

Google earth/Google Maps

The internet and computers are always evolving meaning the types of things you can do and see are constantly increasing. Google Earth is a program which has evolved over time. What started as simply a mapping website is now a website and program that allows virtual tours of any land, ocean or faraway galaxy. The images on the website are taken by satellites and are seamlessly joined together like series of aerial photos. Google has 13 satellites in orbit which are used for networking mapping and communication purposes.

Google earth operates on a variety of computers such as PCs, Macs and Smartphone's like an iPhone. Google earth on PC requires Windows 2000, XP or Vista. A version for Windows 7 is not far away. Your computer needs to have a these specs or higher. Pentium III 300MHz processor, 256MB ram, 400MB hard drive space, 128Kbit per second internet speed and a 16MB graphics card. There is a free version of Google Earth which is a 5 megabyte download. More advanced versions such as Google Earth Pro can be purchased, however the free version would be suitable for most users. Google earth is a fairly simple program to learn. Most navigating can be done using the mouse and clicking, double clicking or dragging.

The program allows you to search for places. For example if you type Grenfell NSW into the search box and press Enter the globe will spin and zoom to Grenfell. You can then zoom further to look at certain streets or buildings, and you can mark locations so that you can easily find them again.

Google earth has an alliance with other websites allowing you to access information on locations identified on Google earth in National Geographic Magazine and from Wikipedia, an online encyclopaedia. In addition Google Earth allows you to watch videos from YouTube relating to your location of choice.

In the newest version of Google earth you are not restricted just to land, you can view under the water's surface, and visit space where you can view the moon and

spacecraft landing sites. Some of the new features of Google Earth are allow you three dimensional views of spacecraft and let you watch footage of the Apollo space missions.

You can view buildings in 3D. Examples of locations to view with this feature is Uluru or the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Google earth had a function which allows you to adjust the daylight on you location of choice allowing you to watch the sun rise or set. You can then record the vision to share with friends or family.

This is a service for young and old alike. Young people can take virtual tours of Disneyland where as older people may be more interested in how certain homes have been renovated or looking for the loch ness monster or some crop circles in Europe.

Many of these features allow you to do things that although interesting, are very light hearted and not very functional, yet there are some very useful functions on Google earth. It allows you to look at images and how they have changes over time, in addition it allow you to have full aerial photographs of all of your property which are useful when looking for changes in vegetation cover. You can measure an area using the ruler tool the free version only allows you to measure a line or a path but the professional version allows you to measure circle radius or a polygon. To print go to file and down to print. Select print Graphic of 3D view, select your printer and click print. It will print out whatever is shown on the screen. For students the links from Google earth to reputable sources like National Geographic Magazine mean the site can become a valuable learning resource.

In more built up areas such as the city or large towns the image quality is a lot better than smaller country towns. You will be able to see a lot more detail in Sydney then you can in Grenfell. Countries like Afghanistan and Iraq have very good image quality because they are war zones.

There are some parts of the world that cannot be viewed on Google Earth. These include areas like military bases where it would be breaching security to have the images available freely on the internet.

The Grenfell Internet Centre has in stock some custom Grenfell Christmas cards. These would be great to send people who live overseas or in other towns. There are 6 cards to choose from at \$3.95 each or all 6 cards for \$20. They come with envelopes and look great.

If you would like a lesson on how to use Google earth or if they would like me to install it on your computer give me a call on 63431720 or drop in and see me at the Grenfell Internet centre next door to the library across from the NAB in the main street.