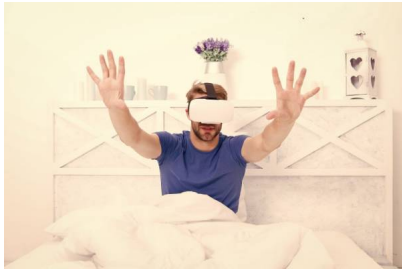


VIRTUAL TOURISM TO SAVE THE ZEAL FOR TRAVEL



Due to the pandemic, there are many countries like Italy, France, Spain or India that are basically locked down. Other nations like the United States, South Korea, Colombia, El Salvador, Venezuela, Singapore and a fast-growing list of others have restricted travels and travelers from different countries across the globe. It is time for virtual tourism to take the lead.

A few weeks ago, a popular Tibetan tourist center 'The Potala Palace' recorded over 1 million visitors. With Tibet facing the brunt of the Coronavirus in China that has suspended public and religious activities including the New Year celebration, supposed to hold on February 24th, they couldn't possibly achieve this.

Well, Tibet cannot afford to hold people in large gatherings at this time so the simple answer to this is that they visited online; via smartphones and computer devices.

Various online platforms are offering their visitors to see great sights and visit places around the world from the comfort (and of course safety) of their homes. At this point, landmarks are fading out and tourists are going on their expeditions virtually.

The scale of things travelers can do online right now is increasing and options are expanding.

In China, about twenty museums have caught up quickly with the trend of virtual tourism and have gotten shops on Alibaba's Taobao live; they use this live stream as their revenue stream to keep the business moving.

Not only are they fast gaining online streams and visits, on busy days they make as much as 4 times the souvenir sales they would usually make.

A Chinese museum that has already tapped into the virtual revenue stream reported as much as 5.8 million visitors at its first and second live-streamed tours which would usually take them about 3 months to amass before this time.

In the United States, the Walker Art Museum in Minneapolis and the Met in New York have put together great online options that are almost as great as the real thing. Critics of online surfing might not even have pointed to make in opposition to this one.

At this time, Alibaba Live is the hub for museums and tourist centers who want to go live; visitors can explore the Chengdu Panda Base, visit the Magao Caves in China and take a trip through the Potala Place in Tibet. They can explore the Audi factory in Ingolstadt, a number of Italian museums, and even Palmyra, Aleppo, and Mosul.

As sad as the effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic are, a niche has been created for virtual tourism. They now have the responsibility to satisfy the cravings of tourists who are restricted by the outbreak, and bring in the revenue while they are at it. Perhaps as things begin to unfold, the value of virtual tourism will increase and even last long after nations have recovered from the coronavirus crisis.

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