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Going around the world in 20 ways

These days you can travel the world from your computer screen. **Michael Gebecki** explores the art of site-seeing.

TRAVEL is tailor-made for the Web. If you need to find out how many kwachas you can get for your dollar, or a weather report for Zanzibar or the nearest hotel to Bangkok Airport, the Web is the place to look.

From the priceless to the downright absurd, here are 20 sites to dazzle, animate and amuse from the weird and wonderful world of virtual travel.

1 THE Web-cam is for the Web-cam globetrotter is City.Net. As well as fingertip access to 5,000 destinations, the site is a gateway to special features for skiers, sailors, business travellers, photographers and those in search of third-world driving tips. **http://www.city.net/**

2 MICROSOFT has invested heavily to establish a formidable Web presence and its Expedia site is one of the more comprehensive around. There is a find-and-book hotel locator, a currency converter, world weather guide, fare trackers and a series of travel guidebooks to the world's major cities, plus quality thrills for the technically inclined. **http://expedia.msn.com/**

3 ANOTHER valuable 3 anthology of travel sites is Rec.Travel Library, which has destination information, a world calendar of festivals and events, a list of (listing optional) travel-related clubs, health tips and information on driving and disabled travel. **http://www.rec.travel.tr/rec-travel/**

4 MELBOURNE-based guidebook publisher Lonely Planet has inspected and selected the best sites on the globe, or so it seems. LP's on-line guides present a general introduction – "designed to kick-start your travels and help you on your way" – and a "Thorn Tree" provides a firm foundation, and the clickable slide shows enhance the text. **http://www.lonelyplanet.com/**

5 THE Great Outdoor Recreation Pages are just that – reams of information for adventure travellers, photographers and those in quest of third-world driving tips. **http://www.city.net/**

6 AN on-line magazine for women travellers, Journeywoman, is slick, sleek and jam-packed with female-friendly city sites, porthole and you will be drinking kava in the South Pacific, bargaining for qat in Yemen or hauling orcas in the NT. **http://webs.wimsey.com/~ayoung/travel/index/**

7 ESPECIALLY for travellers heading for the Third World, health is a major preoccupation, and the US Government's Center for Disease Control and Prevention site is filled with area-specific medical guides for travellers. The information gives simple and valuable precautions. **http://www.cdc.gov/travel/**

8 WANT to know the distance between Tokyo and Timbuktu? Top is a starting point and a destination and the server replies in a flash. And just to end the suspense, Sydney to Saskatoon is 13,685km. **http://www.indo.com/distance/**

9 DIDJ is the Australian version of Mango Park, an e-zine (electronic magazine) dedicated to adventure travel. The May edition takes you to Antarctica where Sir Edmund Hall roped up to an ice-climbing expedition. Travel with the intrepid ice-pickers in the day-by-day text, complete with stirring pictures, evocative sound effects and voice-overs. **http://mangopark.com/didj/default.htm**

10 *NATIONAL Geographic Traveller* is a magazine to set you dreaming. While the electronic version does not offer quite the same glossy presentation of the newsagent's version, it does offer dazzling feature articles and inspiring photos. **http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngs/magazine/index.html**

11 EPICURIOUS, the electronic version of Condé Nast's *Traveller*, is another glossy magazine, crammed with fantasy material plus a valuable link to *Fodor's* travel site. Epicurious also offers an electronic guidebook to your requirements for most major cities. **http://travel.epicurious.com/travel/g_cnt/00.html**

12 *Lost!* tourists are your friends and the Walkabout Travel Gear site – "essential gear and information for the independent traveller" – is the place to pick up your Eagle Creek pack, shortwave radio or Chinese phrase book. **http://www.walkabouttravelgear.com/index.htm**

13 WEIRD plus danger equals fascination and Travel at the speed of Light (TSOL) exploits the combination to the hilt. Click the Adventure Guide for a travel tip bazar, travel tales, shopping and travel classifieds. **http://www2.journeywoman.com/journey/index.html**

14 ENCARTA World Atlas Online offers a comprehensive database for the world traveller. From the home page, click Explore Places, enter your destination from an alphabetical directory and the server comes back with a five-star list of links. **http://www.encarta.com/maps/default.htm**

15 INVITATION to Antarctica is a guided tour of the frozen continent. The site is pitched at children but it is a rare adult who would not be drawn to this informative document. It is one of the best you will find in the sometimes blurry world of the Web. **http://www.glacier.rice.edu/chapters/invitation.html#invitation**

16 ARE you terminally addicted to the National Lampoon school of humour? If so, check into Greetings from Roadside America – an on-line guide to such weird manifestations of The American Way as pet cemeteries ("40-x animals mourned and displayed"). **http://www.roadsideamerica.com/**

17 IF you have ever ukuleled made from a coconut shell, Coconut is the place to go. Anywhere coconuts grow is covered in this site, which maintains a highbrow stance as it surveys the tropics. From the home page, there is a museum dedicated to anything and everything about coconuts, a library of books, arts, photography, music and literature and a Marketplace with coconut-themed goods. **http://www.coconut.com/**

18 ONE of the most electrifying aspects of the Web is its audio facility. And there is nothing like music to turn the mind to travel. Click on to Wink Records' home page and you can download the sounds of Russian folk music, Brazilian samba, gypsy music or talking drums from West Africa. **http://www.winkworldsounds.com/index.html**

19 MOST travellers know some of the most telling and memorable impressions come from unexpected quarters. NSTTT is dedicated to those moments – the labour of love of Australian Peter Moore. It is also hilarious, clever and, once you click on the title bar to be greeted by the sound of a flushing toilet, you will laugh through every link. Highly recommended. **http://www.magna.com.au/~nglobe/nstt/contents.html**

20 IMAGES proliferate on the Web and one of the most satisfying photographic sites is the portfolio of Japan by Masaharu Ishii. His images are simplicity itself: drops of dew, poppies or carp in a pond, each a celebration of a sublime moment. **http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~rhly-kwsk/index.htm**

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