

# The mystery behind the Earth wallpaper on the first iPhone 13 years ago

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This beautiful, sharp, and perfectly-looking image of the Earth is called "Blue Marble" and was used as the default iPhone desktop background 13 years ago.

But in fact, this is not a real photo, but just a product of editing on Photoshop software done many years ago.



More than a dozen years ago, photos of the Earth were quite rare and were mostly taken from the Apollo 17 spacecraft flight when it flew to the Moon for exploration. And of course, it's not as beautiful as this.

The author of "Blue Marble" is Robert Simmon, a data analyst and designer at NASA's Earth Observatory. He created "Blue Marble" using data from more than 10,000 images taken by Terra satellite over 4 months. And to make the image look real and clearer, the clouds were removed and some details were added.

Simmon admits that there are fake details in this photo. Specifically, clouds are created using cloud map data, they are distributed evenly and beautifully thanks to the help of the clone tool in Photoshop. The color of sea water is created from data on chlorophyll levels in the ocean and the low altitude of the continent is created from topographic data. After adding new details, the image is completely edited thanks to the 3D rendering software and Photoshop.



At the time, this original photo was considered a public work, which anyone could use for free for any purpose. Meanwhile, many versions of "Blue Marble" in black and white are sold at very high prices, up to \$ 10,000.

In 2002, Simmon posted "Blue Marble" on the NASA website. And five years later, Apple used it as a wallpaper for its first iPhone at no cost.

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