

Top Gear USA Captures Rubicon Trail in 360 Degrees



[NCTech](#), the developer of reality imaging systems, announced that its [iSTAR](#) panoramic camera has been used by the Top Gear USA television show to create the first ever virtual online experience of the infamous Rubicon Trail, using high-resolution 360 degree imaging. The images are being uploaded to [Google Maps](#) to provide a visual online record of the Top Gear team's journey – a route

that Google's Street View cars could never access.



The Rubicon Trail is a 35 kilometres long route, part road and part 4x4 trail, located in the Sierra Nevada in California. It is viewed as one of the most difficult off-road vehicle routes in the world, with an average driving speed of 3km per hour during the trail section, meaning that it takes several days to complete.

Top Gear is an American motoring television series, based on the BBC series of the same name. The show's presenters are professional racing driver Tanner Foust, actor and comedian Adam Ferrara, and automotive and racing analyst Rutledge Wood. The Rubicon Trail feature was part of Top Gear's new season premiere, which aired on 26 April.

Tough

The Rubicon Trail is one of the toughest and most well-known 4x4 routes in the world and based on our research, no one has ever captured it in 360 degrees, commented Patrick Costello, showrunner and executive producer of Top Gear USA. So his team wanted Top Gear USA to be the first. Their research into 360 degree photomapping led them to NCTech and their iSTAR camera. NCTech helped to put together all the technology to turn this big idea into a reality. Costello said they wouldn't have been able to do it without NCTech. The iSTAR camera impressed everyone. Top Gear is tough on everything, vehicles, camera gear, etc. and the camera held up perfectly to heaps of abuse, he added.

Capture

iSTAR is a high-resolution, fully automatic, 360-degree HDR camera. Machined from solid metal for robustness and accuracy, iSTAR precisely captures full spherical immersive images and high-resolution panoramic data streams for fast, efficient visual documentation of almost any environment.

With the camera set to automatically capture an image every minute or so, over 6,000 images were captured as part of the project, each of them automatically location tagged with iSTAR's built-in GPS module. For the upload to Google Maps, a reduced number (around 2,000) will be added. To date, around 30 images of the journey have been uploaded, with the full number to be completed over the weeks ahead.

Perfect fit

When NCTech heard what Top Gear were hoping to do, they were instantly interested because the project was a perfect fit for the easy-to-use and rugged capabilities of iSTAR, said Neil Tocher, co-founder and CTO, NCTech. They assisted their team to build a mounting plate so the iSTAR could be easily attached to any of their vehicles, sent them some quick instructions on how to use the camera and set them loose with it, Tocher added.

Top Gear car crash on rubicon trail



Top Gear presenters made it to the top



To access images and other background information relating to this story, visit [NCTech imaging](#).

For full iSTAR product information and images, visit the [NCTech iSTAR](#) page