

# The future of marketing in 360-degrees

By [Andre Van Kets](#)

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It's hard to keep up with technology; everything seems to be moving at the speed of light. Innovation in camera technology is giving marketers, consumers and travellers a new reason to immerse themselves in a virtual world.



Andre van Kets

The technology to watch in 2017 is Virtual Reality - along with the accompanying practice of 360-degree videography, the mechanism used by consumers and professionals to create immersive virtual reality experiences.

## A brief history of virtual reality

Virtual reality's origins go back to 1838 with [the invention of the stereoscope](#) (Charles Wheatstone). Later, in the 1930's, Stanley G. Weinbaum prophesied the fact that one-day a virtual reality would be created through wearing certain goggles in his science fiction story [Pygmalion's Spectacles](#).

In 1993 [SEGA launched a VR headset](#) similar to what we see today, but the costs were not realistic for the market and failed.

## Virtual reality has arrived

Fast forward to 2016: the year virtual reality was released to the masses by YouTube and Facebook. Suddenly everyone can get a sense of virtual reality, even if they don't have a VR headset.

By swiveling and panning orientation-aware smartphones while watching a 360-video (or clicking and moving the mouse on desktops), Facebookers and YouTubers can place themselves in rich immersive experiences like this virtual encounter with Uganda's mountain gorillas.

## Filming in 360-degrees

Nikon, GoPro, Samsung, LG, Ricoh and many other camera manufacturers have released cameras capable of filming and photographing in 360-degrees. Prices range from \$250 to \$5,000.

Apart from the higher price, the major downside of the GoPro Omni is the processing time and power required to edit and produce the finished product. Cameras like the Theta S and Samsung Gear stitch instantly on the camera and are instantly ready for upload, but the quality is nowhere close to the multi-camera GoPro rig.

## Virgin uses virtual reality to showcase new offering

Virgin Atlantic was one of the first travel companies to embrace virtual reality. In 2015, they partnered with Microsoft to [introduce their clientele to their new upper-class travel offering](#) using virtual technology.

By donning a VR headset, would-be Virgin passengers could get an immersive experience of Virgin's VIP check-in at Heathrow, then relax in Virgin's Heathrow Clubhouse, and finally a taste of what life is like in the Upper-Class cabin itself - all in a 360-degree, high-res video.



[Image Source](#) - A Virgin Atlantic representative takes a would-be traveller on a virtual experience of their new Upper-Class experience

## South Africa in 360-degrees

Drive South Africa has partnered with Google to [map out South Africa's wilderness areas](#) using Google's 360-degree Trekker backpack camera. The company has been mandated to capture 360-degree StreetView imagery of 21 national parks and dozens of other South African sites of cultural and natural heritage significance over a six-month period.

Whilst trekking, the company has been posting regular photos and videos to their [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) account, but have also been experimenting with 360-degree photos, videos and time-lapses captured with the Ricoh Theta S 360-degree camera, giving users a virtual experience of South Africa's wilderness areas.

If you're excited to add 360-video and virtual reality to your marketing mix in 2017, then you can get started by reading this easy [step-by-step guide](#) to creating, shooting, editing, and uploading 360-degree videos.

Virtual reality and 360-video will have a big impact on tourism in 2017. Tour operators, travel agencies, airlines and hotels who film and publish 360-videos will have an edge over competitors who don't. Especially early on before virtual reality becomes truly mainstream. By providing immersive virtual reality experience, travel companies will attract customers, build trust, and create a greater sense of anticipation for the experiences they offer.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andre Van Kets is the co-founder of Cape Town travel company [<https://www.drivesouthafrica.co.za/> Drive South Africa]. Van Kets has a passion for using tech in interesting ways to promote travel to Africa. Drive South Africa is currently partnered with Google to map out South Africa's wilderness areas using Google's 360-degree backpack camera via the Google StreetView camera loan program.

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