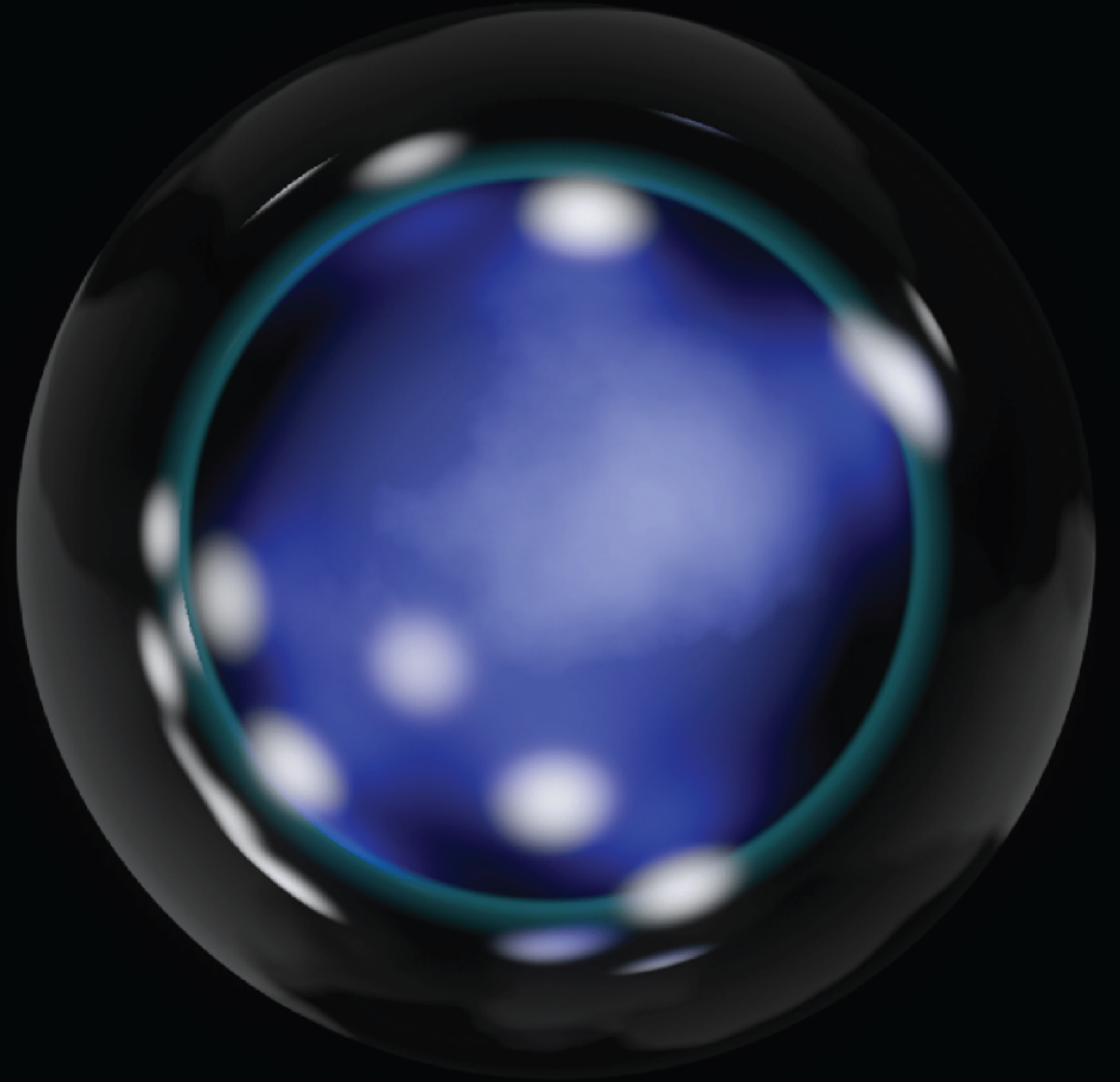


A S T R A L I S

DISCOVER 1000 YEARS OF YOU

An Interactive VR Memory Archive

Emma Canfield
Process Deck
VCD 2020, RIT





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BRIEF

PROBLEM

Despite the proliferation of **family photos** and **video media**, we lack an **engaging** way to connect our **memories and experiences** to those images.

SOLUTION

Create an immersive, interactive experience that allows a personal, **intimate connection to memories** and **significant moments**, in a **searchable, archival** format.

OBJECTIVES

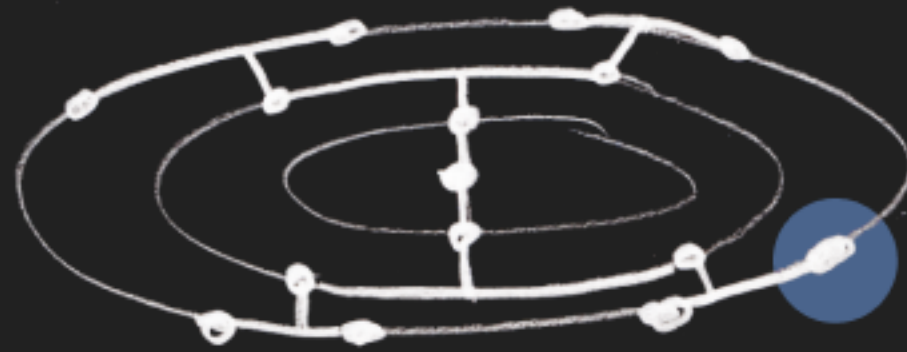
A compelling piece to **visualize** the experience from viewing the whole family tree down to **a specific memory**. The primary goal of Astralis is to have the user walk away with a sense of...

Legacy	07 - 09
Connection	10
Organization	11
Memory	12,13

OBJECTIVES

FLOW OVERVIEW

Solar System



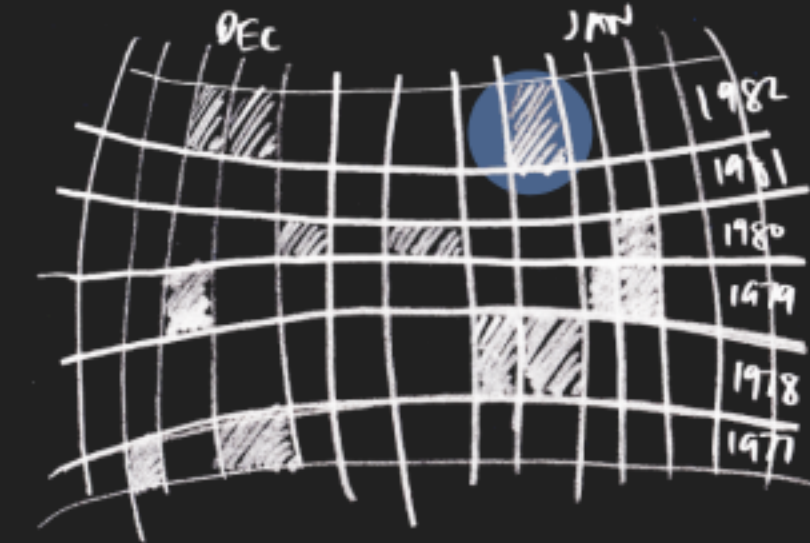
Explore your family's solar system: tap on lower left navigation to discover relationships and names, or directly on planets or generational rings to reveal their connections and stories.

Playback



Double tap on a planet for a preview of that person's memories, then swipe to see the connections to other people who shared that experience or take a deep dive inside the planet.

Continuum



Inside the sphere, swipe up and down by year or right and left by month through the interactive archive, then tap to see more images from that day, or play an archived memory.

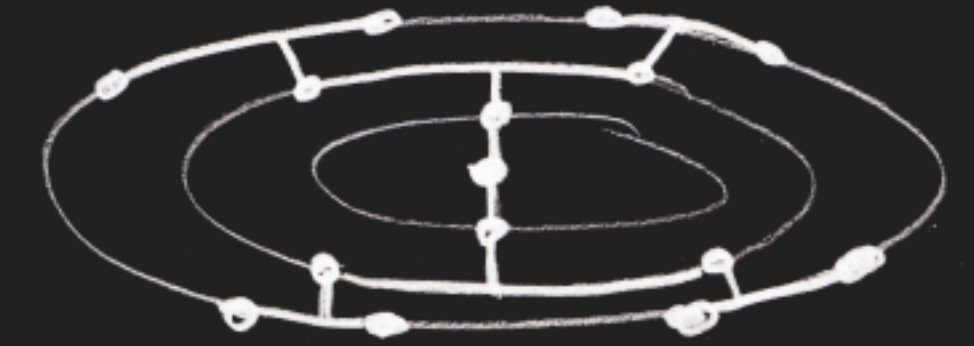
Memory Sequence



As you tap to dive into a memory, other images are compiled, creating a visual backdrop for oral narratives - multiple reflections recorded by family can be accessed.

OBJECTIVES

UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEGACY

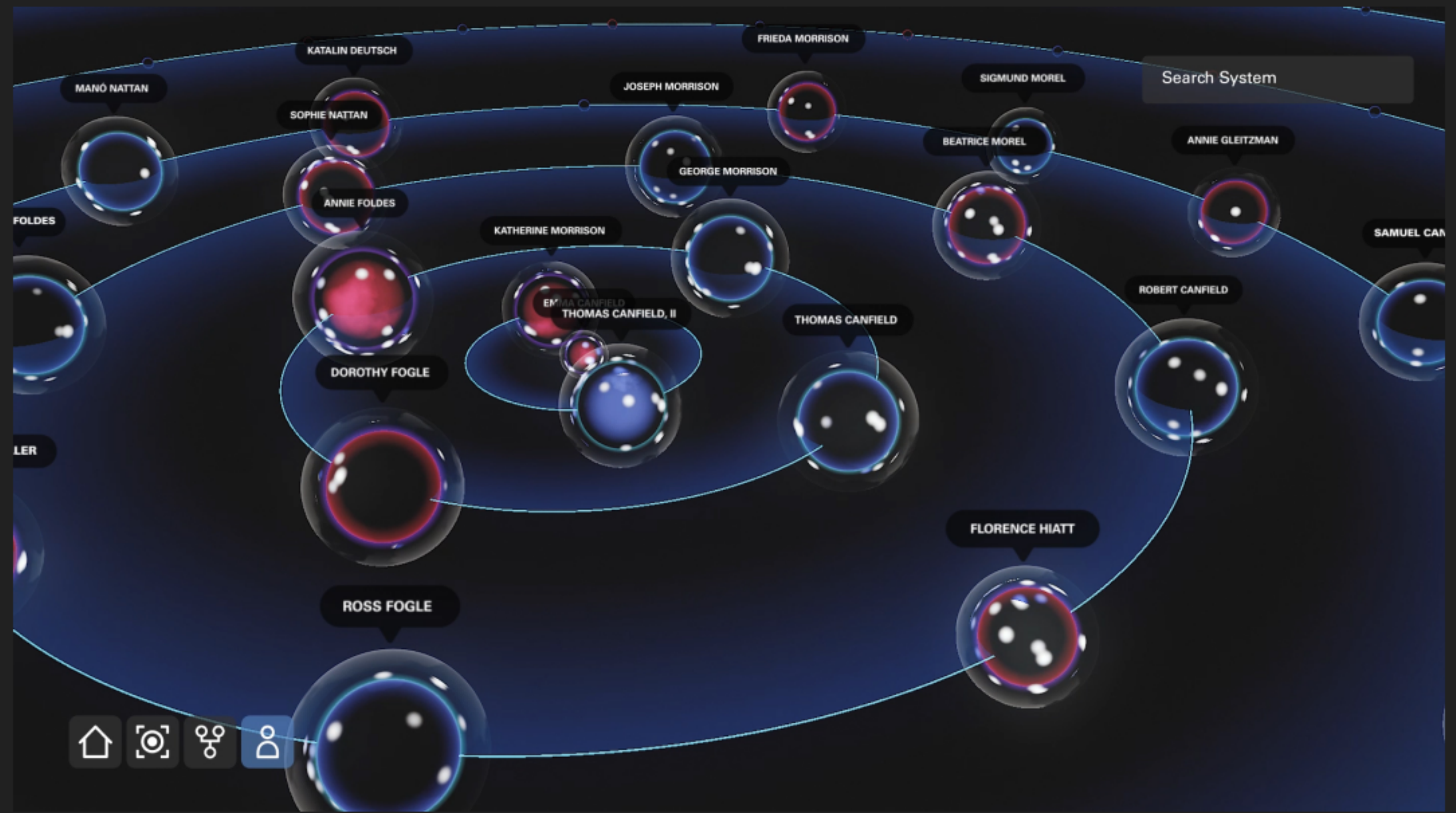


IDENTIFY YOUR RELATIVES

By visualizing the family tree in a **circular** format, **each person is represented as a planet** in the center of their own solar system.

Selecting the **name tag button** reveals the names of all individuals in the current view,

- Each generation is a single ring
- Structure lets you see entire family history in a single view
- Allows comparison of both sides of your family
- Creates an engaging experience



Images by the Author

OBJECTIVES

UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEGACY

IDENTIFY YOUR RELATIVES

Selecting the **relationship button**, the user can bring up a traditional drop-line chart to easily see how everyone is related. This is commonplace in all genealogical platforms.

- By having this be a selectable option the user can keep the space uncluttered, making it easier to navigate.
- The user can also toggle on the name tag button to have the name tags present while navigating the system.

FEATURES

- 1 Home Button: if the user wants to recenter the solar system on their planet (the center)
- 2 Center Button: when another planet is selected, and the user navigates away to examine another part of the tree they can then recenter on that selection.
- 3 Relationship Button: lines revealed to show how all are related
- 4 Nametag Button: Names of each person in the current view shown

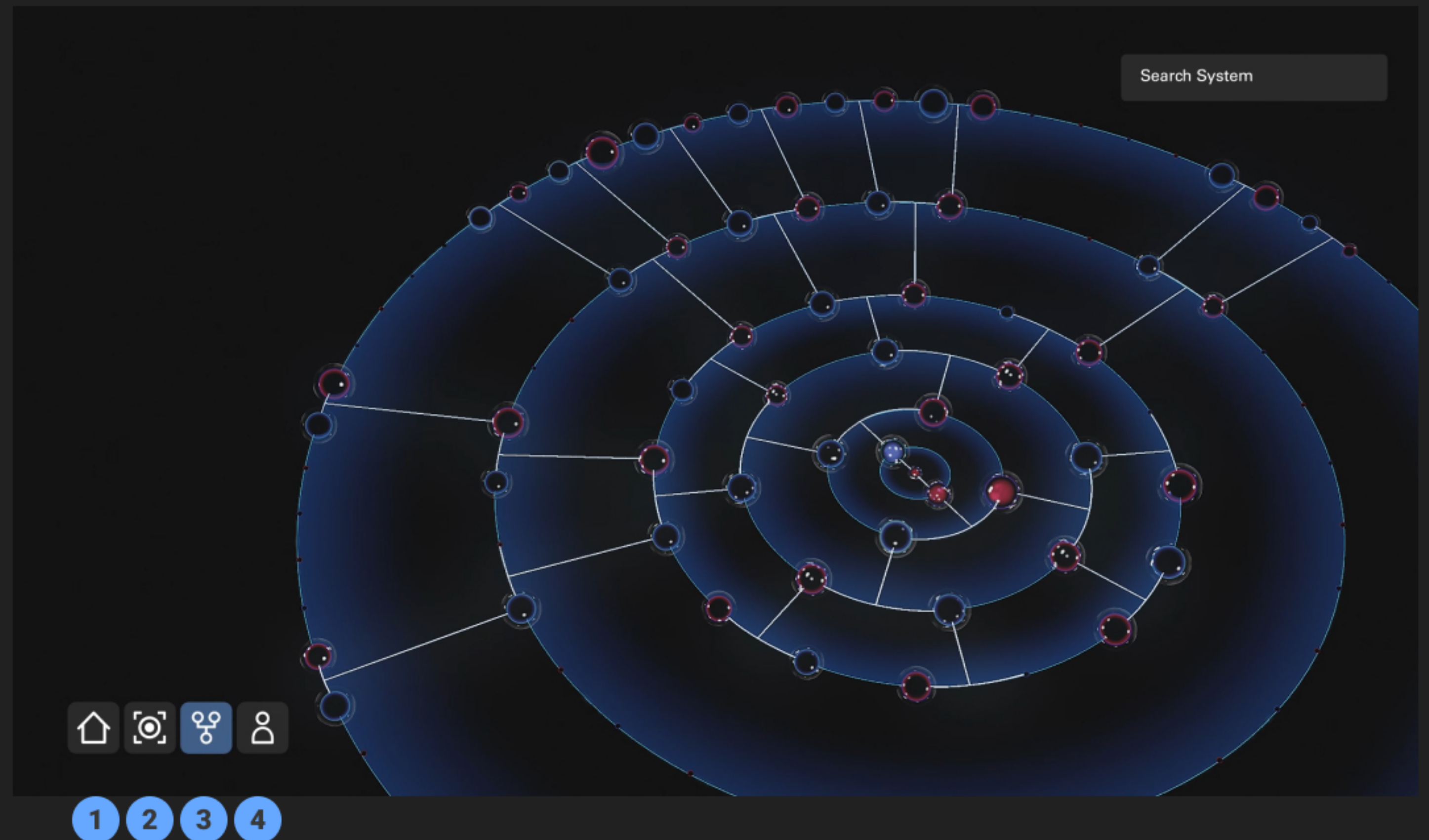


Image by the Author

OBJECTIVES

UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEGACY

- 1** parents
- 2** grandparents
- 3** great grandparents
- 4** 2x great grandparents
- 5** 3x great grandparents
- 6** 4x great grandparents

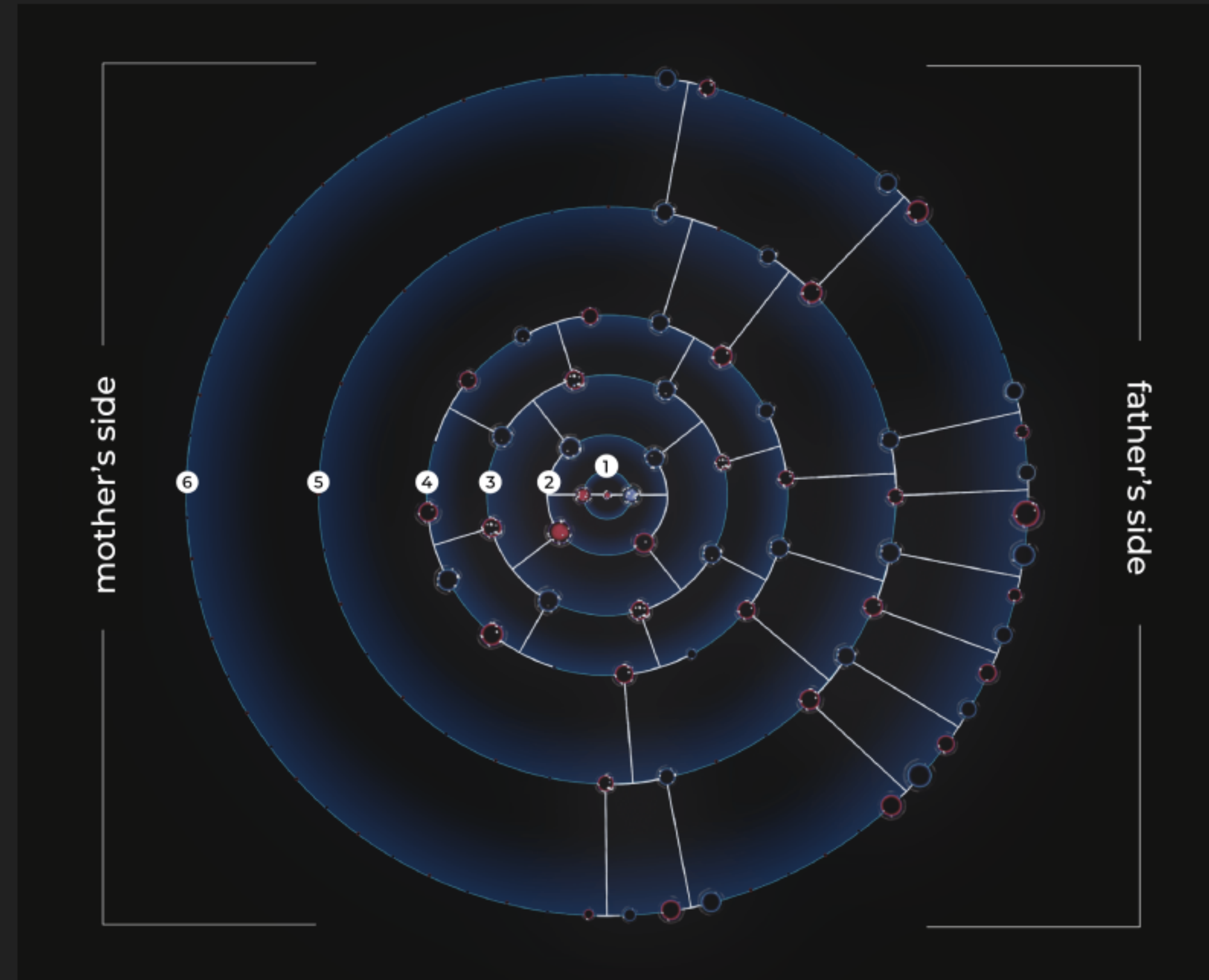
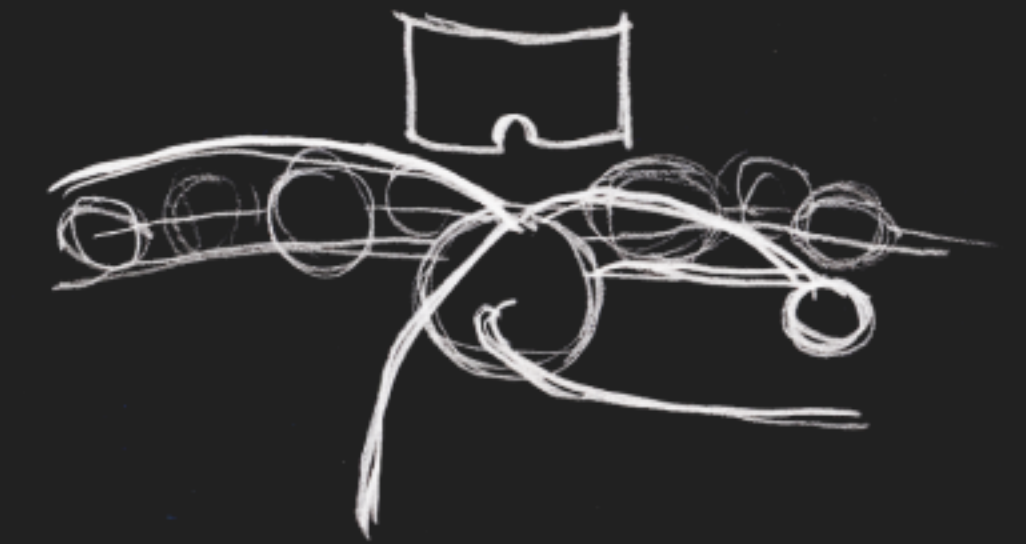


Image by the Author

OBJECTIVES

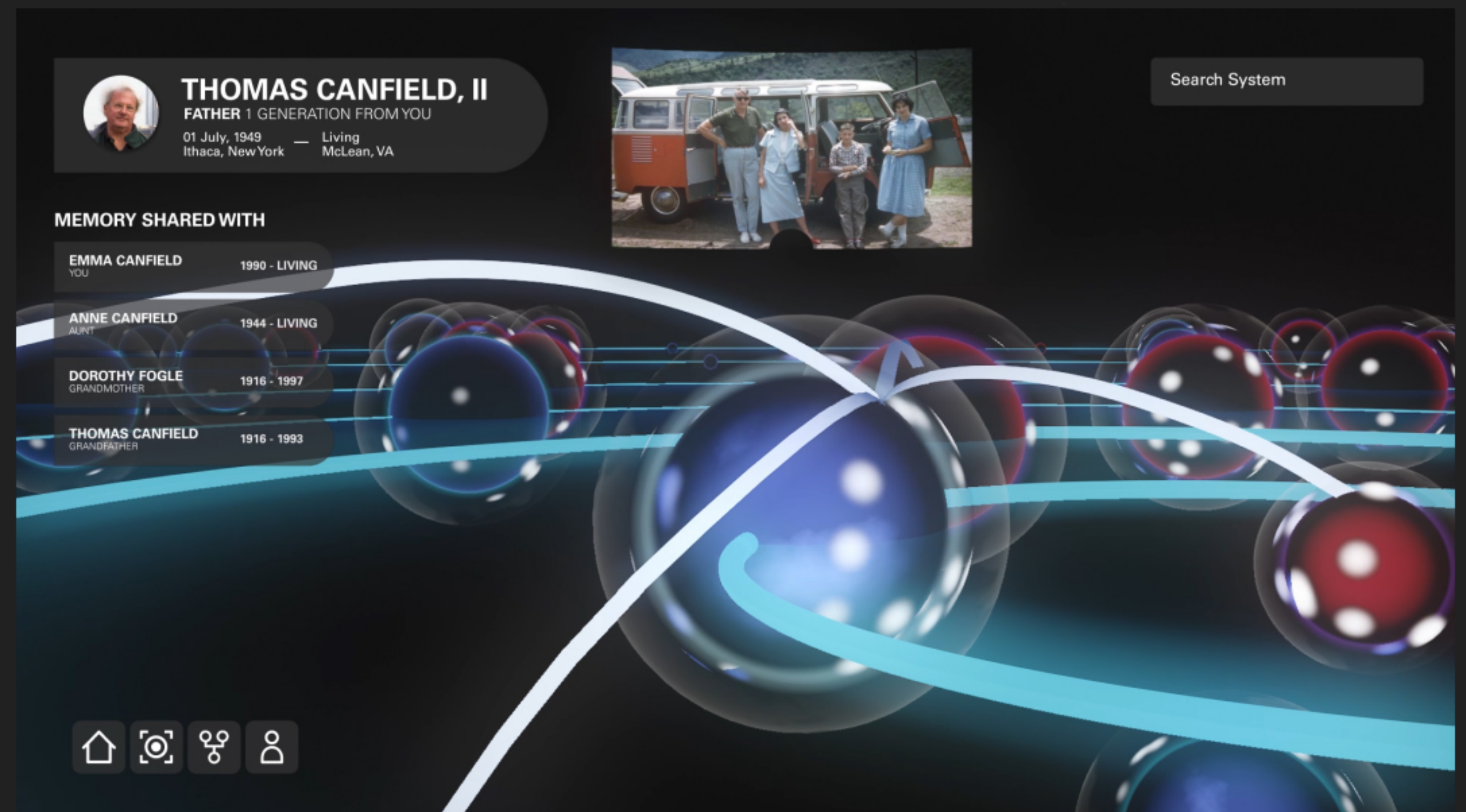
SEEING CONNECTIONS



MEMORY PLAYBACK

Once a planet is selected, the user gets a preview of the memories within that planet. **Connection ribbons** appear, visualizing who else has a **memory attached** to that piece of media.

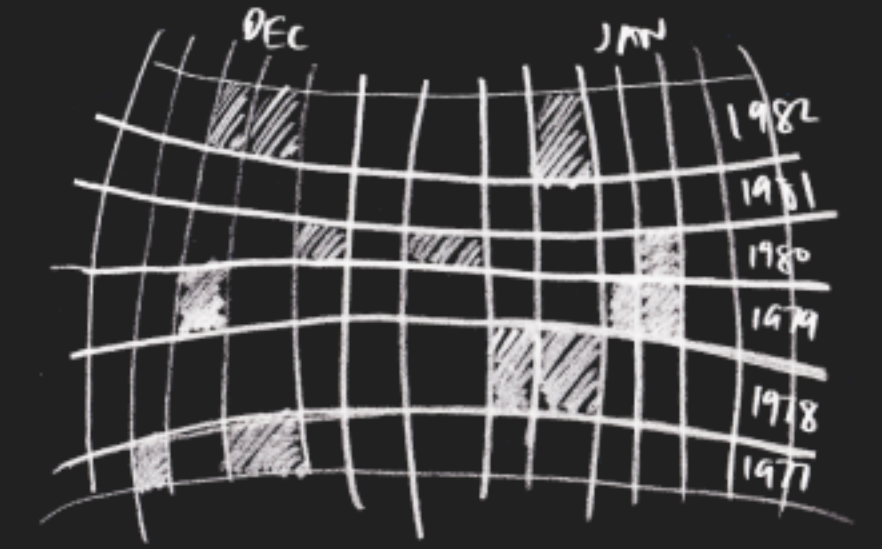
- Deciding how to show connections to individual memories was a challenge
- The idea of animating a trim path to show the connections solved this and made it an engaging, legible experience
- Users can follow these paths to discover connected memories, and then dive into a planet to see the entire continuum of that person's memories.



Images by the Author

OBJECTIVES

ORGANIZATION OF MOMENTS



CONTINUUM OF MEMORIES

Once you enter a person's planet, you are **immersed** in their **memories** (photos, videos, and documents) organized around the **inside surface** of the sphere.

- How: By organizing all of a person's data on a single curved surface, the visitor has virtually instant access to any image, document or memory by glancing in any direction. This single surface eliminates the confusion of traditional file systems (folders, drawers, etc.). This allows all of a person's data to fit into a simple X/Y coordinate system. X being months (days if zoomed in), and Y being years.
- Why: entering the individual's planet puts you in direct touch with the entirety of their personal memories and connections.
- The process of passing through the outer layer into the interior of the planet creates a dramatic VR experience. This also allows the user to get a full sense of the continuum of another person's life.



Images by the Author

OBJECTIVES

MEMORIES



BRING A MOMENT TO LIFE

When a memory is selected, it fills your field of vision, opens a **sequence** and a playback menu. The user can then **connect** to related memories defining that story from many people's **viewpoints** and:

- Hear first-hand personal recollections & reflections
- Add a personal memory or narrative
- Make connections to other family members



Images by the Author

OBJECTIVES

MEMORIES

FEATURES

- 1 Timeline reveals when each piece of media was originally documented, moves to correspond to the media being shown.
- 2 Play bar is broken up into sections for each piece of media used in the story. The name in front of the playbar is the person you are listening to currently. This feature was recently implemented on youtube for longer format videos, called chapters
- 3 Add a personal recollection to the story shown.
- 4 Save the story to your favorites collection
- 5 Share the story with someone.
- 6 Get more information on the image shown, more details and other images shot at that event.
- 7 By tapping on the piece of media, the names of everyone shown are revealed. Tapping the profile button in the upper right corner opens a detailed list of individuals (drawer format) and the user can then navigate to their planets to explore more.
- 8 Hear first-hand personal recollections & reflections, select others who also have a story, or other version of the story.
- 9 By double tapping the screen the summary of the story is shown along with the location where the image was originally captured.



Image by the Author

THE EXPERIENCE

Analysis	15
User Stories	16 - 18
Interactions	19 - 24
Competitive Analysis	25 - 31

INITIAL ANALYSIS

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

The biggest issue with existing Family Tree platforms is that you **cannot see your entire tree simultaneously**; you must select each "branch" individually, by generation, at which point you **lose sight of the overall structure** and your relationship to your distant relative.

- The solar system model allows you to keep yourself in context at all times
- It makes the complexity of a family tree simple and imageable
- It uses familiar forms to make the exploration enjoyable

An abstract graphic on a dark grey background. It features a large, light grey triangle pointing upwards, a smaller light grey circle in the upper right, and another smaller light grey triangle pointing downwards to the right. Overlaid on these shapes is the text 'REFER TO THESIS WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE

USER STORIES

As a **parent**, I want to preserve memories of my children, so that I can:

- Share moments with them as they get older
- Preserve all the digital images and videos, not be afraid of losing them, and move beyond the antiquated physical album format, and
- Have all of my memories in one place, including: vintage prints, recent prints & digital photos & videos

USER STORIES

As a **young adult**, I want to **explore my family tree in as much detail as possible**, so that I can:

- Learn about where my distant relatives came from, and hopefully be able to humanize them,
- Discover new relatives I didn't know I had, and
- Feel like I'm a part of something bigger than myself

USER STORIES

As a **grandparent**, I want share stories about my parents and siblings with my grandchildren, so that I can:

- Preserve family stories for those who come after,
- Create ways for them to share a sense of their family history, culture, & traditions and,
- Preserve my own memory (especially those suffering with Dementia)

INTERACTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

SEE ALL RELATIONSHIPS

Each ring of the family tree is expandable to see any children of that previous generation. This allows for expandable exploration **without leaving the primary state.**

- Conventional genealogy charts do not allow this, or become overly complex when they attempt to show this.
- This model allows drop-down tiers to explore other offspring from previous generations, without losing context
- With this model existing in a VR space, the user can move around at will and explore any relationship, or even change viewpoint to see a relationship more clearly.

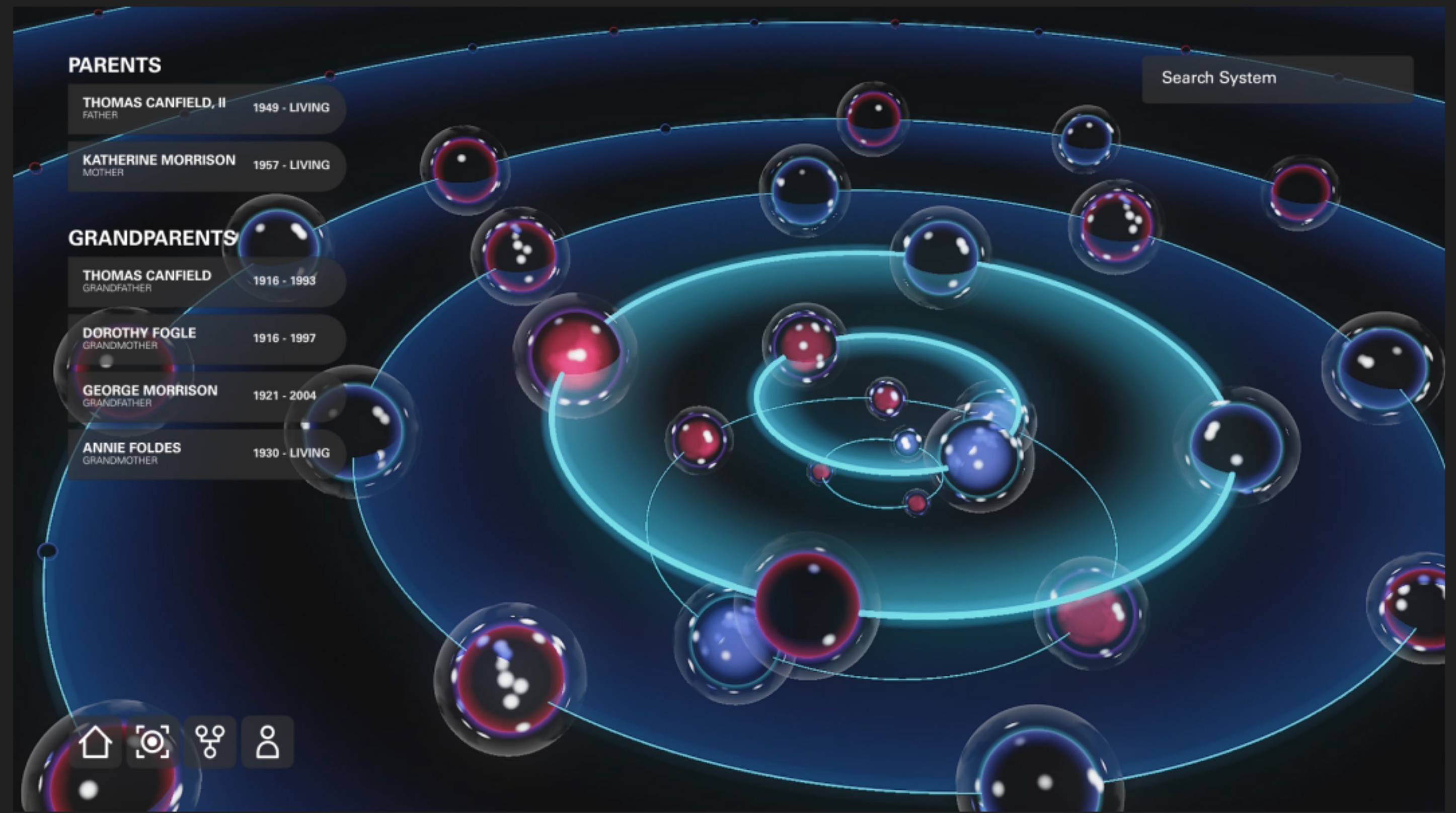


Image by the Author

THE EXPERIENCE

INTERACTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS



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REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE

In existing models if you are in **Pedigree** view you cannot see who your aunts, uncles, or cousins are unless you switch to the **Family** view.

If you choose to explore your tree in the **Family** view (ie by choosing a great grandparent), the interface switches to that person's perspective. In this instance only 11 people from the first state are still visible, and you even lose view of yourself.

One of the 3 options to display your family tree in Family Search is the fan. This is a great deal better than Ancestry in allowing the user to go back seven generations at a time, but is still lacking when you try to simultaneously view cousins, siblings etc.

INTERACTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

FAST, SEARCHABLE RESULTS

The search feature allows the user to quickly browse and **identify family members** they are looking for. You can search for any given or family name and get instant results broken down based on their relationship to you.

- Starts with recent search results to jump back into exploring someone's memories
- Identifies how the user is related to each search result
- Reveals results visible within current view as well as throughout the entire tree if it were fully expanded.
- Results are broken up into individuals visible in current view, those that could be found if you explored cousins & aunts/uncles, and finally distant relatives (where more rings would need to be added and explored.)
- When a name is selected from the legacy section of the search results an arrow hovers over that corresponding person to quickly identify where they are in the solar system.

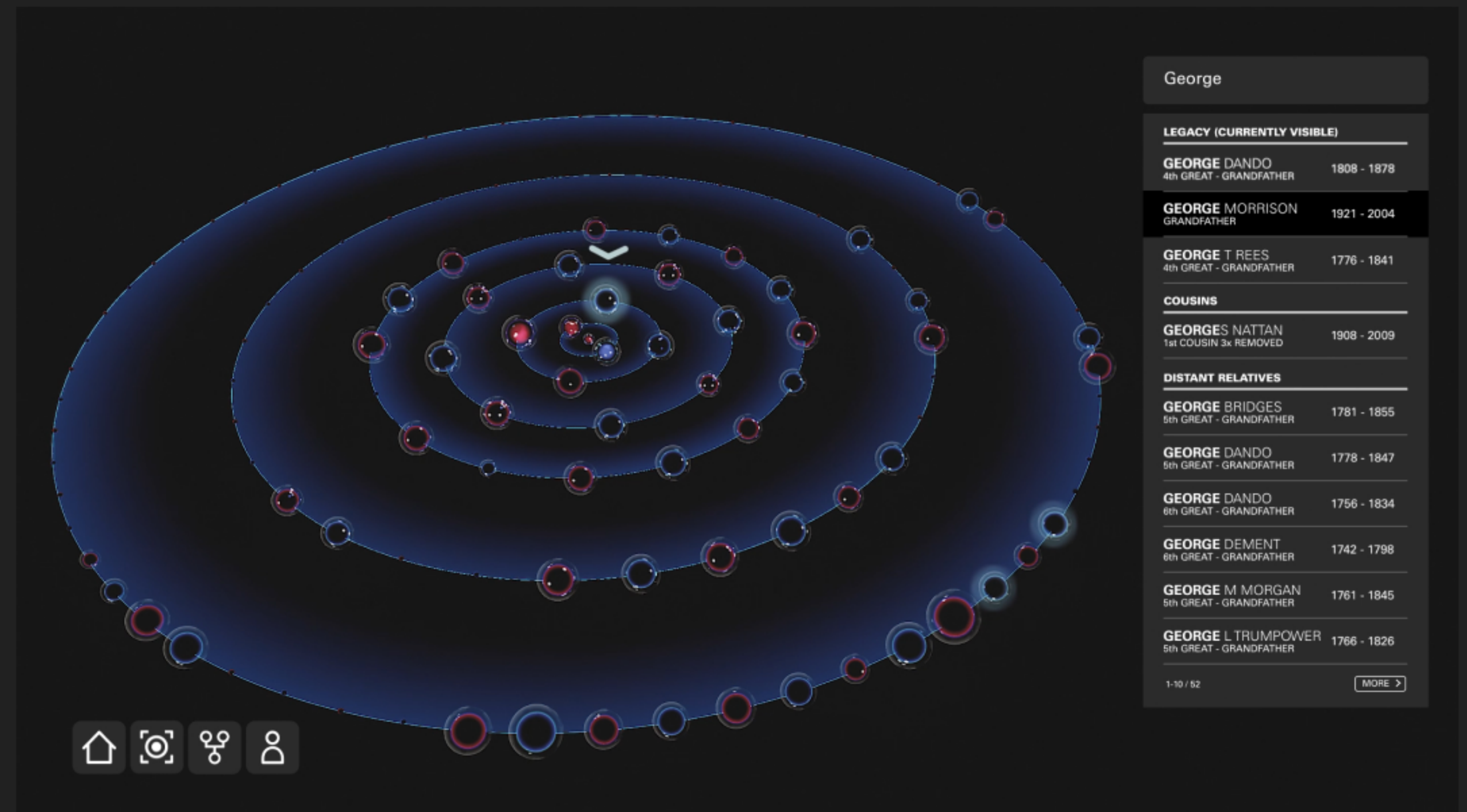


Image by the Author

INTERACTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

FAST, SEARCHABLE RESULTS

- Search results do not identify how you are related to them
- No preview is available to the user when you hover over each result to explain where they are in your tree.
- Once you select a search result it shows the tree from that person's perspective and you lose any sense of how you are related to them.

A dark gray rectangular placeholder with a faint, light gray geometric pattern consisting of two overlapping triangles and a circle in the upper right corner.

**REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE**

A dark gray rectangular placeholder with a faint, light gray geometric pattern consisting of two overlapping triangles and a circle in the upper right corner.

**REFER TO THESIS
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INTERACTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

QUICK OVERVIEW OF PERSONA

By selecting a person you will see a brief **summary** of their information, including **how you are related to them**, how many generations away they are from you, and others in their generation.

- Birth and death dates appear on a single line to improve readability.
- The collapsible list under the ID card reveals other individuals in their immediate family. These names are sequenced in order of your relationship to them.

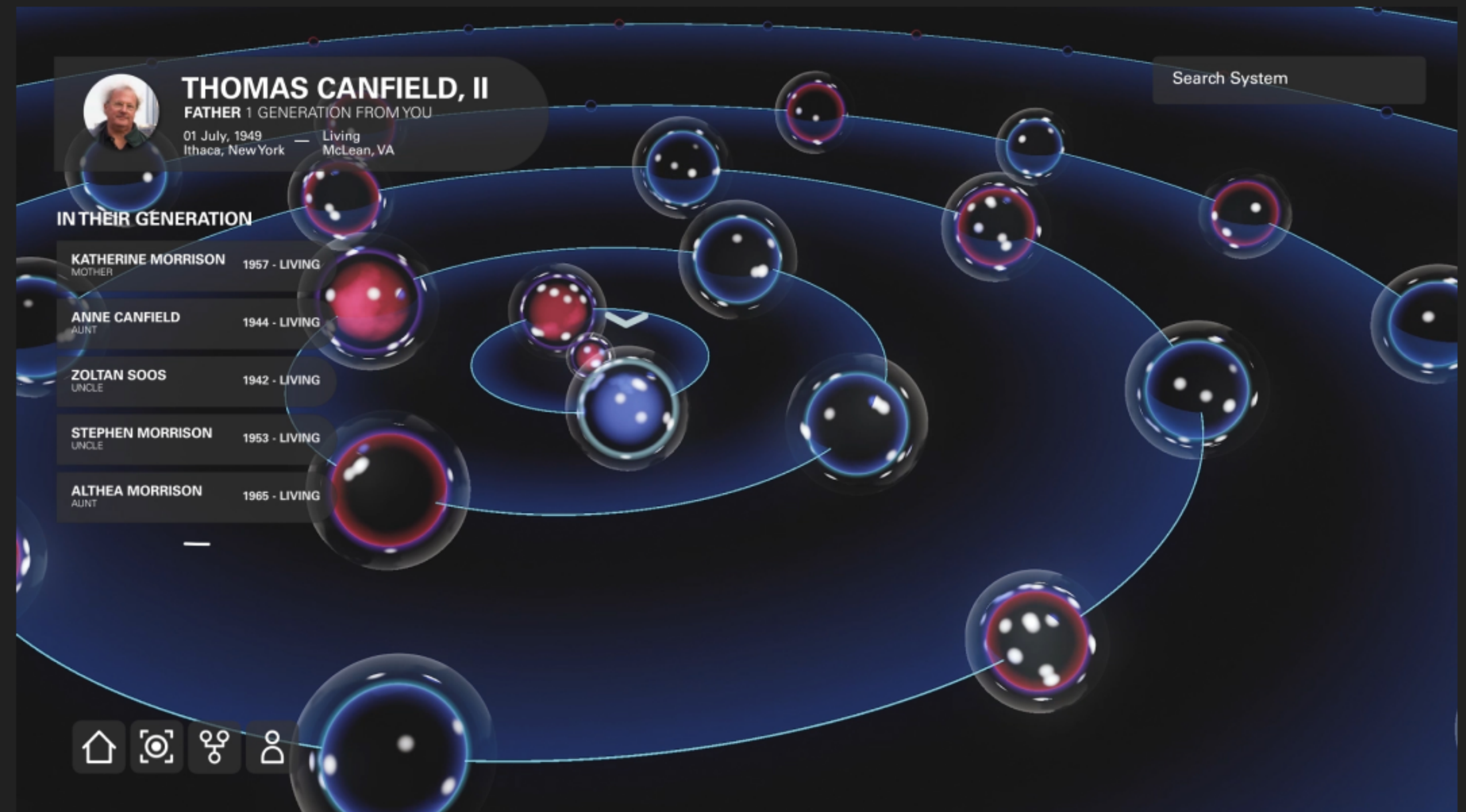


Image by the Author

INTERACTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

QUICK OVERVIEW OF PERSONA

- Birth & Death dates are stacked rather than being side by side
- There is no identification of that person's relationship to you. As you explore the family tree more deeply it becomes harder to identify relationships by counting generations. In order to find this information you have to go into their profile which removes you from the tree, to reveal an entirely new window: their profile page.



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THE EXPERIENCE

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

SHUTTERFLY

A limited platform that is essentially just picture storage; there is no way to channel or target specific emotions or thought processes, apart from which trip, which date, etc. It is the most rudimentary form of memory sharing, because it is also passive & non-interactive. Most common use is to imprint memories on physical objects. It includes some reminders, but at a very simple level.

An abstract graphic on a dark grey background. It features a large, light grey triangle pointing upwards, a smaller light grey triangle pointing downwards to its right, and a light grey circle in the upper right corner. Overlaid on these shapes is the text 'REFER TO THESIS' and 'WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE**

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

FACEBOOK

Also maintains a timeline with photos and posts, but often the reminders are of events we DON'T want to remember. Sharing painful moments can backfire on the user also, and interactions can quickly become something we do not want to revisit.

The choice of emotions has long been too limited, and seems really mechanistic. When people take chances, they can get "burned"; it has also become an entry point for stalkers. The ads make it a shallow, commercial experience - could a premium for pay version without ads solve some of these problems?



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COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

INSTAGRAM

Stories: offers public and private story modes, and both expire after 24 hours, so you can feel more free to post, laugh and criticize, without fear of the past coming back to haunt you. You can still post permanently on the home page, and then delete or archive them later. You can see how many people viewed your content, and if others want to interact with it they can comment/message you directly. In Stories the like feature does not exist, forcing the viewer to have a more genuine interaction with the person who posted the content.

Main Feed: Apart from commenting, you can only like a post in the main feed, you cannot have any other emotion attached to the quick response.



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THE EXPERIENCE

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

SNAPCHAT

Very non-permanent, forces viewers to comment to have interaction before the story goes away. Heavy AR filters so there is a younger audience here. Limited to short videos, same as instagram. Only about present moments, less about past memories. More casual approach to saving memories, small genuine moments, rather than curated public announcements. Access to entire archive of past posts to your main feed, other short form videos in private messages can disappear.



**REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE**

THE EXPERIENCE

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

ANCESTRY

View how relatives are connected, add content (pictures, birth certificates, weddings, milestone moments). See where you come from and who you are connected with. Limited in sharing actual memories. More of a major milestone archive base. Not a social media platform, but historically accurate family tree information.



**REFER TO THESIS
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COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

PHOTOS

Very linear straightforward photo organization. Is broken down into: All, Days, Months, Years. (all in “photos” tab)
Other tabs provide other ways to search & navigate the photos. **For you**: curates the images based on when and where they were shot **Albums**: any albums you may have curated in the app. **Search**: Broken down into: Moments, People, Places, Categories. These use software to identify what is in the image to suggest categories for the user.
From the collections created by the app, it will also create montage videos with customizable music. However this is not done by the user so it may contain outtakes from the event they do not want in the video.

An abstract graphic featuring a large, light gray circle in the upper right corner and two overlapping triangles, one light gray and one medium gray, in the center. The text 'REFER TO THESIS WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE

THE EXPERIENCE

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

AMAZON PHOTOS

Similar to Shutterfly the images are displayed in a grid, with a timeline to the right. Rather than simply indicating the years, the timeline has dots identifying when there were more images added to the archive, which signals some kind of event. The user can then click on those dots to see each event rather than scrolling endlessly.

An abstract graphic featuring a large, light gray circle in the upper right corner, a large, light gray triangle in the center, and a smaller, light gray triangle to its right. The background is a dark gray gradient.

**REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE**

DEFINING A VISUAL LANGUAGE

Studies	33 - 34
Style	35 - 37
Sketches	38

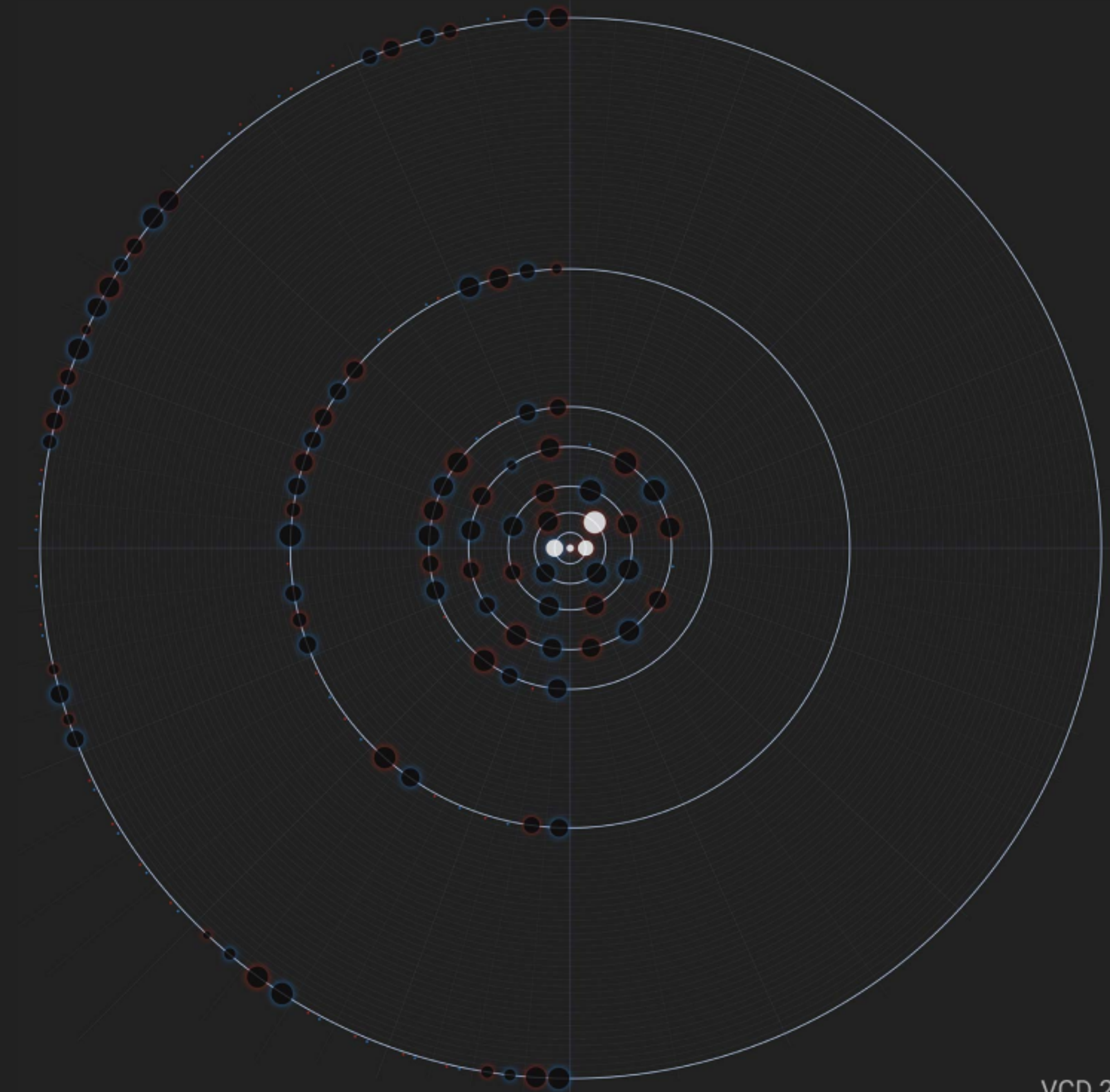
DEFINING A VISUAL LANGUAGE

STUDY OF FAMILY TREE GEOMETRY

MAPPING A FAMILY TREE

The structure of the tree resolved into **concentric circles**, where each ring represents a generation, allowing the user to easily compare their family history from one side of their tree to the other. Ring spacing **doubles** moving outward (back in time) to accommodate the greater number of people represented.

- Circular geometry allows simultaneous viewing of entire family
- Initially, ring spacing was conceived as equal
- Understanding the increase in numbers defined the final geometry



DEFINING A VISUAL LANGUAGE

STUDY OF FAMILY TREE GEOMETRY

MAPPING A FAMILY TREE

Circle, or Sun Charts, as well as many other geometric representations of ancestry are not new, but the layout done here, with the added ability of being able to see other children in the ring via a drop-down, is a feature that was not available in any of the traditional charts.

- Circular geometry allows simultaneous viewing of entire family
- Initially, ring spacing was conceived as equal
- Understanding the increase in numbers defined the final geometry



**REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE**



**REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE**

DEFINING **STYLE** & CONTENT

MOOD BOARD: CELESTIAL

Since the structure of the Family Tree uses the visual metaphor of a **solar system** or **armillary sphere**, there are strong visual influences from these elements:

- Spheres, which represent individuals
- Their satellites, which represent moments and memories
- Their orbits, which define generations
- Comet-like traces that appear when memories are connected



**REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE**

DEFINING A VISUAL LANGUAGE

DEFINING **STYLE** & CONTENT

PLANET SIZE & MEMORY DENSITY

The **size** of the planet is based a person's **age/how long they lived**. The smaller the orb, the younger they are/were when they passed. The **white dots** on the surface of the orb represent the **volume of memories** connected to that person.

- A clear graphic display of lifespan was important – orb size made it legible
- The memory dots allow a clear and immediate sense of memory richness
- More distant relatives often show fewer memories because records are sparse

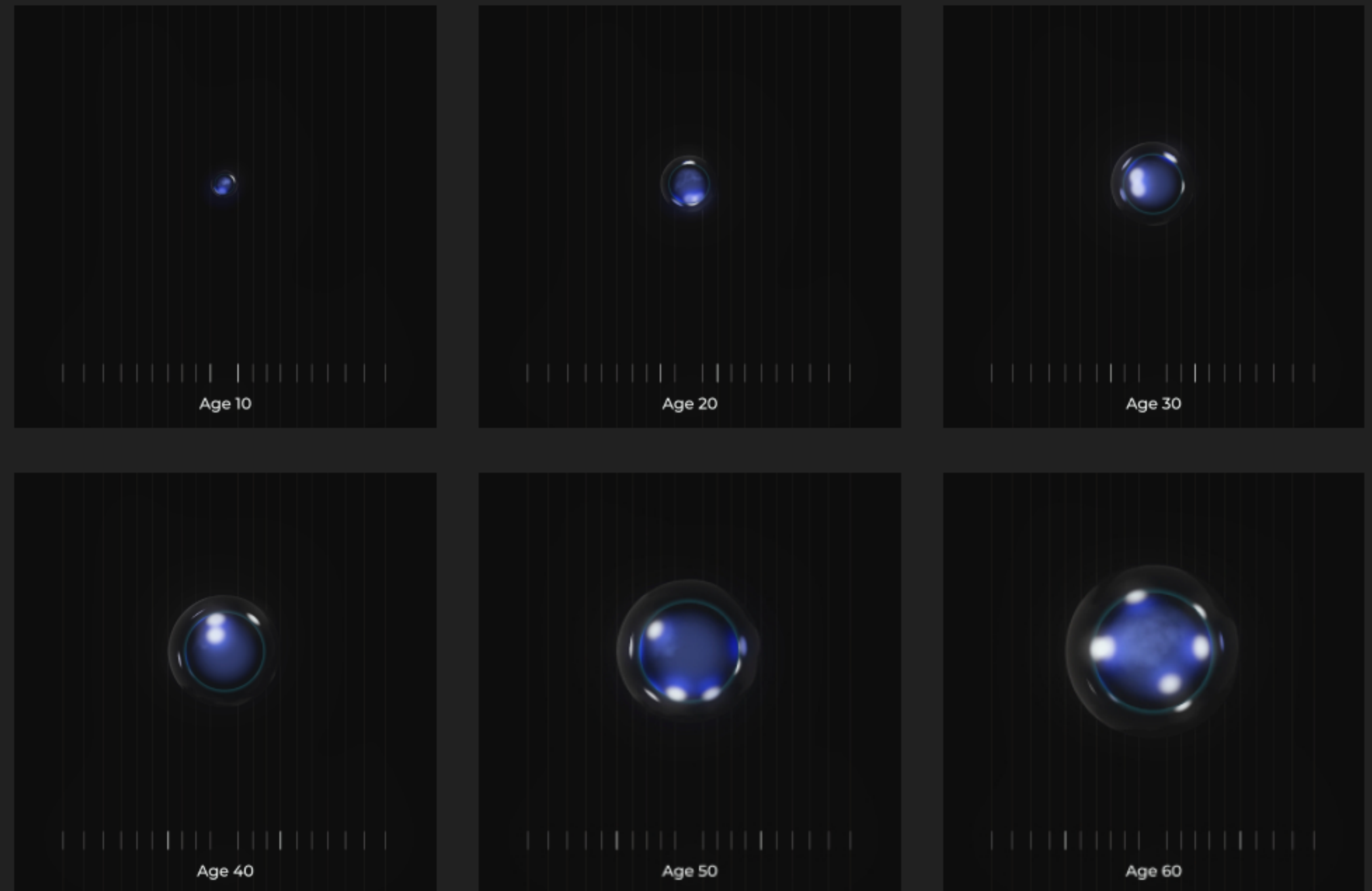


image by author

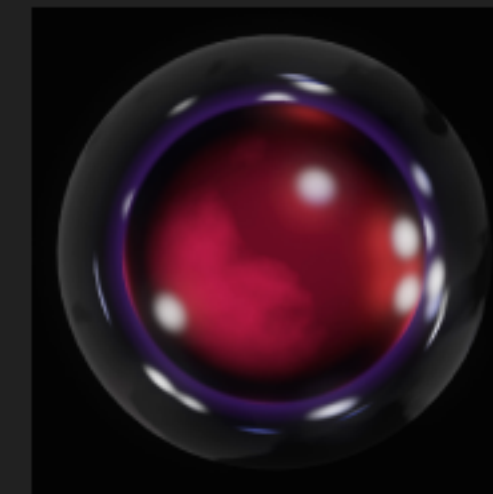
DEFINING A VISUAL LANGUAGE

DEFINING **STYLE** & CONTENT

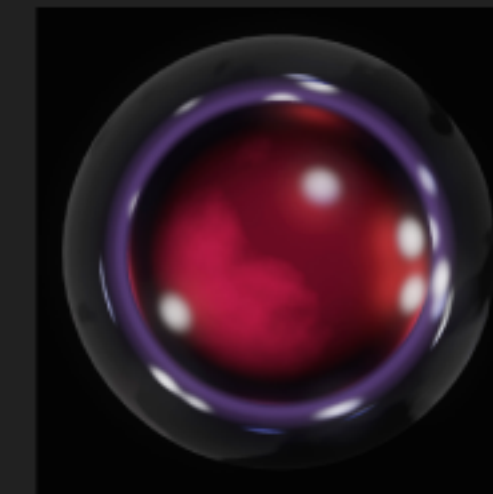
PLANETARY STATES

Within the family tree it was apparent that there needed to be a way to distinguish gender, living people from ancestors, and indicate selected versus deselected states.

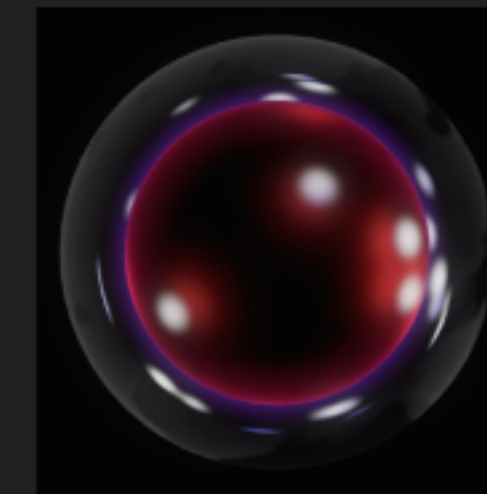
- Gender color was a challenge but resolved into blue, magenta and green for male, female and agender
- People still living show a strong inner glow, while the deceased are dark
- When selected, an individual's outer glow intensifies



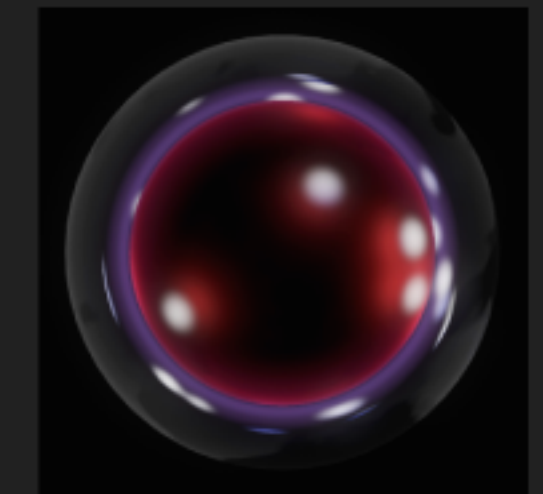
Females Alive - deselected



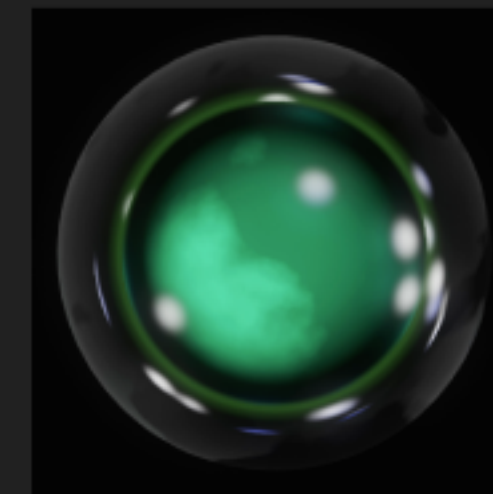
Females Alive - selected



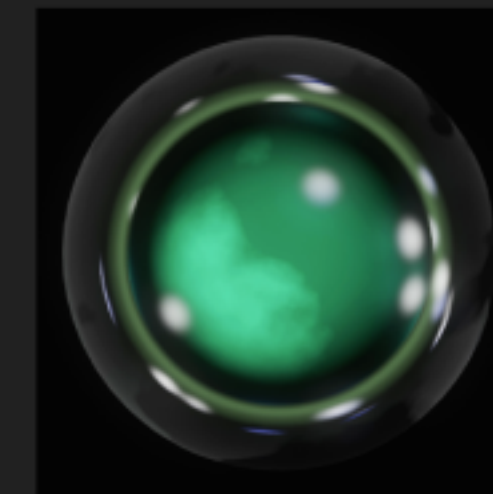
Females Passed - deselected



Females Passed - selected



Agender Alive - deselected



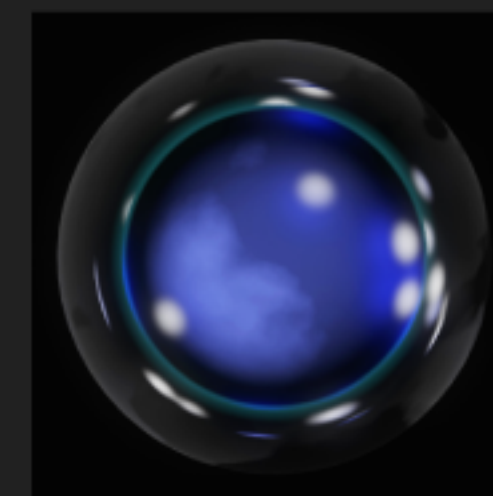
Agender Alive - selected



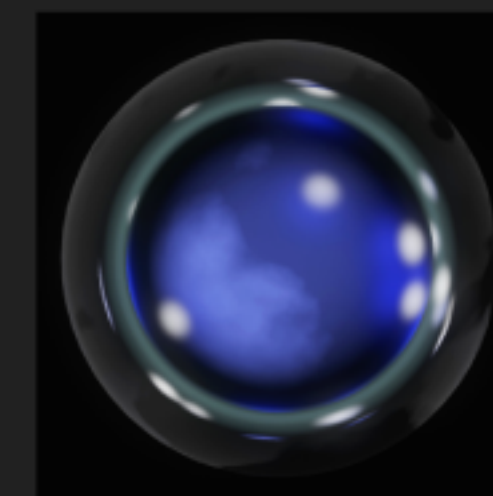
Agender Passed - deselected



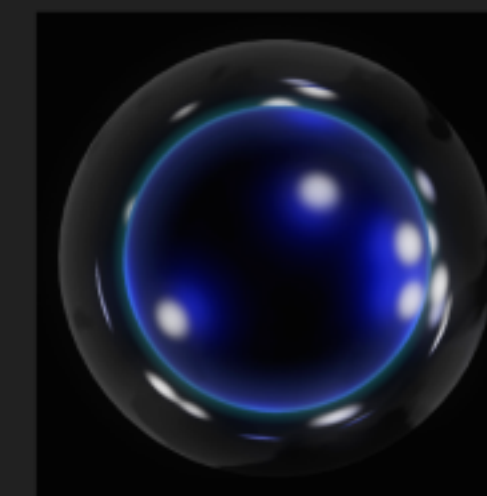
Agender Passed - selected



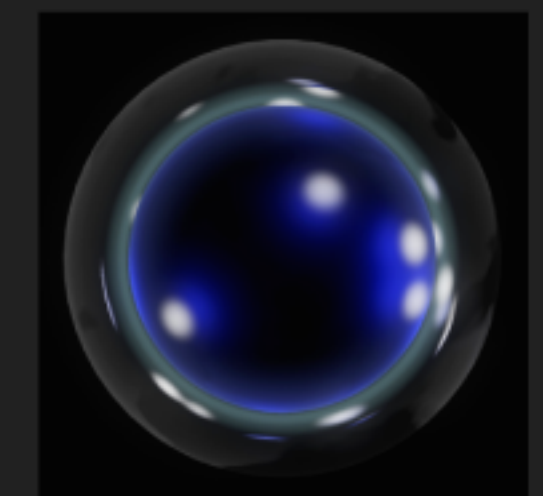
Males Alive - deselected



Males Alive - selected



Males Passed - deselected



Males Passed - selected

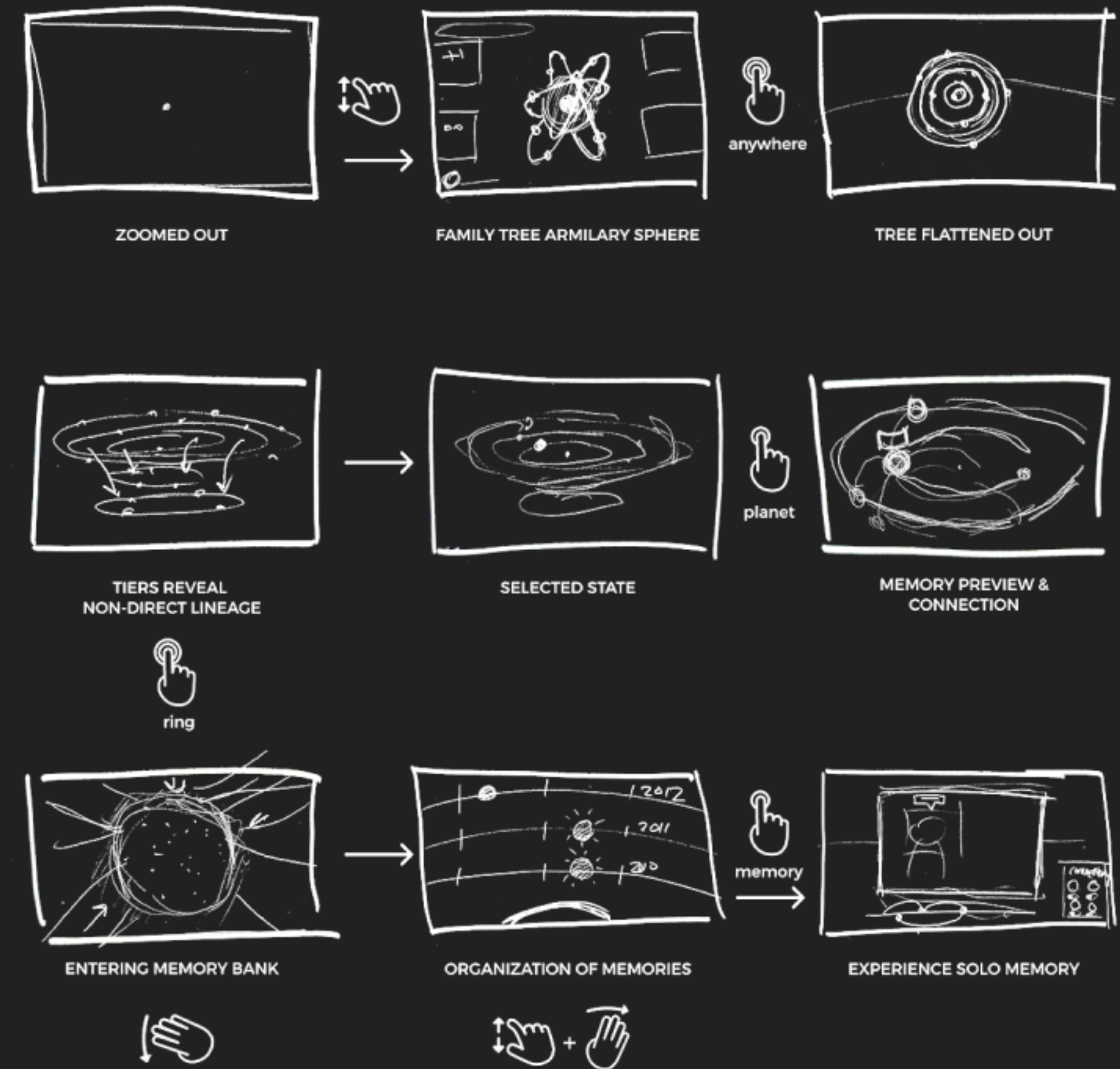
Images by the Author

SKETCHES & USER FLOW

STORY BOARD

Exploring the evolution of the idea from a **solar system** to a **VR interface**, the user flow had a direct influence on how each state would function & animate.

- Difficulty of showing both legacy and family view in a single model was the greatest challenge
- The key was adding a third dimension - as a drop-down subset, to reveal children of the selected generation.
- This keeps the user in-context, unlike genealogical charts which only show one set of relationships at a time.



CAMPAIGN ASSETS

Motion 40

Branding 41

MOTION BRINGS OLD PHOTOS TO LIFE

PROMOTIONAL ANIMATIONS

To pitch the experience, I created a video animation hybrid piece to illustrate archival family photos coming to life.

- Animation of still photos was originally seen as a way to pull the viewer into the experience
- Having the prints animate as they are placed on a surface was later seen as an ideal promotional piece for the concept ("Don't you wish you could...")
- Animated photos work to enhance the actual experience.



BRANDING IDENTITY

LOGO DESIGN

With the experience set in space it only made sense to have the typography align with this theme. Selecting a clean angular sans-serif made the most sense. By increasing the tracking the logo type has a cinematic effect.

A S T R A L I S

Idler Pro Test

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr
Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

ITERATIONS

Style	43 - 47
Process	48 - 50

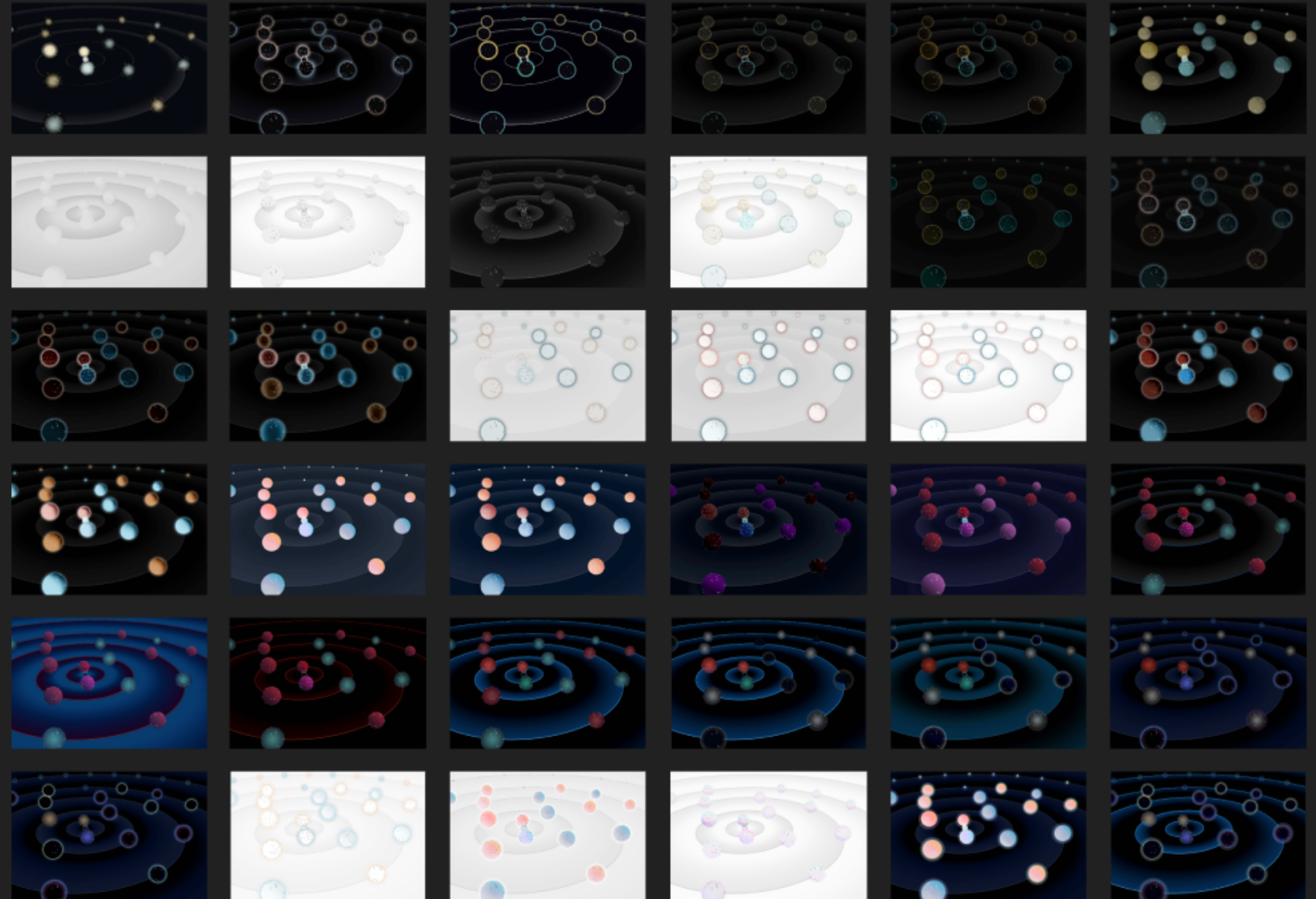
ITERATIONS

VISUAL **STYLE** OF ASSETS

SOLAR SYSTEM ITERATIONS

An exploration of potential visual styles to represent the elements of the family tree.

- Finding the best color scheme for the system of planets involved many passes on color combinations, with feedback from diverse groups
- The initial color scheme was muted, using yellow & teal, but did not prove intuitive in identifying males, females and agender in the planetary view.
- The surface and texture of the orbs and their attached memories were also run through many iterations, looking for visual attraction and legibility.



Images by the Author

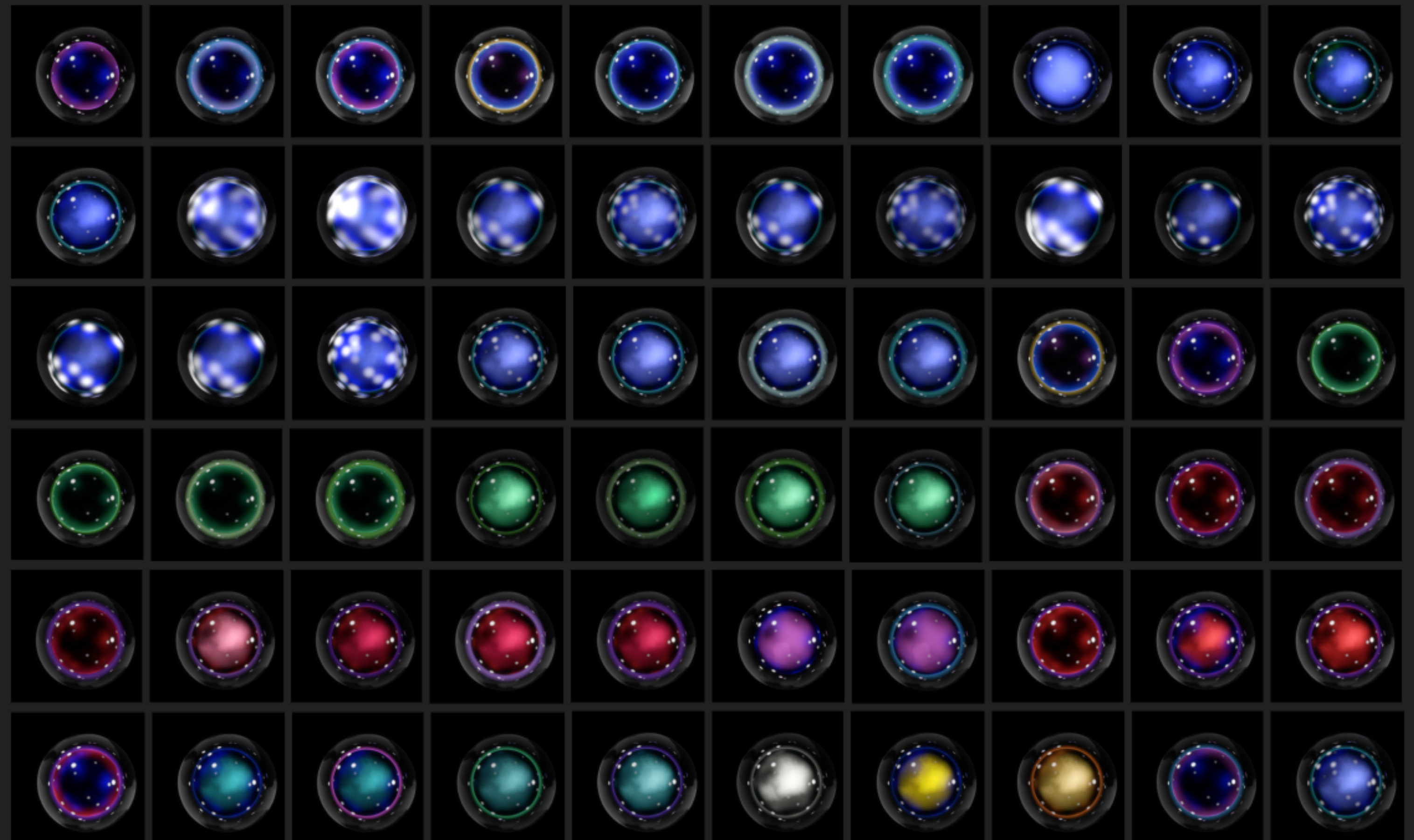
ITERATIONS

VISUAL **STYLE** OF ASSETS

PLANETARY STATES ITERATIONS

As the study of planetary expression became more detailed, the individual orbs continued to explore color & gender relationships, and whether to be more traditional or experimental with the use of color.

- Density of memories was also explored, ranging from pinpoints on the surface of the planet to larger spots, which also became more like reflections of light from inside the sphere.
- The addition of depth not only added visual interest but began to suggest both atmospheres and eggs – a subtle reference to our common origins.
- The re-imagining of the spheres as translucent, glossy objects with perceivable depth made them more intriguing & engaging visually, and hints at the ability to go inside that person's memory.



Images by the Author

ITERATIONS

VISUAL STYLE OF ASSETS

WIREFRAMES

By working through the UI many informational aspects had to be reworked until each element was as clear as possible.

- Initially each element had a white stroke around it, making it have more of a futuristic sci-fi interface appeal. As this got pushed it was clear that the white from the text was getting muddled with the white from the outline of the bounding box.
- The Memory playback screen was the most important in terms of UI as it did not have the ability to rely on 3D assets to move around.
- The placement of the elements was important, as was the way the tagging structure worked.
- There was a great deal of experimentation in the way the lists of tagged family members appeared at the top of this screen, in this scenario a drawer made the most sense especially if there were many people in the image.

STRUCTURE



TAGGING



DRAWER



Images by the Author

ITERATIONS

VISUAL STYLE OF ASSETS

WIREFRAMES

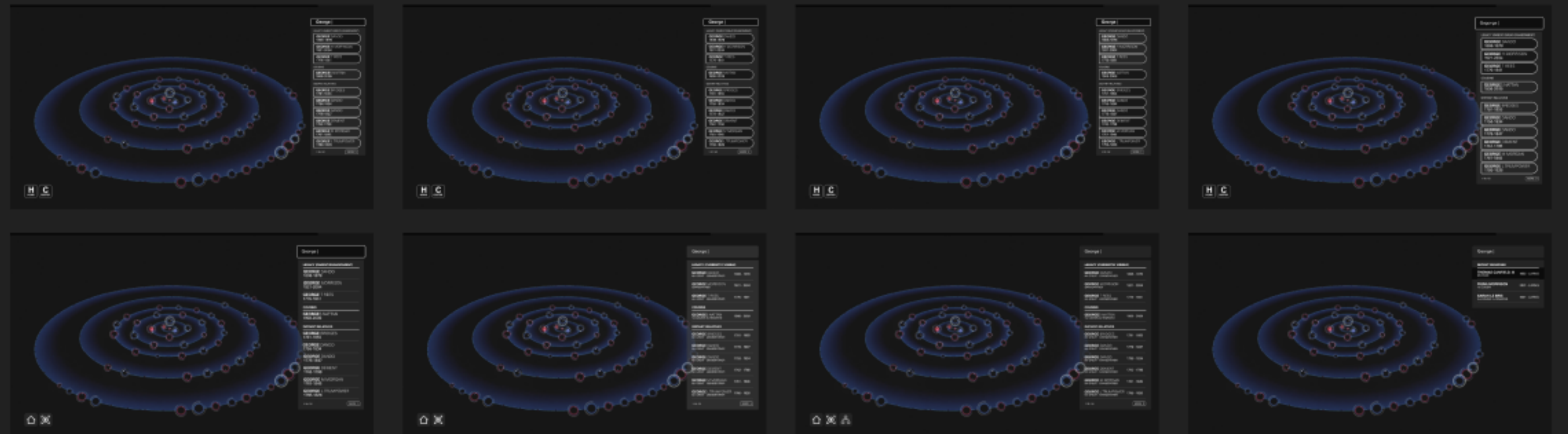
As with the memory playback screen the search & preview pages had some UI on it that was important to focus on, as they would inform other buttons in other parts of the system.

- The listed names below the selected profile card went through several passes; they were ultimately much more successful without the white outline.
- The search page originally had each result in the same capped tag shape as other list views, however this made the page too chaotic. By varying the weight of the rules throughout the list to break up the sections it was much easier to read through all the information.

PREVIEW



SEARCH



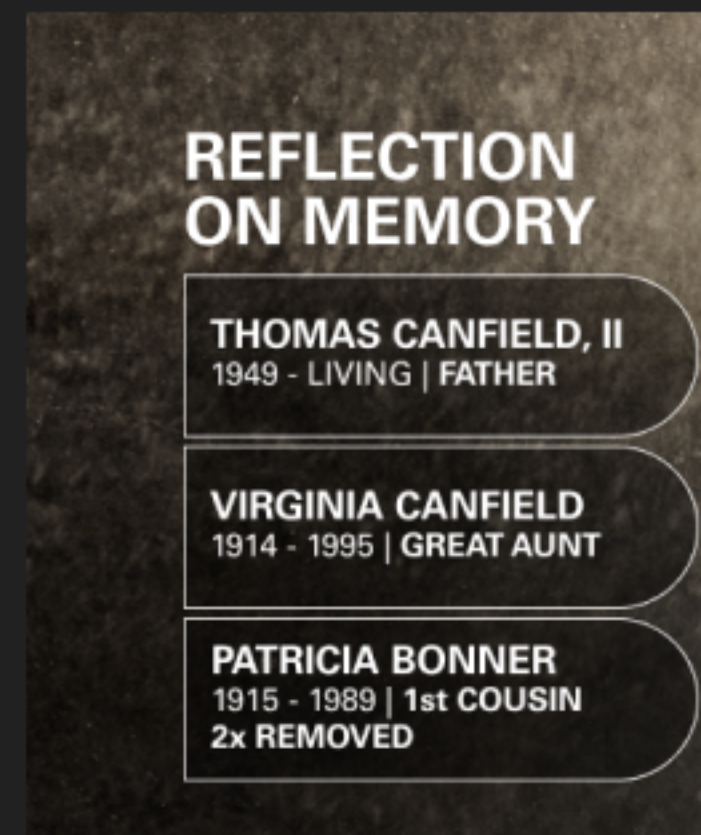
Images by the Author

VISUAL STYLE OF ASSETS

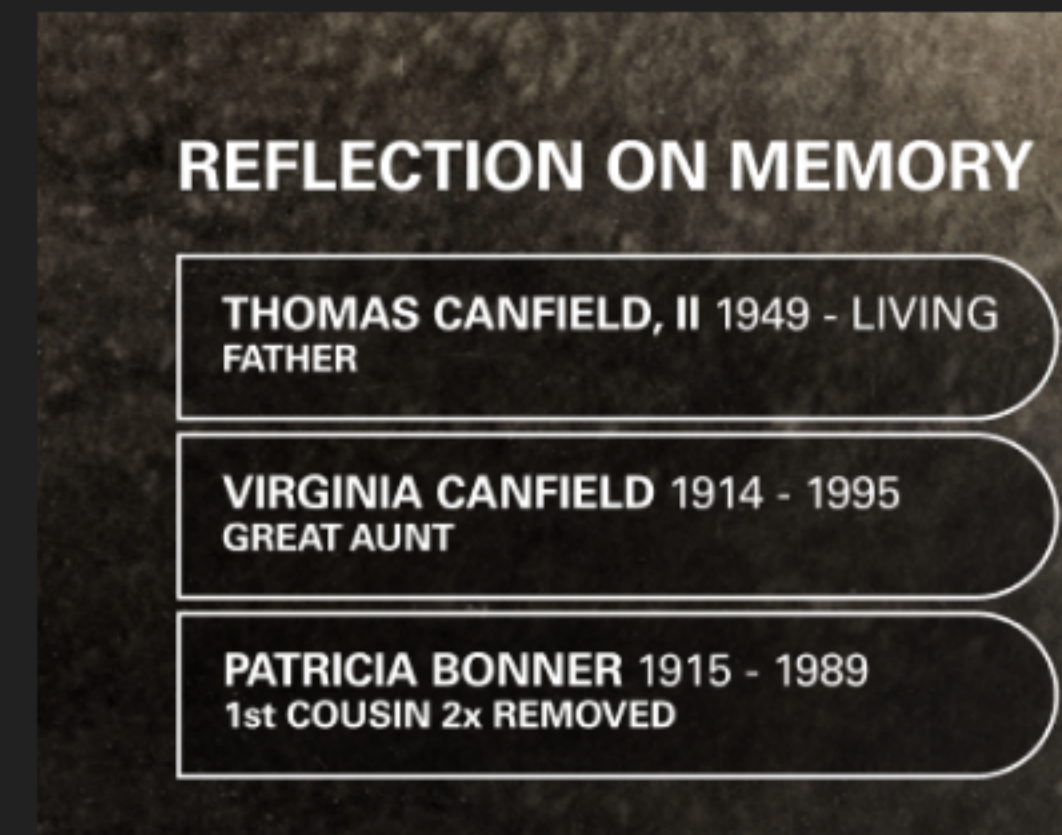
WIREFRAMES

The hierarchy on the tagged persons was also very important for scanability and continuity. The person's name had to be the largest element, however the relationship title & date range had to be placed in the field in such a way that they were not only legible but scanable in a long list.

By making the other two sections a light typeface & grey rather than white it helped in bringing emphasis to the name, and shifting the date range to the edge and centered helped greatly for scanability. This also gave the relationship section enough space for longer titles to be written out.



Images by the Author

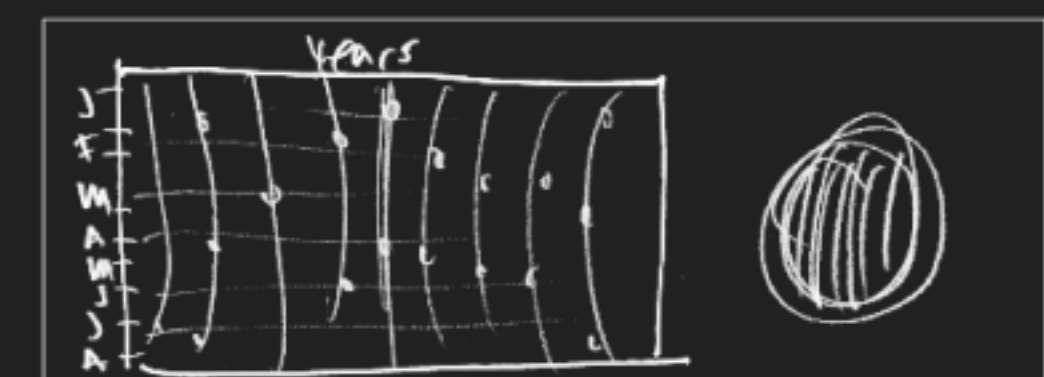
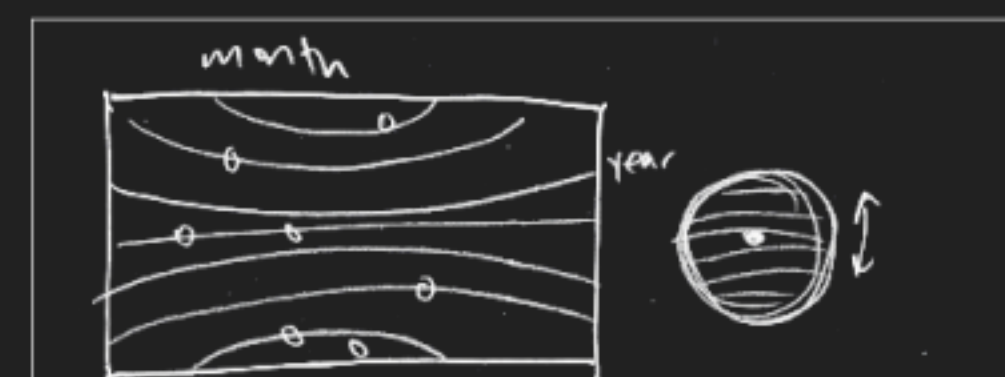
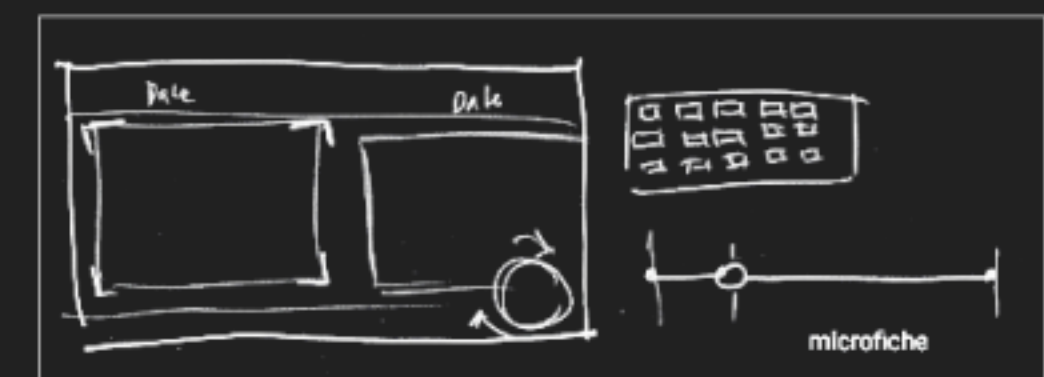
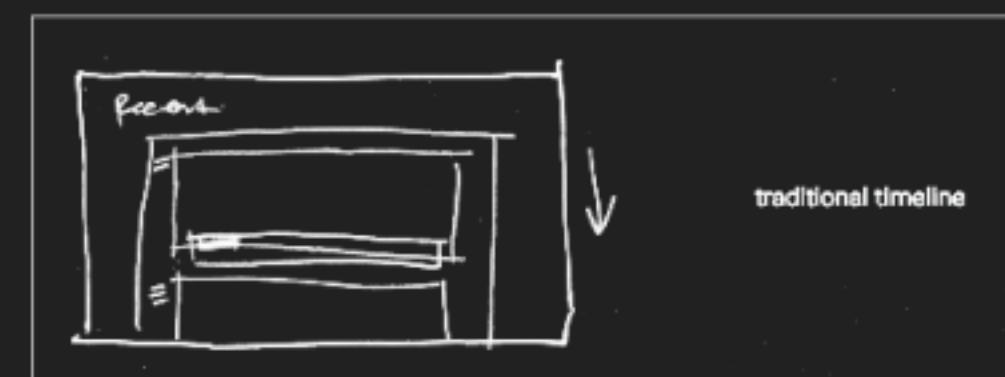
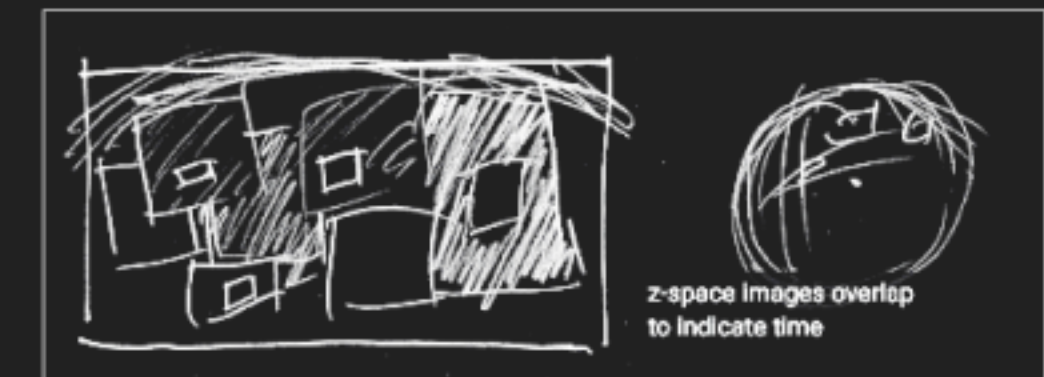
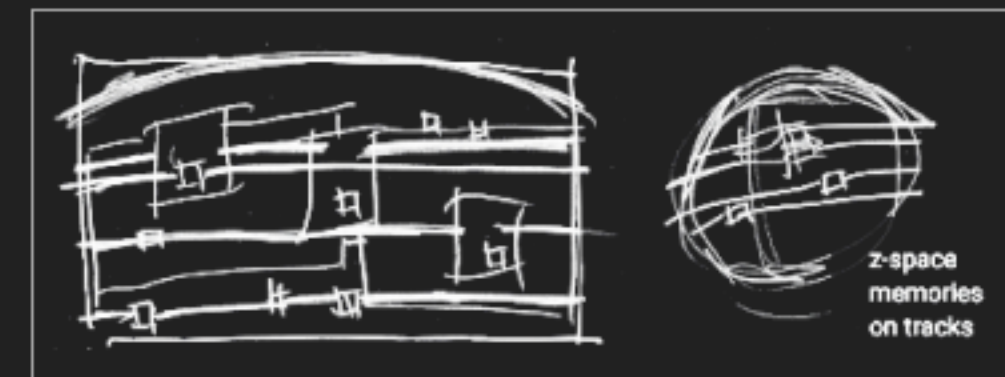
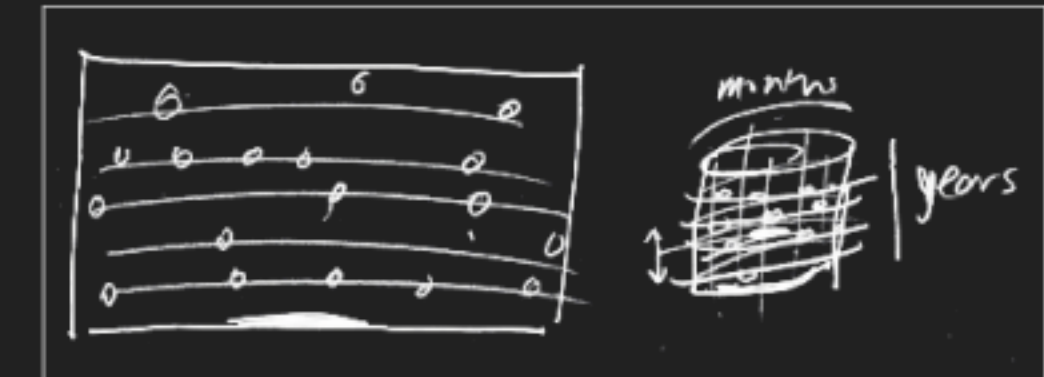
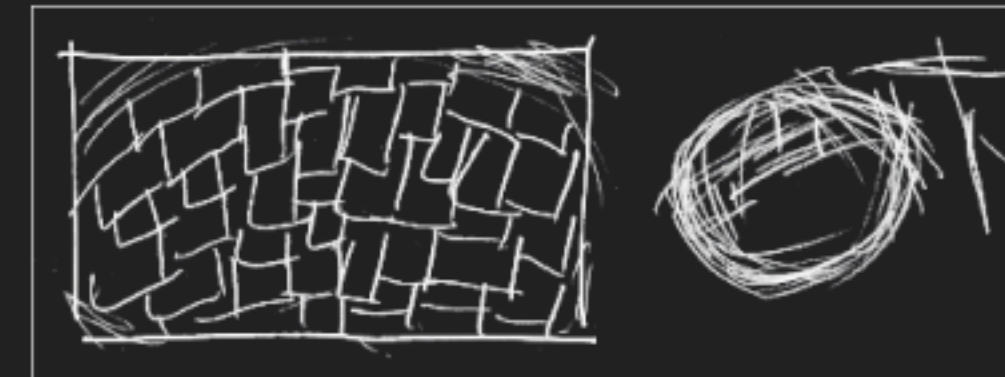


PROCESS: AN INDIVIDUAL'S MEMORIES

SPHERE SKETCHES

In order to figure out the best possible structure to **organize memories**, sketching out as many variations as possible was crucial.

- The same idea mapped to the inside surface of a sphere suggested the ability to enter one of the spheres to see its details, but navigation challenges remained
- The final mechanism is a grid of pictures, each representing a memory, mapped to the inside surface of the sphere, with a chronological overlay



Images by the Author

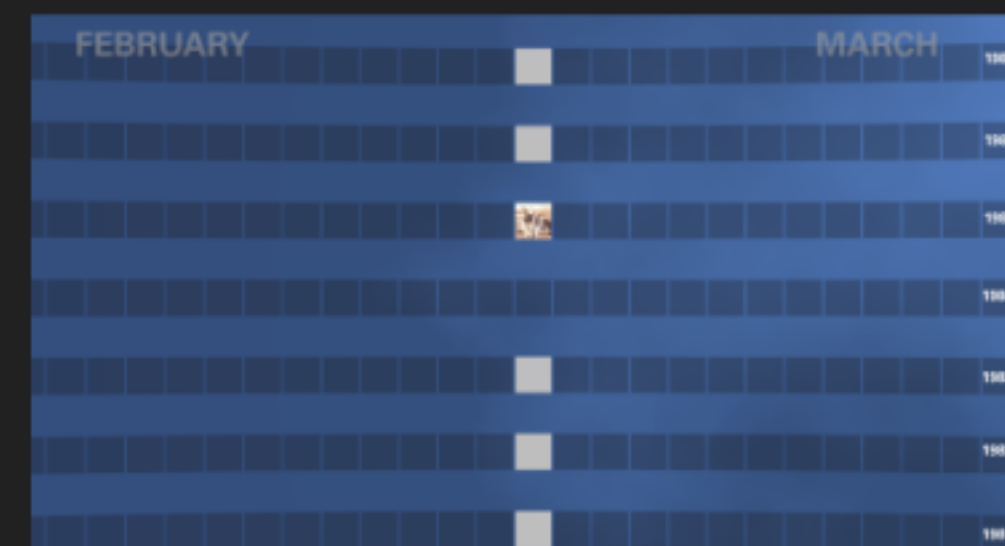
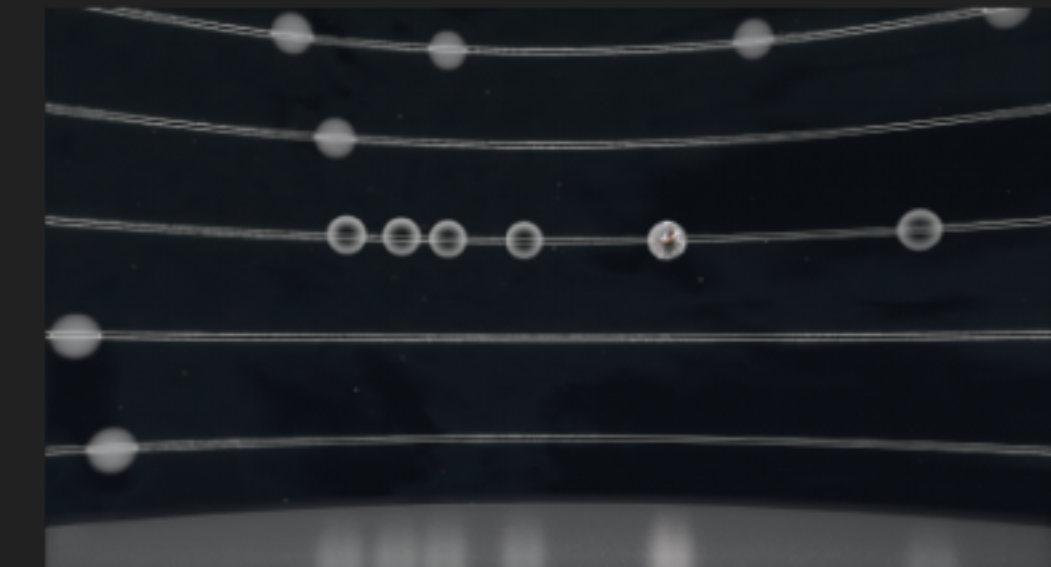
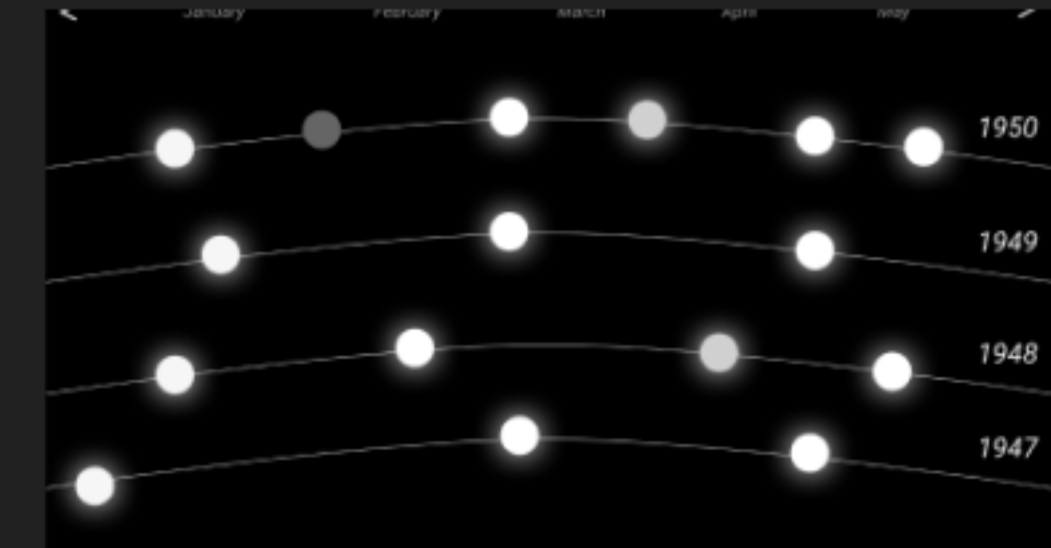
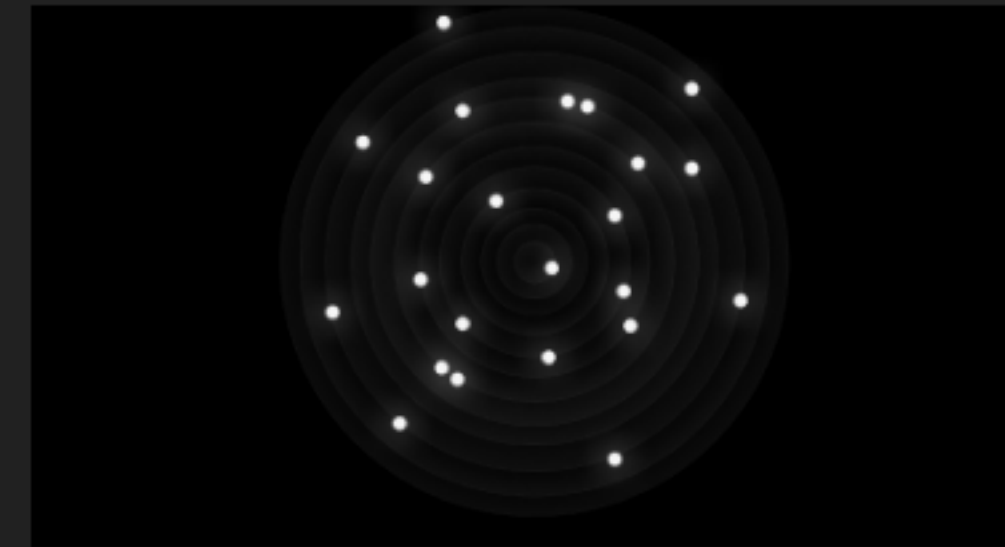
ITERATIONS

PROCESS: CONTINUUM EXPLORATION

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Correlating data organization with the planet metaphor proved to be extremely challenging.

- The structure was originally conceived as a cylinder, in which the user could look around 360 through the days or scroll up and down to explore years. As the individuals came to be represented as planets though, there was a disconnect between the geometries.
- The structure was then imagined as a layered sphere, with memories arranged from most recent on the outer layer, like an onion, but was visually overly complex.
- The resolution was to map a two-dimensional grid onto the interior surface of the hollow planet/sphere
- A challenge remained: once all the days were mapped into the sphere and a camera was implemented it looked like a flat grid and the curvature was not compelling.
- Ultimately the interior of the sphere was reconstructed to simplify the geometry. There was a lot of experimentation done with camera focal lengths to get the right effect.

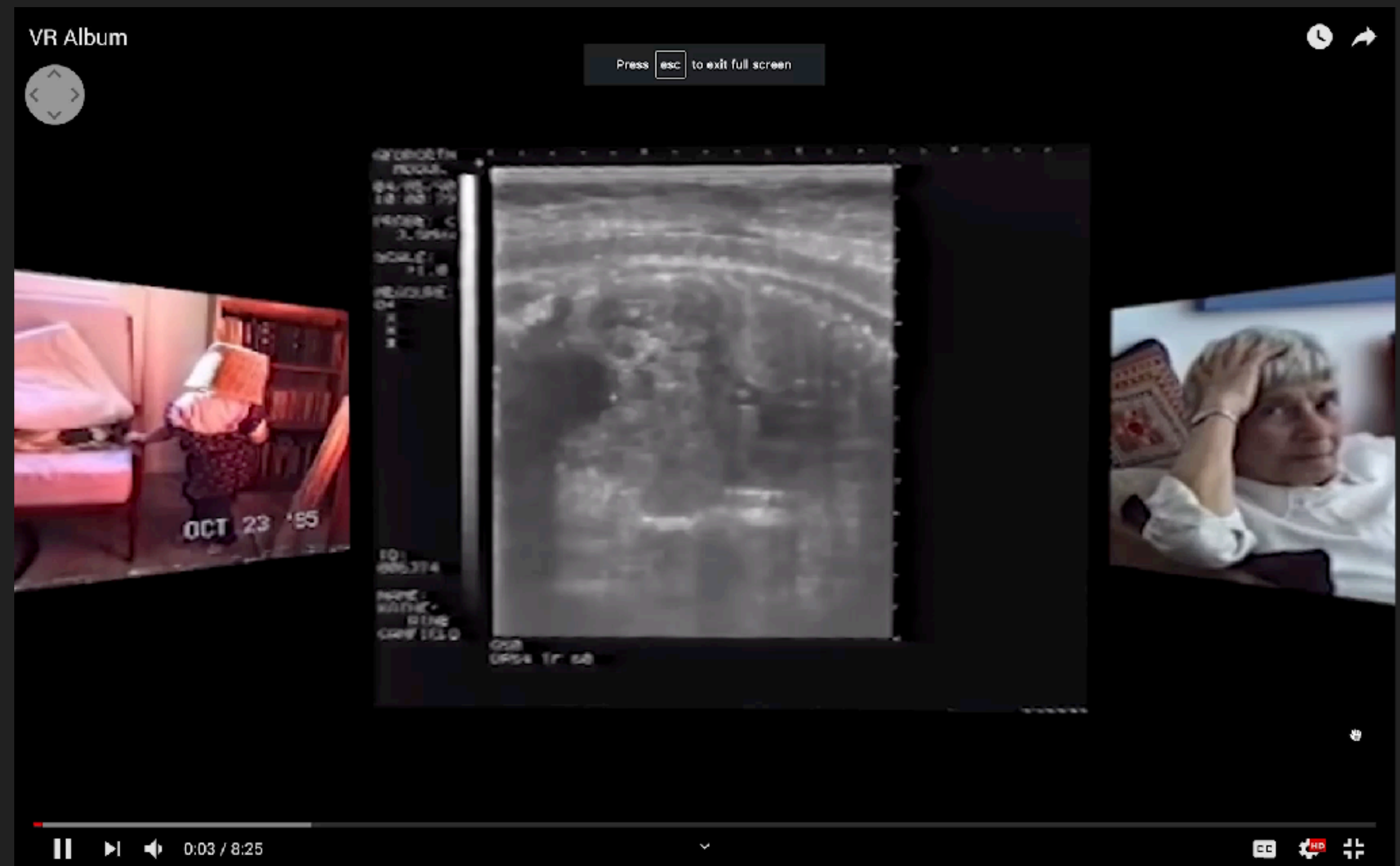


Images by the Author

PROCESS: EARLY EXPLORATION

MEMORIES IN THE VR SPACE

Before the concept had been fully realized, in mid-November of 2019 I started experimenting with VR video media with overlaid dialog of someone sharing their verbal recollections of a memory. The format was essentially a VR version of an accordion gallery combined with the feeling of being in a gallery installation making it incredibly immersive.



RESEARCH

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Psychological	53, 54

RESEARCH

CONCEPTUAL

EARLY CONCEPTS

In the early stages of conceptualization many inspirational concepts came from tv & movies. Specifically the memories in Inside Out and the glowing orb quality.

In Black Mirror there is also an episode where a character has the ability to view and play back memories in their contact lens; although a dystopian approach to memory capture, it is visually compelling.

The Polaroid Lab device allows printing a still from a video, then later to access that photo on the user's iPhone to re-watch the video. This inspired the still images coming to life in my promotional video.

REFER TO THESIS
WEBPAGE FOR IMAGE

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RESEARCH

PSYCHOLOGICAL

THEORY PUSHED

In order to validate the concepts behind why my solution was necessary I researched the psychology of memory and why learning about your family history is important.

Learning about your family history as a child **improves you self-esteem** and helps **deal with stress**, and **strengthens relationships** between children & parents.

“The consequences of this are subtle. For one, Barasch finds that focusing on sharing photos can make the process of taking photos less enjoyable. That’s possibly because sharing makes us more self-conscious. (Therefore, she recommends pausing a bit after a photo is taken before you share it.) What’s unclear is how this perspective shift will change the way we think about our lives years down the line.”

Brian Resnick, Vox

“A study conducted at Emory University and published in 2010 ... found that the more children knew about their family history, the higher their self-esteem and the better able they were to deal with the effects of stress. "Family stories provide a sense of identity through time, and help children understand who they are in the world,"

The discovery made reading and learning about the history so much more personal for his children.

It's eye-opening, and it makes you much more aware how interconnected we all are. It's much harder to be racist and narrow-minded when you see how closely linked all the races are.”

“If people review the pictures, this seems to help memory. This serves as a form of rehearsal. In families, reviewing pictures can serve as a scaffold that enables conversations about the past with children. In this way, pictures can strengthen both memory and relationships. But this only works if you review the pictures. I don’t know about you, but we’ve rarely taken the time to review many of our family pictures. Maybe later. Maybe.”

Ira Hyman Ph.D., Psychology Today

“Most people cherish their memories, know that they represent their identity, who they are, where they came from. And I appreciate that. I feel that way too. But I know that from my work how much fiction is already in there.

Just because somebody tells you something and they say it with confidence, just because they say it with lots of detail, just because they express emotion when they say it, it doesn't mean that it really happened. We can't reliably distinguish true memories from false memories, we need independent corroboration.”

Elizabeth Loftus, Ted Talk

RESEARCH

ALBUM

A MODERN ALBUM

The chaos of multiple forms of media and how to organize and display them is still unknown to the new millennial parents. There are no “best-practices” yet on how to preserve cherished memories, and fear of loss is ironically becoming the dominant emotion.

Hypothetically, this model could exist as a cloud storage framework that also combines family tree data and enabled multiple methods of retrieval, including VR/AR or simply downloading software or files.

“parents are more intentionally thinking about how to re-create a version of the shoebox for their kids. The majority of parents I talked with are using some type of cloud-storage service—Dropbox, Google Drive, and iCloud are the biggest ones—while also printing out their favorite photos. Other storage options range from flash drives full of photos, to CDs, to simply keeping old laptops stacked in the closet. But the consensus seems to be that there isn’t yet a consensus on how to preserve photos. ...

Still, the sheer number of photos that some families have amassed can be anxiety-provoking, and can serve as an impediment to preserving them in any coherent fashion.

The ability to look back on childhood photographs can help strengthen and retain those memories. So, for parents, the chance to update and reinvent the shoebox can be enticing—that is, just as long as they always remember to back up their phones and keep track of their images.”

[Meg St-Esprit, The Atlantic](#)

“family photos are an effective way to reinforce your child's self-image and self-confidence....

Visual reminders of school events, family trips and everyday activities are proof-positive that a child has a place in life and relationships with others.

"It's important not only to be photographed in ways that indicate caring, nurturing, love and success, but also to see those images and take them in," says David Krauss, co-author with Jerry Fryrear of "Photo Therapy and Mental Health." The Cleveland clinical psychologist, who often uses client photos in therapy, advocates going through family albums with children from time to time to give them a clear vision of growth and change.”

[Ro Logrippo, The Baltimore Sun](#)

CONCLUSION

Through my design process, I have addressed the challenge of reducing an incredibly complex system of relationships into a form that could be fun and engaging, but also thorough and easy to navigate. By analogizing people to planets I created a system that lets you visualize your entire family tree in a way that is both graphically simple and legible but still infinitely detailed and customizable.

The greatest challenge in resolving the structure was how to show the family state simultaneously with the legacy view. By tapping on the ring of each generation the user can see the other children from that generation, manifested in a secondary tier that drops down below the selected ring.

The ability of the user to enter directly into any of their relatives' planets and experience their memories, personalities, triumphs and tragedies, allows a uniquely personal connection.

If I were to develop Astralis further I would like to explore other ways to potentially organize and sort memories within the sphere and develop additional ways to search or apply tags to each memory, as well as to explore the mechanics of adding new images, videos, documents and narratives.



Photo by the Author

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THANK YOU