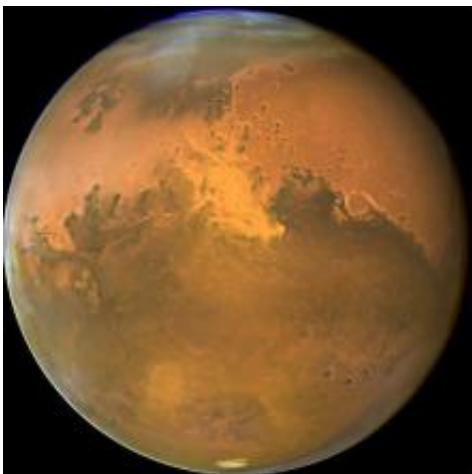


# Microsoft's WorldWide Telescope to focus on Mars

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This NASA Hubble Space Telescope image shows Mars in 2005. Microsoft and NASA on Tuesday announced an alliance to focus the software giant's virtual WorldWide Telescope on space agency images of Mars and other celestial bodies.

Microsoft and NASA on Tuesday announced an alliance to focus the software giant's virtual WorldWide Telescope on space agency images of Mars and other celestial bodies.

NASA and [Microsoft](#) will jointly develop a system to make high-resolution images and scientific data from [Mars](#), the moon and elsewhere in the cosmos available for people to "explore" online at [worldwidetelescope.org](http://worldwidetelescope.org).

"Making [NASA](#)'s scientific and astronomical data more accessible to the public is a high priority for NASA," said the US [space](#) agency's science mission directorate associate administrator Ed Weiler.

"Especially given the new administration's recent emphasis on open government and transparency."

Google teamed up with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration several years ago to enhance Google Earth with space agency images.

Google Earth features 3D images of Mars, real-time spacecraft tracking, and virtual tours of the red planet at the free online service.

More than 100 terabytes of NASA data, including images from a [Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter](#) that has been studying the planet since 2006, will be incorporated into [WorldWide Telescope](#) later this year, according to Microsoft.

"This collaboration will enable people around the world to explore new images of the moon and Mars in a rich, interactive environment," said Microsoft vice president of external research Tony Hey.

"WorldWide Telescope serves as a powerful tool for computer science researchers, educators and students to explore space and experience the excitement of computer science."

Images from a camera aboard a Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter to be launched by NASA in May will also be made available.

Worldwide Telescope went live online about a year ago and combines images from ground- and space-based telescopes to simulate peering into the cosmos.

"NASA is excited to collaborate with Microsoft to share its portfolio of planetary images with students and lifelong learners," said Pete Worden, director of NASA's Ames Research Center in Northern California.

"This is a compelling astronomical resource and will help inspire our next generation of astronomers."

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