

University of Minnesota, Google team to offer new 360-degree images of Antarctica

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See the inside of early polar explorer Ernest Shackleton's hut, visit a penguin colony and take in the wonders of the Antarctic landscape from the comfort of your own home or office with new images launched online today by Google in cooperation with the University of Minnesota's Polar Geospatial Center.

With images gathered by the Polar Geospatial Center, Google has expanded its 360-degree [imagery](#) of Antarctica giving the public an opportunity to view important and historical locations such as the South Pole Telescope, Shackleton's hut, the Cape Royds Adélie Penguin Rookery, explorer Robert Falcon Scott's hut, McMurdo Research Station and many other sites.

"This is the ultimate public outreach," said Paul Morin, director of the National Science Foundation-funded Polar Geospatial Center in the University of Minnesota's College of Science and Engineering. "These are places that nobody can visit without tremendous effort and cost. This puts the glory of Antarctica at people's fingertips around the world so everyone can be an 'armchair' [polar explorer](#)."

See examples of the 360-degree imagery including Shackleton's hut, Scott's hut, and [South Pole Telescope](#).

"We're honored to work with the Polar Geospatial Center to expand our imagery of this remote continent," said David Pablo Cohn, Senior Research Scientist at Google. "This collaboration supports our ongoing

efforts to map every corner of the world, and we hope people enjoy the breathtaking landscape that Antarctica, and its penguins, have to offer."

The public/private partnership provides new images to give public access to the outside and inside of historical huts that served as bases from which the explorers launched their expeditions a century ago. The huts were built to withstand the drastic weather conditions only for the few short years that the explorers inhabited them, but remarkably, the structures are still intact, along with well-preserved examples of the food, medicine, survival gear and equipment used during the expeditions. Now anyone can explore these huts and get insight into how these men lived for months at a time.

University of Minnesota research fellow Brad Herried took more than a dozen images of the historical huts, research stations and other places during the Antarctic field season between October 2011 and January 2012 that now appear on Google Maps. He used a lightweight tripod camera with a fisheye lens that could withstand the harsh conditions and took the photos manually.

"When I visited the historical huts of the early explorers, it gave me a new appreciation for what they endured to provide generations of scientists with important Antarctic information. I don't know how they did it back then," Herried said. "To just visit a place like that is so interesting. Now I am able to share it with the world. It makes me feel like I am part of their enduring legacy."

Because many of the sites are in very remote locations, Herried said getting to them required some interesting forms of transportation. Some sites were accessible by snowmobile, while others, such as the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station required traveling by U.S. Air Force LC-130 Hercules aircraft.

In addition to the 360-degree images, University of Minnesota researchers produced panoramic imagery of historic Antarctic locations that are now part of Google's special collection on their World Wonders Project site where visitors can learn more about the history of [South Pole](#) exploration.

Researchers also helped Google pinpoint specific points of interest and increase the accuracy of searchable location names in [Antarctica](#) on [Google](#) Maps. More images will continue to be added in the coming months including many from arctic regions in Greenland, Siberia and Alaska.

Today's announcement of the new imagery was made in conjunction with this week's Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Conference in Portland, OR.

Provided by University of Minnesota

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