

Google's Street View enters Mongolia on horseback

ULAN BATOR: After recording images of towns and cities across the world, Google's Street View service launched on Thursday in a less likely location -- the vast, sparsely-populated Asian country of Mongolia.



The US technology giant used a horse-drawn sled to carry its image capturing camera to remote locations including Lake Khovsgol, Asia's second-largest body of fresh water.

To capture the expanses of the Gobi desert, a trekker carried the camera in a backpack, Google said as it launched the service in the Mongolian capital Ulan Bator.

At the event held jointly with government officials, the California-based firm unveiled digital representations of 5,500 kilometres of road.

"Google hopes that bringing Street View to Mongolia will raise awareness of the country as an emerging destination for visitors around the world, and support the country's economic growth moving forward," said company representative Susan Pointer.

Slightly larger than a basketball, Google's camera contains 15 individual fixed-focus lenses that simultaneously capture a 360 degree image roughly every three metres.

Local officials said they welcomed the opportunity to preserve vanishing traces of Mongolia's traditional nomadic culture and boost tourism in a country well off the beaten path.

With a population of only three million and a territory over twice the size of France, Mongolia is the least densely populated country in the world.

Many Mongolians still have a nomadic lifestyle with elements inherited from 13th century conqueror Genghis Khan, whose empire was the largest in history by territorial size.

Source: AFP

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