

Google *Expeditions*

Take your patrons for a walk around the world with Google Expeditions, a project made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. With the help of the free app from Google and the hardware supplied by WMRL, the region's users can drop by hundreds of world landmarks and engage in experiences that may have been previously unattainable. Destinations include nature locations, college campuses, zoos, the moon and Mars, the inside of the human heart, monuments and landmarks, TV sets, career-related locations, and many others.

The kits include Asus phones, viewers, a teacher/leader tablet, and a router, enabling the kits to work without needing an internet connection. Set up is relatively seamless and intuitive, and the interface is easily navigated. Each expedition is pre-loaded with information about what users are seeing, as well as multi-leveled questions geared toward a variety of age levels, so prep work is minimal and it's easy for people to be engaged. The leader tablet allows the "guide" to launch, pause, close and reset the expedition. As the guide, you can also track the focal point of each participant and highlight certain points in the immersive panorama. Since there's no in-world motion or interaction, users can only look around by simply turning their heads. This way, there is no software or process to learn, and the potential for motion sickness is kept to a minimum.

During training, staff toured ruins in Peru, navigated the Taj Mahal, and visited the International Space Station. The "Wow!" factor was very real. They reached out to touch things, ducked, and turned, proving that excitement and curiosity knows no age limit. With seemingly endless possibilities, the only question that remains is where will you go next?

