

First Lady, Google launch White House virtual tours

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A view of the White House from the South lawn March 17, 2012 in Washington, DC. First Lady Michelle Obama said Tuesday that Google is opening doors to the White House on the Internet by letting users pay virtual visits to all the public rooms.

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The US president's home at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is part of a Google Art Project that lets online visitors step into museums, galleries and other famous spaces and look around as though they were there.

"The White House isn't simply a home to first families or a meeting space for world leaders, it's also known as 'The People's House,' a place

that should be open to everyone," [Michelle Obama](#) said in a video message.

"Thousands of people have walked these halls and gazed at the artwork. They've examined the portraits of Washington, Lincoln, and Kennedy," she said.

"They've imagined the history that's unfolded here. And now you can do all of that without leaving your home."

Google used [Street View](#) cameras in rooms to capture images in 360 degrees to provide a sense of being able to gaze around full circle, zooming in on pieces of art or other features.

President [Barack Obama](#) and the [First Lady](#) have been known to unexpectedly drop in on groups touring the White House, which has logged about 2.5 million visitors during the past three years.

The online opening of the White House came with word of the expansion of the [Google](#) Art Project, launched early last year, to include more than two dozen new partners.

The website at [GoogleArtProject.com](#) was not live when the addition of the White House was announced.

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