



## **Virtual Tours: More Than a Field Trip: It's a Personal Instructional website**

Take an online field trip with your class. No bus permits needed, all you need is a computer with Internet access.

A virtual tour or field trip is a multimedia presentation providing a guided tour of a subject on the Web. Most tours or field trips are presented using text and graphics, some add sounds or movies. These computer generated environments allow students to visit places such as the Smithsonian in Washington D.C, the Louvre in Paris, or even the inside of a human body without leaving the classroom.

There are several advantages to using a virtual tour or field trip in your classroom:

- Expand the walls of your classroom
- Open your students to new perspectives and places
- Enhance curriculum with real life experiences
- Provide authentic learning and publishing opportunities
- Motivate learners
- Break barriers and increase understanding

There are many virtual tours on the Web you can use to enhance your curriculum. But what if you want to create your own tour?

The Utah Education Network has created the Virtual Field Trips tool and repository that allows you to create your own virtual tour and store it at the UEN Web site. Educators have been using the Virtual Field Trips tool to create Web pages on a variety of curriculum topics. These existing tours created by other educators can be used to support your curriculum, or you can create your own tour with this easy-to-use online tool.

In this section, you will learn how to create a tour of our own using the Virtual Field Trip Toolkit. (<http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours>)

Before we continue let's look at some tours that already exist. Looking at these tours will give you a better idea of what is available already as well as what features make up a good virtual tour.

- [http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/tourFames.cgi?tour\\_id=14629](http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/tourFames.cgi?tour_id=14629)
- [http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/tourFames.cgi?tour\\_id=14438](http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/tourFames.cgi?tour_id=14438)
- [http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/tourFames.cgi?tour\\_id=14419](http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/tourFames.cgi?tour_id=14419)