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Low-cost spherical photography is a benefit



Posted by **Simon Clayton, Chief Ideas Officer RefTech** on Monday, 16 March 2015 in **Technology**

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See this example of a hotel meeting room

There is nothing new about panoramic imagery to capture 360-deg images, but before digital photography it was difficult to view the images. Now, with the technology is more practical and easier to use. Thanks to digital photography, a panorama can be created using nearly every digital camera and smartphone and the results can be shared easily online and on most smart devices. The technology is now so readily available that it has moved into the mainstream, with even small businesses adopting the trend.

So, today, the question is does it matter to the meeting business? Yes, it should. Any venue with meeting rooms for hire will benefit from giving a potential client the ability to look around and zoom in on parts of a meeting space in this way.

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For the meeting planner, the advantages are potentially huge. Instead of seeing a few photographs of a meeting room, they can effectively stand in the middle of the space and look all around. This should help in the early stages of researching venues and in the process of drawing up a short list of those that seem to be worth a visit in person. If the meeting is a small one then this viewing may be all that's required to seal the deal for the venue over one of their nearby rivals.

Various startling claims are being made for spherical photography, but whether any of them really stand up to close scrutiny is open for debate. That said, it is clear that there are benefits for conference venues, especially given the relatively low cost of getting spherical photographs on to a promotional website these days.

As an example, this spherical photo of a small meeting room at the Brooklands Hotel in Weybridge, near London, England (pictured) really shows what the room looks like in its entirety. Every angle can be explored and a sense of the dimensions is easily picked up.

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An image like this helps to give organisers a complete idea of what to expect when they get there. In this instance, the camera used is a dedicated spherical camera capable of instant capture of a full 360-deg image and is currently selling, new, for less than 300 GBP. Of course we still need to be careful that the photos haven't been retouched and are not out-of-date, but the responsibility lies with the venue not to mislead potential clients.

Conference venues and also organisers should make the most of the availability of spherical photography, if only because more and more of your competitors are doing so. Ultimately, making it as easy as possible for a potential organiser to appreciate your venue has to be a good thing.

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