

## Google offers online panoramic views inside tsunami-ravaged buildings

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Internet surfers can now take a virtual tour of the interiors of schools, city halls and other buildings in the Tohoku region that were damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami.

On Dec. 6, Google Inc. made the images from Iwate and Fukushima prefectures available on its Google's Street View found in Google Maps.

Google Street View enables viewers to move forward or turn directions by clicking on the photos.

Google officials said the project was designed to record the horrific damage of March 11, 2011, for the historical record.

The images were photographed during a three-week period from Nov. 13. Those taken inside the former Rikuzentakata city office in Iwate Prefecture show rubble and automobiles littering the floors. Going upstairs, the viewer can see the remains of tsunami damage even on the fourth floor.

The images show the interiors of 34 buildings, for which Google was able to enlist the cooperation of local governments, from Kamaishi, Ofunato and Rikuzentakata in Iwate Prefecture, and Namie, Fukushima Prefecture. Twenty-nine of the galleries show the interiors of damaged buildings and five galleries are of buildings that have already been reconstructed from the damages on 3/11.

Demolition work has started on some of the buildings.

Google, which plans to keep records of ravaged buildings in Miyagi Prefecture as well, is calling for applications from local governments and building owners willing to take part.

The images are accessible both on Google Maps and on Google's "Memories for the Future" website at ([www.miraikioku.com/streetview/en/building](http://www.miraikioku.com/streetview/en/building)).

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