A Toronto-based advertising executive has built a thoroughly detailed account of a historic space mission for the world to explore online.  
  
Ben Feist, vice-president of technology at advertising agency TAXI, has spent over four years building [Apollo17.org](http://apollo17.org/), a website that allows viewers to explore the last NASA moon landing in real time. The site features 300 hours of audio, 22 hours of video and more than 4,200 photos of the mission, which can be viewed as if it were happening in real time.

Feist felt it was important to pay tribute to the historic 1972 event, as it was the last manned mission to the moon. It’s also the only mission where a scientist was sent to the moon. Jack Schmitt was a geologist whose work helped define the moon itself. Feist refers to it as the “crown jewel of the whole program,” as it’s the longest mission with the most samples collected and the one with the most time spent on the moon’s surface.

Feist approached the project as a hobby, digitizing all the typewritten transcripts and gathering and listening to the entire audio recordings to make sure they were accurate to the transcripts. Though he was close to giving up, he persevered during his free time.

The end result is an audio and visual depiction of the 12-day mission, spanning exactly what was taking place 43 years ago this month. Feist spoke to Yahoo Canada News about the inspiration behind the project and what’s next.  
  
**Q: What compelled you to start this project?**  
  
I thought this was the most compelling content I’ve ever seen but it’s also the most underrepresented content in terms of being palatable to the general public. There was a big disconnect between how rich this stuff was and it not being presented in a compelling way. I knew it was an enormous task. There are almost 2,500 pages of typewritten text for that mission.  
  
The transcripts for Apollo 17 were missing quite a bit of information. I could see that the typewritten transcripts were there. I could see that there was other information available. What would it take to kind of automate the digitization and correction process?  Because I’m a programmer by trade, the next thing you know, I’m solving the problem rather than thinking about solving the problem. Then I’m 200 pages into solving the problem and there’s no stopping.  
  
**Q: How did the project come together?**  
The transcripts were the part that really started the whole project and what was missing the most information from the archive. The corrected transcripts will be pushed back into the NASA archives through a website called the [Apollo Flight Journal](http://history.nasa.gov/afj/), which has all the transcripts of the missions except 17, because it was so messy. In order to create that transcript, I had to find all the audio for accuracy, and through finding all that media, I realized I can make this compelling, real time thing because I have all the media. It didn’t start out the way it was made today. It was gathering the information and flipping the task, to say it’s not about the transcript anymore, it’s about witnessing what occurred on the mission.  
  
The audio has been digitized over the years by NASA’s Johnson Space Center audio lab. They’ve been working with the Internet Archive to digitize the original recordings and store them. That happened at the right time, as I was thinking of doing this.  
  
**Q: How involved was NASA in this project?**  
  
NASA isn’t an archive. They’re not carefully making available all their materials from previous missions. They’re in the business of the next mission. You’d think, why didn’t this already exist? But NASA isn’t funded enough to be a national archive. They’re more focused on next missions, not past ones.  
  
Through someone I knew in the audio lab, I asked if they could make someone on the social media side of things there aware of what I’d done. They thought it was great and the Johnson Space Center account shared it with their two million followers.   
  
**Q: What’s next?**  
  
There’s a lot that could be done to make what I’ve built more accessible to the general public, who aren’t that interested in this stuff. I could do some more work that can inspire people who aren’t interested in space but I have to put some thought into that, and that will be for the next anniversary I guess.

*This interview has been edited and condensed.*