



FRONT PAGE

## S'porean offers 360-degree glimpse into N. Korea

LYDIA LAM

659 words

22 July 2015

[MyPaper](#)

MYPAPR

FIRST

A1

English

(c) 2015 Singapore Press Holdings Limited. All Rights Reserved

A SINGAPOREAN man has filmed what could be the world's first 360-degree video tour of North Korea.

The 19-minute video was captured by 39-year-old photographer Aram Pan and uploaded to [YouTube](#) on July 10. It has garnered at least 128,000 views since.

Viewers can pan the panoramic video, recorded on a spherical camera, in various directions even as the clip plays, as if they were looking about on location where it was recorded.

Mr Pan, who was in the news in 2013 for his panoramic photos of North Korea, said that [YouTube](#) began supporting such videos only in recent months. But the panoramic video-making technology is not new. He has created more than 1,000 360-degree virtual tours at various locations since 2007.

His latest clip has been cited by several foreign news outlets including Britain's Daily Mail, as well as well-known camera review site Digital Photography Review.

[YouTube](#) user Samuel Archer said the clip was "so new to me" and that it was "amazing", expressing a desire to visit North Korea sometime.

But some netizens were less glowing in their comments – Daily Mail reader Kenny F. said the video was "government propaganda".

North Korea recently opened up previously restricted areas for tourism in its north-eastern region. Some of these areas Mr Pan visited on his sixth trip to the country include the cities of Hoeryong and Chongjin.

Mr Pan's one-week trip to North Korea last month was sponsored by a China-based travel company. He was joined by other tourists from countries such as Australia, the United States and Lithuania.

The photographer's clip features his journey from Beijing to the border between China and North Korea, as well as footage in North Korea of a mountain hike, a visit to a secondary school, a trip to a Russian bar and restaurant, and the border between North Korea and Russia.

Recounting his trip to My Paper, Mr Pan said that one of the things he was surprised by was how the China-North Korea border was not "heavily fortified", as he had initially thought due to portrayals of North Korea as being very strict.

While Mr Pan – who has put up other footage of North Korea on his website ([www.dprk360.com](http://www.dprk360.com) [<http://www.dprk360.com>]) – was allowed to take photos and videos in North Korea, he said that there were still

areas, such as a market in Rason city, where photography and video-taking were not allowed.

Even so, he said that there are beautiful sights and interesting locales in the reclusive country, such as the Chilbosan mountains which he likes for the scenery, and the Myongchon county where he enjoyed interacting with villagers.

Some people might visit North Korea out of curiosity after seeing Mr Pan's clip but Michael Chiam, senior lecturer in tourism at [Ngee Ann Polytechnic](#), believes tourism to the country may not increase drastically any time soon.

Travel to the country is still restrictive and many people will be cautious about visiting the country, said Dr Chiam.

As for the impact of 360-degree videos similar to the one Mr Pan posted on global tourism, Dr Chiam said that it is a "double-edged sword" as virtual reality tours can show both the positive and negative sides of tourist destinations.

**Lynda Wee**, an adjunct associate professor in retail at [Nanyang Technological University's](#) business school, said that there is "great potential" for 360-degree videos for the retail and real estate sectors.

"If we like what we see, we will travel. With demand, supply will catch up," she said.

lydialam@sph.com.sg

Watch the video at <http://bit.ly/1GySs8W> [<http://bit.ly/1GySs8W>].

EYE-OPENER: Mr Pan visited a secondary school during his one-week trip to North Korea. He has uploaded a 19-minute, 360-degree video of the trip.

Singapore Press Holdings Limited

Document MYPAPR0020150723eb7m00001

### Search Summary

Text	lynda wee
Date	In the last 6 months
Source	All Sources
Author	All Authors
Company	All Companies
Subject	All Subjects
Industry	All Industries
Region	All Regions
Language	All Languages
Results Found	23
Timestamp	4 October 2015 20:32

© 2015 Factiva, Inc. All rights reserved.