



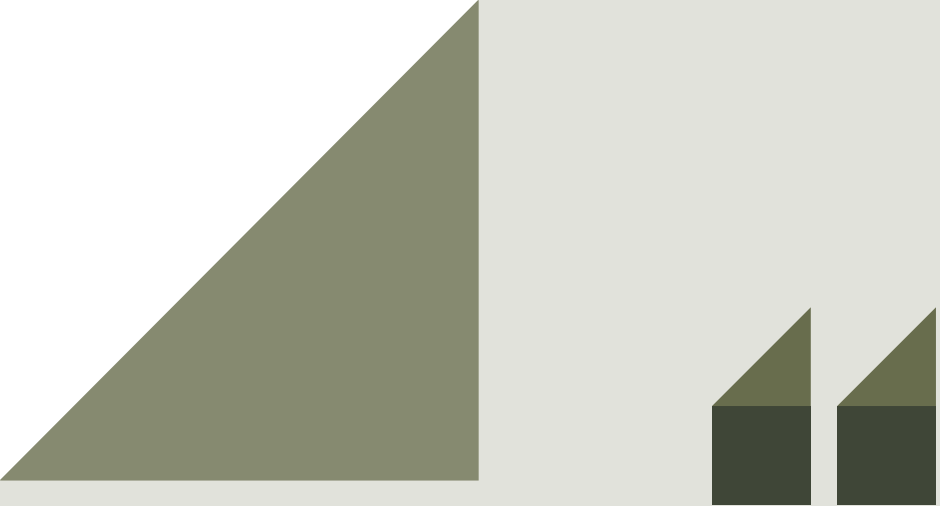
Gamescape travel

Video games and virtual platforms are evolving into modern modes for digital tourism.

“The convergence of different technologies into the virtual realm could create a serious and exciting alternative to the reality of travel,” Philippe Brown, founder of luxury travel company Brown and Hudson, tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence. “In the uber-luxury realm, we’re already speaking with a client who’d like us to scope out the creation of a virtual travel experience designed exclusively for their family to a land we co-create,” Brown explains. “It’s early days, but they imagine a destination that is a synthesis of several past journeys, some imagined and some on their wish list.”

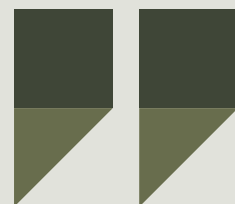
Travel companies are starting to lean into this virtual extension of travel. Soul & Surf, which organizes yoga and surf retreats all over the world, recently introduced a new “virtual holiday.” Called Soul & Surf Pause, the two-day program creates a weekend retreat at home, with yoga and meditation workshops, lessons on surfing fitness and technique (without the waves) and cooking classes—all held over Zoom.





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In the future, these virtual travel offerings may mature into fully-fledged multisensory experiences. “What you’re seeing immediately are a lot of Zoom conferences and virtual conferences and online streaming,” Justin Bolognino, founder and CEO of multisensory experience company Meta, tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence. But, Bolognino argues, a physical element is still needed to fully translate the cultural experience for at-home participation. We need experiences “where there is a tactility, there is a human energy component, there is a human creativity component—something you can actually touch and feel and make,” he says.

Brown agrees. “You could use content that presses the same buttons that physical travel does,” he suggests. “The virtual traveler could touch and feel objects, surfaces or people; they could hear sounds that provoke an autonomous sensory meridian response; smell things that make them salivate and eat foods that they’re seeing in their virtual world.”

Why it’s interesting:

As the radius of daily life constricts, consumers are using screens as a window to the world as never before, turning to digital gamescapes and virtual tours for opportunities to explore new worlds and engage in cultural customs.



On travel:

“Travel isn’t going to be as easy as it used to be and that may be a good thing. Over-tourism, climate change and now this—perhaps this reset is the opportunity to revisit why we travel at all. For the first few trips people might see their travel as therapy. From there they might seek out what I call meta-travel—travel that helps them travel better and get more from their precious time traveling. Perhaps we’ll start seeing bucket lists centered on why rather than where.”

— *Philippe Brown, founder, Brown and Hudson*

On food:

“People will rely more on shelf-stable products, including frozen items, going forward, more so because people will simply be cooking more and eating out less for the foreseeable future, but convenience will continue to be a priority.”

— *Amanda Shapiro, editor, Healthyish*

On data:

“Brands that are most attentive to their customers’ requirements and can recalibrate the value exchange to remain personally relevant will thrive amid rapid change.”

— *Jacques van Niekerk, global CEO, Wunderman Thompson Data*