

## Ground Zero plus seven

September 9, 2008



The anniversary of the 9/11 attack is a date that is not celebrated with fond memories and anticipation; it approaches each year with a quiet dread and the universal hope that something like this will never happen again.

If you are over 16, chances are you know where you were and what you were doing when the first plane struck the World Trade Center. That moment in time has become this generation's Dealey Plaza, or perhaps Lorraine Motel — an instant rife with emotions like anger and horror that crosses cultural and ethnic lines.

The image of 9/11 that most of us carry with us and that defines the memory of that day is the television footage of the Boeing 757 slamming into the World Trade Center, instantly vaporized in a plume of flaming fuel, or the sight of the first tower collapsing. Of course, there were other tragedies that day. The Pentagon was struck, and we cannot forget Flight 93 and its passengers who chose a death marked by uncommon valor to save lives. We will never forget them, but the images of that mortal blow to the first tower and its subsequent collapse endure in the public mind, perhaps because they were the most often shown, and so have become symbols of that day. When you think of the World Trade Center you probably see a mental image of that smoking wreckage — a sad scene to be sure — though a New Jersey company is trying to change that.

Many visitors to New York City feel compelled to make a pilgrimage to the WTC site, if only to absorb the enormity of the evil that was perpetrated on that day. You can see them standing along the fences looking in as construction of the Freedom Tower progresses, hundreds of people on any given day — and those are just the ones you can see. In reality, the site is visited by hundreds of thousands of people who see it on their computer screen, watching the activity in real-time through the World Wide Web and four cameras that point down from different angles and broadcast a view of the entire construction site to the Internet.

The Web cameras were put in place by Hackensack, N.J.-based [EarthCam](http://www.earthcam.com) in mid-September 2001, and are accessed through their own page (<http://www.earthcam.com/usa/newyork/groundzero/>) on the company Web site. [EarthCam](http://www.earthcam.com) is on the leading edge of remote and wireless camera technology, providing video monitoring infrastructure worldwide for the construction industry, government, and the film industry, with many of these cameras available on their Web site. [EarthCam](http://www.earthcam.com) organizes its site geographically and by subject, with a Top Ten list of online cameras, though few are as popular with visitors as the cameras at Ground Zero.

"The site is heavily visited, especially this time of year. People feel compelled to go to it," says Justin Camerlengo, Director of Marketing for [EarthCam](http://www.earthcam.com). "We get 200,000 unique visitors every day," Camerlengo says, though he says there is no way to predict how heavy the visitor load will be on and around the seventh anniversary of the attack. "We really don't know what the traffic will be on 9/11 but we're prepared for it," he says.

The images taken by the cameras as well as images taken on 9/11 are archived on the site, and the company plans to maintain the archive in perpetuity: "We will maintain the archive for as long as the Internet exists," Camerlengo explained.

Construction on the below-ground utility relocations, foundations and footings for the 1,776-foot (541 m) Freedom Tower began on April 27, 2006, with the first steel columns being installed in the building's foundation on 19 December of that year, those two dates marked as milestones in case you want to search through the archives online. One World Trade Center (the Freedom Tower) is the main building of the new World Trade Center complex, and a museum and three other high-rise office buildings are planned for the site, with the World Trade Center Memorial at the center.

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