

NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

The Taj Mahal is India's most famous and **romantic landmark**. Soon, people who want to see the Taj Mahal will be able to take a **virtual** tour, using Google Street View, without leaving their homes.

The Taj Mahal is being mapped digitally using the Trekker, a special camera that creates 360-degree **images**. These images can make viewers feel that they are walking around the **monument** or landmark.

Google plans to use the Trekker camera to collect images of all the world's most **beloved** landmarks. It has already been used **to map** the Grand Canyon and the world's tallest **skyscraper**, Burj Khalifa in Dubai.

Today, about 80% of **holidaymakers** research their trips online before booking their holidays. Online virtual tours of hotels and **destinations**, like the Taj Mahal, are becoming an important way for holiday companies **to market** their products.

But is it possible for 'virtual holidays' to replace real world holidays completely?

Stuart Hetherington, **chief executive** of Holovis, a company which **specializes** in this kind of technology, believes this is possible.

In the future, he says, the walls of our homes could become giant TV screens, giving us extremely **vivid** 3D experiences. This technology could allow us to take 'virtual vacations', while staying at home.

"But I think virtual vacations are still a long way off," he admits.

We can expect tourists to keep visiting the Taj Mahal for a long time yet.

Vocabulary

romantic

(here) beautiful; having a strong effect on your emotions

landmark

a building or a natural feature which is well-known, or easy to see from a distance

virtual

something you can see or experience through a computer

image

picture

monument

a building, statue or structure which is famous or important

beloved

loved very much

to map

to make a map of something

skyscraper

a very tall building

holidaymaker

someone who is on holiday, or planning a holiday

destination

a place where someone is going, or where they are planning to go

to market

to advertise and tell people about something, in a way which encourages them to buy it

chief executive

the leader of a company or organisation

specialize

to have a lot of skill or knowledge about something

vivid

very colourful and lifelike

This story is based on an original BBC News story:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-26169116>