

See the World from Your Desktop

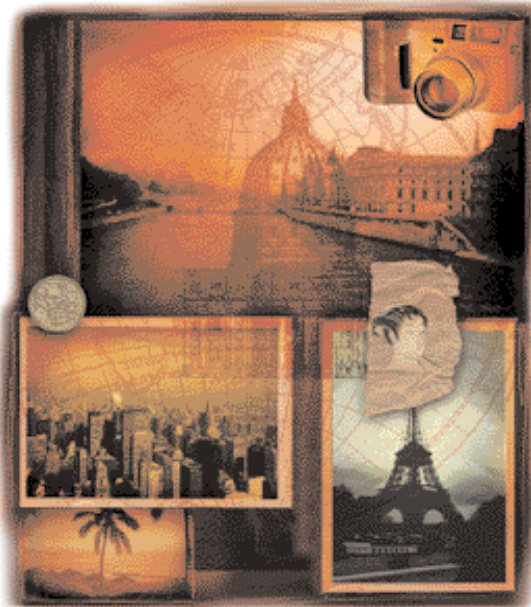
New, controllable Webcams are a great way to travel the globe—from the Roman Colosseum to New York's Empire State Building. By Frank Lenk

Ever thought how great it would be to have your own personal “transporter” that could instantly “beam” you to faraway places? Internet Webcams can't take you there personally, but they can be your eyes, bringing you live images from exotic locations all over the planet. Some Webcam sites are going even further, allowing you to actually reach out and take control of the camera.

One of the best places to start your exploration of the world is the Canon LiveScope Webcam (<http://www.canon.fr/frames/webcam.htm>), which features both reliable technology and a romantic locale. It presents a dazzling view of Paris courtesy of a camera located on the 12th floor of French headquarters of Canon, the office-equipment manufacturer, on the banks of the Seine. Using the scroll-bar controls to tilt, pan and zoom, you'll have no trouble spotting the Eiffel Tower.

Once you've done Paris, why not visit the Eternal City of Rome, via [Capitolium.org](http://www.capitolium.org) (<http://www.capitolium.org/eng/virtuale/liveview.htm>)? The site gives you a spectacular way to admire the oldest and most picturesque parts of Rome, including the Colosseum.

A more intimate view of Europe is available from the ArtisCam (<http://www.artiscam.com>), shooting in the Artis Zoo in Amsterdam. The site gives you full-motion streaming video with optional live audio. The Webcam doesn't always work smoothly, but seeing the animals and human visitors in live motion is well worth the aggravation.



FOCUSING INWARD

Not all interactive Webcams look outwards onto scenic panoramas. One of the most peculiar inward-looking cameras is in the Insect Zoo at Iowa State University (<http://zoocam.ent.ia.state.edu>). It lets you get uncomfortably close to such strange creatures as the giant South American cave roach (*Blaberus giganteus*), going about its business in a terrarium. You get to pan and zoom the Webcam for two minutes at a time.

On this side of the Atlantic, there's an equally good selection of sites. The INSTAAR Tundra-Cam (<http://tundracam.colorado.edu>) lets you escape into the high Rockies—Niwot Ridge, about 40 kilometres west of Boulder, Colo. By clicking on a panoramic still image you can rotate the camera to take in a beautiful mountain vista, and even pick out the lights of Denver about 80 kilometres away. Another good site is the Sedona WebCam (<http://www.sedonawebcam.com>), which offers two interactive views of the picturesque town of Sedona, Ariz., and the surrounding desert mesas.

Sedona uses TrueLook Webcam technology from Perceptual Robotics, in Chicago (<http://www.truelook.com>). That company's home site, in turn, has links to a whole array of fascinating cam locations, ranging from inside the Air Canada Centre to the interior of a Danier clothing store in Toronto. TrueLook Webcams update slowly, but offer a large, clear image. The two atop the Empire State Building in New York City are particularly good, allowing you to take in all the sights from Central Park to the distant Statue of Liberty.

Continuing west, you'll find a few interactive sites in Japan. The Kamakura Wakaejima cam (http://www.x-zone.canon.co.jp/WebView-E/sites/java/kamakura_j.htm) shows a beach scene, and the cam at Harajuku Station (http://www.x-zone.canon.co.jp/WebView-E/sites/java/harajuku_j.htm) displays street views. @

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