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Virtual Home Tours

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When a potential home buyer can't get out right away to tour a listing, savvy real estate agents hold an open house on the potential buyer's computer screen using virtual home tours.

Virtual home tours aren't just a cool gimmick real estate agents use to show off their technological prowess. Consumers demand virtual home tours. Seventy-eight percent of those who shop for homes on the Internet say the most important feature when searching online is photos -- followed closely by detailed property descriptions and virtual home tours, according to the 2003 National Association of Realtors Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers.

What's more, those who demand virtual home tours are more likely to be smarter, wealthier consumers in their prime home-buying years, compared to those who don't take tours. On a typical day, 2 million people are using the Internet to go on a virtual tour, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Those tours are not always virtual home tours. They also take viewers to far off places on Earth and beyond, say, to Mars, and include vacation destinations, colleges, art exhibits, hotels, and notable homes like the White House and Taj Mahal.

Virtual home tours, however, are among some of the most common tours taken. Pew's nationwide phone survey to examine the impact of the Internet interviewed 914 adults, 534 of whom are Internet users. The survey said those who take tours were more often single, white, women, aged 28 to 49, earning \$50,000 a year or more, graduate degree holders and broadband access subscribers.

Home buyers like virtual home tours because they provide them with an immediate and efficient way to view and eliminate the homes they don't like and choose the homes they want to go see in person. For sellers it can mean less foot traffic, but just as many, if not more eyeballs on their home for sale.



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Virtual home tours are particularly common tool in the high-end market, where the best are professionally produced in living color, often with voice-overs as if the real estate agent is along for the tour. The best are also easy to navigate, allowing you to smoothly tour the listing room by room, as if you were walking through the home and looking up and down, left and right.

Technology has improved immensely and costs have plummeted since the first jerky images rotated with fits and starts on a computer screen, but it still takes a clean, speedy broadband connection or a download to a computer with a fast video processor to fully enjoy the tour without unwanted stop-action.

Virtual home tour making also takes skilled professionals to output high-quality, life-like videos. Virtual home tours produced unprofessionally can harm a listing more than help it. Occasionally, the best virtual tour may not be of the home itself, but, say, of its unobstructed view of the ocean, hillsides or meadow. Putting a home's unique feature in its best light with a virtual home tour and leaving the rest to good old still photography remains an option.

For example, it's nearly impossible to overcome "bloating" rooms when the confines of a small space forces the virtual tour maker to snap on the wide angle lens to capture the flow of the room. Real Hollywood magic on the silver screen or an in-person visit remains necessary to see a home as it really exists.



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Real Tour Vision™ (RTV™), the world's fastest growing virtual home tours business, has announced it has partnered with Realty-Disc™ to offer RTV Dealers discount pricing and full-color customized labels on the duplication of standard CD-ROMs or business card-size CD-ROM disks that RTV Dealers can use for distributing or archiving virtual home tours. "Disk copies of virtual home tours are often given away at Open Houses, mailed to select sales prospects or archived for emergency services reference," said Jason LaVanture, Vice President of Real Tour Vision. "Virtual home tours on disk can be viewed at any time wherever someone has access to a computer with a CD-ROM drive. No Internet connection is needed."

According to RTV, for a limited time, each Dealer will be able to order one low-cost introductory package of 10 standard CD duplicates with customized color labels and free shipping. Normal duplication packages will feature discounts when ordering 30, 60 or 100 disks. Larger quantities are also available. RTV dealers can simply visit: www.realty-disc.com and place orders online.



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ABOUT Real Tour Vision™

Real Tour Vision™ (RTV™) is leveraging the Internet with 360° Panoramic virtual home tours that are already in demand by Real Estate firms, Resorts, Universities, Hospitals, and many other businesses that benefit from providing an online, e-mail or disk/CD-ROM tour of properties or facilities. RTV virtual home tours are distinguished by their high quality, speed of delivery and many features (including audio). RTV Dealers buy a turnkey business complete with proprietary software, comprehensive start-up kit and strong profit potential. Real Tour Vision™ and RTV™ are trademarks of Real Tour Vision, Inc. maker of the virtual home tours.

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