



## Case Study

Intel® Xeon® E5520  
Intel® Core™ i7

# SeeVirtual Marketing & Photography Inc.

## Intel Helps Clients SeeVirtual & Boost Business

SeeVirtual Marketing & Photography Inc.\* specializes in turning still photography into interactive, real-life virtual tours that mimic what people see when visiting a home they're considering purchasing, checking into a hotel in a city they've never visited, or seeing the features of a museum or restaurant online. The company was founded 10 years ago by HomeLife Realty\* Broker Rick Dubord.

"The first year, we did about 30 tours exclusively for the real estate market," says Dubord. "But to be successful, we knew we had to take it to the open market. We have seen our tours growing every year. We've done over 19,000 tours to date."

With an ever-growing client list, Brett Youngberg came on board as an owner and general manager to build efficiencies and ensure the infrastructure could support growth. Youngberg and Dubord knew they needed to cut load times for clients watching tours online, while speeding processing for staff putting together the tours.

The company recently upgraded its web server to a new server powered by Intel® Xeon® E5520 to provide reliable and rapid loading of web images online. Its onsite FTP server is powered by the Intel Xeon X3360 processor for storing all the digital photography and panoramas.

"Our tours have to play quickly. People on the Internet are impatient and if they have to wait, they'll navigate away from the site," says Youngberg, who gets the speed he needs on his new servers with Intel Xeon processor technology. "Load time is extremely important because we never want people waiting for our server. It is much faster now. The load times on the panoramas seem twice as fast."

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## Speeding Photography Processing

With a faster and more reliable server infrastructure, Youngberg looked to increase efficiency at the desktop by upgrading to Apple iMacs\* featuring Intel® Core™ i7 processors to increase how fast they can pan in and out of images to see fine details.

"We are a small business of 10 employees and we need people to be working the whole time they are here," he says. "Buying iMacs and Intel are a good long term investment because I get powerful computers that can easily handle software upgrades."

To create a tour, 10 to 12 images need to be stitched together. In the past staff would be waiting a minute for each image to stitch. The hyperthreading capabilities of Intel's Core i7 processor, allows staff to work on things simultaneously which cuts wait times.

"They would twiddle their thumbs while the progress bar went across the screen," recalls Youngberg. He estimates the time needed to stitch images dropped from 40 to 60 seconds to between approximately 20 and 30 seconds. "It's half what it was before, and they are able to work on other things while they are waiting which allows us to get more work done in a day."

SeeVirtual's full-time staff of 10 (and additional contractors brought in for busy periods) produce between 100 tours a month in the slow seasons to more than 400 tours a month during the busy Spring and Fall real estate selling seasons.

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## Visualizing Floor Plans

To give visitors a greater sense of layout, SeeVirtual has added interactive floor plans to its virtual tours. The floor plan technician goes to a home with a laser distal (for accurate digital measurement) and draws out the floor plan on a Motion Computing\* Tablet PC powered by the Intel® Core™ 2 Duo processor.

"They go around the room and measure all the walls and layout the floor plan on the tablet. They don't draw on paper, it's all done on the computer," says Youngberg.

The completed floor plans are then integrated with the virtual tours so visitors can instantly see how the panorama they are viewing relates to the home's layout.

## Tourism Goes Virtual

While virtual tours are well known in home sales, more and more corporations including hotels and restaurants, cities and tourism operators like museums are using tours to attract visitors.

"When a client of one of our customers orders a hotel room online, they know what they are getting even if they've never been to that hotel before," says Youngberg, which is helping SeeVirtual clients attract customers, and tourism. Large cities and smaller towns across Western Canada including Whistler, Richmond, Burnaby, Langley, Abbotsford, Edmonton, Edson, and Rocky Mountain House, have all created tours of their public facilities to showcase their amenities to potential visitors, as well as current and future residents.

## No Limit To Photo Sizes

With high powered desktop computers featuring Intel Core i7 processors, supported by servers powered by the Intel Xeon processor, SeeVirtual has the power needed to create tours that can automatically re-sizes to fit different screen sizes.

"This feature showcases our high quality photography. With screen sizes getting larger, we can offer larger photographs in the tours but this takes more processing power," says Youngberg. "We created a liquid layout for the photos' slide show that will determine size of browser window and display the photo as big as possible."

Having a server which can handle that processor load ensures SeeVirtual images load quickly, resize quickly and aren't pixilated.

"We had to have a server that could handle all those size requests so we are always showing the best quality images for whatever size they want to view it at," says Youngberg.

### About SeeVirtual Marketing & Photography Inc.

SeeVirtual brings places to life on the Internet, using panoramas to create a 360 experience of real estate, cities, restaurants, hotels, tourism activities and even airplanes. For the past 10 years, the company has created more than 19,000 virtual tours allowing people to see a business' features from their homes 24/7.



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