

## Panoramic Earth and Promoting Travel with Virtual Tours



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## 1) Introduction:

*Free marketing service using one of the most effective tools in the Industry.*

**What is a Virtual Tour?** A virtual tour is a 360° panoramic image viewed on a computer, capable of filling the whole computer screen. Linked by us to maps and accompanied by local information in multiple languages, they give the viewer the best opportunity to explore a destination before visiting.

With free hosting of general virtual tour images and over 75,000 visitors a month, Panoramic Earth offers excellent potential for promoting travel worldwide. Many of our standard services are not available elsewhere:

- **Effective Marketing:** Giving you access to one of the top 5 most effective marketing tools in the leisure industry today to promote your region.
- **Virtual Tour Syndication:** Like *YouTube* but for virtual tours, maximizing your exposure by allowing [3<sup>rd</sup> party embedding](#) of content in other websites.
- **Cost Effective:** Providing FREE hosting of all virtual tours of general locations like towns, villages, scenic areas, historic sites, beaches and more.
- **Unique Web Pages:** Each virtual tour image has a unique web page with unique text content, like having a second website of your own.
- **Multiple Language Support:** Allowing you to target the content to the right audience in the right language.
- **Promoting Regions:** Using images linked to interactive maps, creating interactive virtual tours of entire cities, regions and travel destinations.
- **Social Network Marketing:** Automatic promotion of all locations on [Twitter](#), with additional exposure possible on [blogs](#) and [FaceBook](#).
- **Free Updating:** Giving you editorial control of your locations, allowing you to update the virtual tour images and content at will.
- **Strong Web Presence:** We have over 75,000 visitors a month,, serve out over 350,000 VTs a month and have a very strong Google search presence.
- **Professional Photographers:** Dedicated team available to come and create all the virtual tour images you require.
- **Unique Services:** Many of our virtual tour hosting package, supplied as *standard* to clients are not available elsewhere, or cost a lot more.

## 2) Overview and Comparison:

Compare our VT hosting services to those provided by most other VT hosts available today. Much of what we offer is unique and often not available through other virtual tour hosts. :

|   | Panoramic Earth | Other VT Hosts |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Virtual tour (VT) hosting   | ✓               | ✓              |
| VT display in your own site   | ✓               | ✓              |
| Linkage of VTs to Google maps in client site.                                   | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Linkage of VTs to Google maps in hosting site.                                  | ✓               | ✗*             |
| VT syndication to other 3 <sup>rd</sup> party websites                          | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Unique URL in hosting site for each image                                       | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Unique text description in hosting site for each VT                             | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Multiple language support of unique pages                                       | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Linkage of VTs to Google maps in hosting site.                                  | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Update VT images at will for free   | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Update page text in hosting site at will for free, like having an extra website | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Use of your own photographer and VT images                                      | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Copyright retention of your own VTs   | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Promotion of VT page in Twitter   | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Promotion of VT page in FaceBook  | ✓               | ✗*             |
| Promotion of VT page in blogs   | ✓               | ✗*             |
| <b>FREE</b>   | ✓               | ✗*             |

\* Options rarely, if ever, available from most hosting sites.

### 3) Panoramic Earth Partnership Proposal:

Panoramic Earth (We, Us, Our) Present this **free service** for the promotion of regional tourism in the form of a partnership with national and regional tourist boards (Contributing Partner, You, Yours).

#### 3.a) Panoramic Earth Offers:

- **Free Hosting:** We offer *free* hosting and distribution of virtual tours images from any non-commercial location that the Contributing Partner provides. 'Non-Commercial' means that the location is accessible to the public free of charge without either paying an entrance fee or being sold a product. We will also provide the Contributing Partner *free* embedding of these images in their site as well as distribution of both single images and whole regional tours to other websites (see below).
- **Free Web Exposure:** We will display each virtual tour on a unique web page within Panoramic Earth, linked to a map and accompanied by local and travel information. This textual content will be in English and then also in any other language the Contributing Partner desires, and will accompany the images when they are displayed elsewhere.
- **Personal Account and Upload Control:** The Contributing Partner will be given an account on Panoramic Earth, with complete access and control over the uploading of the images and texts, and the ability to change them at will. A link to the Contributing Partner's account page will be displayed with each image wherever it is shown.
- **Copyright Retention:** The Contributing Partner will retain all copyright of their images, in accordance with our terms and conditions, granting us a royalty free license to host and distribute the images added to Our system.

**3.b) The Contributing Partner Provides** – Panoramic Earth ask for the following from the Contributing Partner:

- **The images:** These must be supplied by the Contributing Partner, meeting the specifications laid out below. We can take these images if required.
- **The Text:** The Contributing Partner agrees to provide at least 250 words of text, in English, to accompany each image. This text should inform readers a little about the location, and the work that is being done here. The Contributing Partner may also provide the descriptions in other languages in addition to the English.
- **Recommendation:** The Contributing Partner agrees to recommend our services to the commercial sector in their region at such time as Panoramic Earth approaches this sector to sell Our commercial services.

**3.c) Image Sourcing** – The contributing partner may either source images themselves, or commission our team take the panoramas required. The latter is a commercial service, charged for at a daily rate plus travel. Panoramic Earth will retain the copyright of any images our team takes

**Note:** Panoramic Earth can provide training to local photographer(s) while creating the tour, effectively providing the resource to continue expanding the tour thereafter and providing potential job creation.

Organizations that already have their own virtual tour images can begin to use our free services today, simply contact us for help with creating your account. Either way will result in beautiful interactive content that maximizes one of the most effective internet marketing tools available today. We are also happy to try to find photographers local to your area.

**Note:** All images submitted to Panoramic Earth must meet the following criteria:

- All images hosted by Panoramic Earth must be 360° panoramas. These may either be cylindrical images or spherical images.
  - **Cylindrical images** are ideal for scenic locations. They just go round, as if standing in a cylinder, but have limited vertical views.
  - **Spherical images** also allow the user to pan up to the top and bottom of the image, as if standing inside a sphere. These are ideal for cityscapes and interior locations but are more complicated to construct.
- All images must be at least 6,000 pixels long and a maximum of 2.5Mb in size.

### 3.d) Costs

- **Hosting Costs: FREE.** Our costs for hosting and syndication of Your virtual tour images of non-commercial locations is **£0.00** per year
- **Photography Costs:** If You require Us to create the virtual tour images, then we will charge a daily rate, to be negotiated, and travel costs.

## 4) Virtual Tours – one of the Top 5 Marketing Tools

The internet is an essential tool for marketing, especially to tourist attractions and travel accommodation. Today, about 75% of all holidays are researched online before being booked and about 60% of holidays are actually booked online. Increasingly the high street travel agent is being bypassed by travelers using the internet.

Consumer surveys reveal that 80% of internet shoppers say images are imperative when deciding to buy or use a company's product or services. Obviously, this has large implications on the travel sector. Good, interactive imagery of the premises and facilities has a powerful impact on visitor numbers and sales.

A recent survey of 590 hoteliers and holiday companies by VFM Leonardo, Inc in 2010 mentioned either Hotel tours including virtual tours (66%) or, specifically, 360 degree spins/panoramas (49%) as among the top 5 most effective marketing tools available to them on the internet. Their popularity with the public is vast, it is estimated over 5 million virtual tours are viewed online, worldwide, each day.

Many leading hotel chains and brands use virtual tours for marketing. David Attardi, Director of E-Commerce, B.F. Saul Company Hotel Division which owns Hilton, Marriott

and InterContinental brands, says, “E-Brochures are great selling tools that let you show off your hotel with professional still shots, 360 virtual tours and HD videos”.

Interactive environments like virtual tours have a much greater impact than static images. Realtor.com, a real estate company, note that properties containing interactive virtual tours get clicked on 40% more than listings without them. Stories of the impact of virtual tours on enquiries are repeated again and again, similar to that of Irfan Rafiq, Marketing Manager of Decorium, a north London conference center, who says, “using 360 virtual tours increased our enquiries by 75%”.

Sources: [metafour](#), *Pew Internet & American Life Study (2006)*, [Gómez](#), [HospitalityNet](#), [VFM Leonardo, Inc.](#), Susan Barber, Business Development section of RISMedia’s Real Estate magazine (May 2006),

## 5) Why One Website is Not Enough

If you already use virtual tours, consider where are they shown and how do people find them Are they found only on one page within your site? Do you have the freedom to embed them in other places? Can the general public use them in their own sites? Are they displayed in the context of your whole region?

For many, the answer to each of the above questions is ‘No’, because the VT company does not permit it. These clients are missing out vast opportunities to maximize their investment in virtual tours.

Imagine a service that offered, *as standard*:

- To show your VTs in the context of the whole surrounding region.
- Embed the VTs within your own site(s), as either individual images or linked to a map of the whole region, showing the non-commercial locations (beaches, mountains, towns etc) near you.
- Acts as a *YouTube* for virtual tours, allowing 3<sup>rd</sup> party websites to embed content within their site(s) giving greater exposure of your VT content to a wider audience.
- Give you a link back wherever your image is shown.
- Provides local and travel information, in any language you choose, with each VT.
- Allow you to update any of the images or text on the system *free of charge*.
- Effective use of social networking, blogs, FaceBook etc to promote your facility.

***You have just imagined Panoramic Earth, which has a clear and proven strategy to address the exposure problem and provides 3<sup>rd</sup> party syndication as a standard service.***

## 6) Panoramic Earth Increases Virtual Tour Exposure

Panoramic Earth is like a *YouTube* for virtual tours. The VTs are held within our system and then served out to both our clients and other 3<sup>rd</sup> party sites, greatly increasing the potential tour exposure. Both single image embedding or whole regional tour embedding are available (see below), where the images are linked to maps that promote the places of interest within whole regions.

While we attract about 75,000 visitors a month, we display nearly 350,000 virtual tour images a month both within Panoramic Earth *and in other 3<sup>rd</sup> party websites*. This demonstrates our effectiveness at virtual tour distribution across the web.

## 7) Panoramic Earth Page

We display each virtual tour image in a unique web page (shown below) with the image (1) linked to a Google map (2). The image may be viewed full screen, and the map shows other nearby images in a geographical context. Above the image is a link back to the contributors page (3). Below each image is a link encouraging embedding in other websites (4) and links for social sharing (5) on Facebook, Twitter etc. All images from one area are listed in a separate index page (6)

Below each image is some descriptive text (7) answering the questions 'What is it, where is it, how do I get there and what is nearby'. This is accompanied by relevant contact details (8) and travel directions (9). National flag icons above the text indicate the available languages (10). To the right are shown thumbnails of other nearby locations (11) to encourage further exploration of the region.

Our web pages are carefully optimized for search engines, with many of our locations appearing within the first 20 search results on Google for the location name. In addition, Panoramic Earth also makes use of social networking ([Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#) etc), bookmarking, [RSS](#) and a dedicated [panorama blog](#) to increase our exposure.

(1) Virtual tour panorama

(2) Interactive regional map with location pins, showing what is nearby

(3) Contributing body link

(4) Embedding options link

(5) Social sharing

(6) Regional index page link

(7) Detailed location description

(8) Address and contact info

(9) Local travel directions

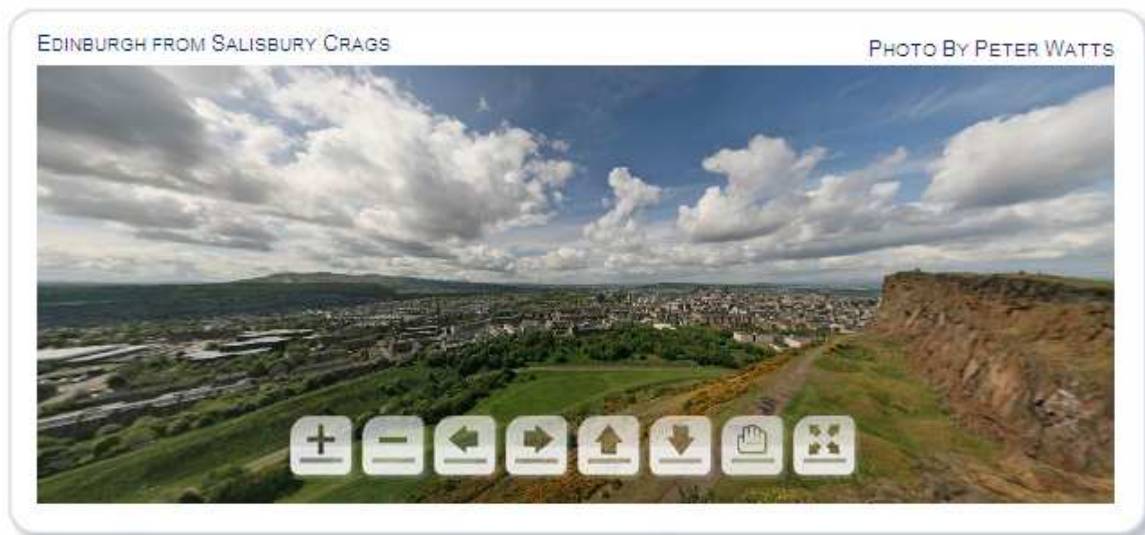
(10) Language Options

(11) Nearby locations list, encourages browsing

The screenshot shows a virtual tour interface for Praça D. Pedro IV. At the top left is a 360-degree panoramic view of the square with a 'PLAY' button. To its right is an interactive Google Map of Lisbon with several location pins. Below the panorama are social media sharing icons and an 'EMBED' link. The main content area includes a 'LIBBON LISBOA' header, a 'PHOTOGRAPHER COMMENT' section, a 'FURTHER INFORMATION' section with a detailed description of the square's history and significance, an 'ADDRESS' section with contact details for 'Posto de Turismo-Lisboa', and a 'TRAVEL DIRECTIONS AND GETTING THERE' section with bus and metro information. On the right side, there is a 'Recent Local Panoramas' section with a list of nearby locations and thumbnail images.

## 8) Single Image Embedding

Embedding a single image is a simple matter of clicking on the embed link. The user then copies the provided code and simply pastes it into their own website. Below is an example of what is shown in their page.



## 9) Regional Tour Embedding

This product is unique to Panoramic Earth. It allows embedding of an entire regional virtual tour, where a collection of images are shown on the 3<sup>rd</sup> party website linked to a Google map. A version of this is shown below. Many of the features available to a user viewing content on our own site are contained within the embedded regional tour.

As shown in the image below, the user is presented with the virtual tour image (1) shown above a larger version of the map (2). Above the image is the link to the contributing organization's page (3). Above this are tabs giving access to the local description for the location (4). Encouragement to further embedding this content (5) or sharing on social networks (6) are clearly presented.

Again this is all freely provided with simple 'copy & paste' code.

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'TOWER HILL TUBE STATION MAP - 360° PANORAMAS AND LOCAL INFORMATION'. It features a navigation bar with 'IMAGE AND MAP', 'DESCRIPTION', and 'LINKS'. Below this is a large 360-degree panoramic photo of the station area, credited to 'PHOTO BY PETER WATTS'. A toolbar with navigation icons is positioned over the photo. Below the photo is a map of the surrounding area with numerous location pins. At the bottom, there are social sharing options (EMBED, LINK, EMAIL, SHARE) and a footer that reads 'Virtual tour of Tower Hill Tube Station provided by Panoramic Earth'.

Numbered callouts on the left side of the image point to the following features:

- (1) Virtual tour: Points to the 360-degree panoramic photo.
- (2) Map: Points to the street map with location pins below the photo.
- (3) Contributors link: Points to the 'PHOTO BY PETER WATTS' credit.
- (4) Access to local description: Points to the 'DESCRIPTION' tab in the navigation bar.
- (5) Embedding link: Points to the 'EMBED' button in the social sharing section.
- (6) Social Sharing: Points to the 'SHARE' button and social media icons.

## 10) Panoramic Earth Website Statistics

Panoramic Earth is based in the UK, using high capacity, very reliable servers to distribute its images. Globally, [Alexa](#) ranks Panoramic Earth as among the top 300,000 most popular websites in the world. It was recently ranked among the top 50,000 most popular websites in the UK, Switzerland and Singapore. Alexa recognizes that many visitors are 'people earning between \$30,000 (US) and \$100,000 who have postgraduate educations and browse from home'. We are recognized as among the top 35% globally in terms of site speed.

About 80% of our visitors arrive to the site through search enquiries on Google, Yahoo, Ask, Bing, AOL and the other search engines. Visitors come from about 170 countries and

regions, using over 55,000 specific search terms. As most people do not look beyond the first page of search returns, this demonstrates the high ranking of our individual pages and locations in the major search engines. Popular terms include top tourist attractions as well as various towns and regions.

Top ranking countries providing traffic to Panoramic Earth include United Kingdom (41%), United States (16%), Australia (4%), Spain (3%), Canada (3%), Germany (3%), France (2%), Italy (2%), Russia (0.5%).

## 11) Sponsorship Options

We recognize that you may want to approach the commercial sector for funding for the creation of your regional virtual tour content. With this in mind we have a few suggestions that may help. Naturally we would be willing to discuss individual needs and any other suggestions you may have. Some suggestions for

## 12) Conclusion

Panoramic Earth offers an excellent way of promoting entire countries to the travel sector online. The services are highly competitive, with excellent global exposure in search engines and also provides syndication to other sites.

We offer one of the most cost effective and best ways to promote your region.

END