

By: ~~May 12, 2008~~ ~~May 12, 2008~~ Biaga, Technology News Editor

## [A New Perspective of the Universe: WorldWide Telescope Is Live](#)

*Courtesy of Microsoft*

When Microsoft states that it managed to bring space exploration to Earth, it is not exaggerating in the least. [WorldWide Telescope](#) is a Microsoft research project that is now live and accessible to all users of Windows XP and Windows Vista. Designed as a Web 2.0 visualization software environment, the WorldWide Telescope is set up to transform computers into virtual telescopes. The rich Web application has debuted into public Beta as of May 12, 2008, making widely accessible data from ground- and space-based observatories across the planet. "The WorldWide Telescope is a powerful tool for science and education that makes it possible for everyone to explore the universe", explained Bill Gates, chairman of Microsoft. "By combining terabytes of incredible imagery and data with easy-to-use software for viewing and moving through all that information, the WorldWide Telescope opens the door to new ways to see and experience the wonders of space. Our hope is that it will inspire young people to explore astronomy and science, and help researchers in their quest to better understand the universe." At the basis of the WorldWide Telescope is Microsoft's high-performance Visual Experience Engine, on which the Next Research Group built the visualization environment by combining software with Web 2.0 services. Users will be able to access and browse not only high-resolution imagery of the universe, but also a variety of data including unique perspectives in infrared, ultraviolet, x-ray and gamma ray from sources such as the Hubble Space Telescope, the Chandra X-Ray Observatory Center or the Spitzer Space Telescope. "WorldWide Telescope brings to life a dream that many of us in Microsoft Research have pursued for years, and we are proud to release this as a free service to anyone who wants to explore the universe", added Curtis Wong, manager of Microsoft's Next Media Research Group. "Where is Saturn in the sky, in relation to the moon? Does the Milky Way really have a supermassive black hole in the center of the galaxy? With the universe at your fingertips, you can discover the answers for yourself." WorldWide Telescope 2.1.6.1 Beta is available for download [here](#).