



## INSIDE VIEW: WHAT IS A VIRTUAL TOUR?

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A Virtual Tour? You may have been browsing the internet, whether it be Google, Facebook or a business' website deciding on what restaurant to eat at or where to venture on your summer holiday and stumbled across a 360 degree photograph? You know the one, a panoramic image where you tilt your smartphone or drag the mouse and it shows a full 360 view of the captured setting.

Or even still you may have been playing with that expensive smartphone of yours whilst out walking or after a few beers, hit the pano setting and twizzled around on the spot like a pirouetting meerkat to create your very own? I bet you showed off your new found technical wizardry to your better half, kids or mates with pride and a grin on your face? You did, didn't you? Go on, admit it...

It's fair to say in today's age most of us at some point in our lives have experienced a 360 degree panoramic image and for those of you who haven't, come on, it's time to upgrade that Nokia 3310 third generation pass me down, sign up for broadband and get with the times. Seriously.

### So what is a virtual tour?

A virtual tour is the next step from a single 360 panoramic image. Multiple high quality 360 images stitched together with navigation added to create a fully immersive experience where you navigate through several locations within a setting, typically a business, such as a kitchen showroom, high street shop or restaurant. Each 360 image location within the setting is what we call in the trade a 'spin'

A virtual tour enables you to view places of interest from your smart device or PC within the comfort



of home, office, Everest, or wherever you might be, although I'm not entirely sure how it is for 4G up there and don't plan on finding out anytime soon, more of a cruise ship man myself, a setting where I've photographed many virtual tours over the years.

A quality virtual tour offers a visual festival to the eyes and senses stand alone imagery or 360 single spins simply can't rival. Compare it if you will to Rump Steak down at the local two for £10 pub against a 50 day aged Fillet Mignon at Miller Carter SteakHouse, don't get me wrong with the right company both are very enjoyable but the latter is next level and a real treat. A quality virtual tour to the eyes is the Fillet Steak to your taste buds, it takes you on a journey through a setting as if you were there. Hence why we call it Virtual Reality!

## **So when it comes to virtual tours what separates the men from the boys?**

Two key things, equipment and the platform it is hosted on. Since their infancy in the late nineties, virtual tours have come a long way and there are many options nowadays in regards to cameras, lenses and where to host them. From standalone platforms through to Google StreetView and from mobile phones to one click cameras through to the professionals choice a DSLR camera, 8mm fisheye lens and all the gubbins in between.

Over 20 years in the game my choice is a DSLR and Google StreetView platform, check out our other blogs as to why.

