

# VIRTUAL TOURISM WILL NEVER REPLACE TRADITIONAL TRAVEL



Many travelers already realized that virtual tourism can take people to other places, without ever leaving the sofa.

The tourism industry lost \$4.5 trillion and 62 million jobs globally only during the last year. Museums around the world are closed, cities are shuttered. What now? What are potential tourists doing in these hours, days, and weeks when they used to travel?

Travel is something of the dream realm now! Or is it exclusive to virtual reality? Seeing a Rembrandt only on Google or also in our homes through augmented reality? Can I change space virtually and travel back in time? Can I step into a Rembrandt painting through augmented reality as I walk through my living room while immersed in The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp?

**Predictions for the Extended Reality (Augmented Reality - AR and Virtual Reality - VR) market, indicating that it would reach a highly promising market value, are old.** In 2016, Pokémon Go boosted this potential. We thought that the AR phenomenon would be enough for a successful future.

But we did not imagine, even in the most outlandish predictions, that this potential would be exponentiated by another global phenomenon in 2020. COVID-19 and virtual tourism have caused predictions for the AR and VR markets to reach \$300 billion in just 3 years. And so Augmented and Virtual Reality have once again been given the opportunity of their lives!

During this long and tragic period for tourism, we had time to put our house in order, restructure companies, reinvent businesses, redesign spaces and rethink tourism. We had time to dream of more sustainable tourism for all, as well as to prepare properly for 'revenge tourism'. But, in between, we have discovered new professions and sources of income and business. We have discovered new ways to travel and to make tourists travel.

We realized that virtual tourism could transport us to other places without leaving our sofa. And we didn't find about this only in the R&D labs of companies. We discovered it with practice, with the access to these technologies provided by more than 2000 museums, which became virtual through Google Cultural Institute. We discovered this through the most traditional museums, such as the Royal Tomb in the Pyramids in Egypt or the world jewel Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, which also ended up opening their virtual doors to the whole world.

Millions of tourists, in those empty hours, days and weeks, took virtual flights in a virtual world, a virtual city, a virtual era or a virtual museum, without ever leaving their sofa. And the good news is that these millions of tourists praised these trips and their impressiveness.

This is stated by the World Travel & Tourism Council COVID-19 Report, claiming that **Virtual Tourism is a trend that is here to stay and will be an important marketing and commercial**

## **tool.**

Accenture also says so in its Immersive-Experience-Digital-Report 2020. The company highlights that 64% of brands are starting to invest in immersive experiences, realizing that this improves the 'top of mind' of over 50% of their consumers when their interaction is done this way.

But those who believe in the apocalyptic vision that the world will be replaced by machines, computers or extraordinary software, leveraged by the billions invested by Venture Capital in start-ups devoted to virtual visits and immersive experiences, are also mistaken.

It is necessary to emphasize, that traditional tourism will never be replaced! But for those who cannot (or will never be able to!) physically visit some destinations, and even for those who have this possibility but like to plan in detail all visits to tourist itineraries, virtual and immersive tourism is here to stay, in fact. It will not replace physical and real tourism. But it has come to increase the role of the latter, to complete it, to improve it, to tell all the stories never told, heard or experienced before.

Date: 2021-05-10

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/virtual-tourism-has-grown-in-popularity-news12020>