifiable information is collected unless you reach out to support and request a response. We do keep aggregate totals on which datasets are popular and crash statistics if you choose to share your performance data with Apple or Google.