

The truth is full of surprises behind the legendary background image of Windows XP

This legendary wallpaper is so sharp that you might think it is a product of computer graphics. While in fact, the person taking this photo is American photographer Charles O'Rear, who used to work for National Geographic channel.

If you are an 'old' computer user who has used Windows XP, you will probably be familiar with the default background image of this operating system. The legendary background photo shows a stunning view, with a view of an undulating hill with green grass and clear blue sky above.

Considered one of the most viewed images of all time, this background image is named 'Bliss', which means "blessing" in English. When searching for the keyword 'Bliss' on Google, The first result is the Windows wallpaper.



More than 1 billion people viewed the default Windows XP wallpaper

However, have you ever wondered where the background image was taken, or who took it? Even so, the image is so sharp that you might think it's the product of computer graphics. While in fact, the person taking this photo is American photographer Charles O'Rear, who used to work for National Geographic channel.

This photo was taken in 1996, five years before Windows XP came out. The work was made when this photographer accidentally passed by a grassy hill in Sonoma County, located on the northern coast of California (USA). After witnessing the green hills beautifully appear after the rain, he quickly grabbed a photo.

After a while, he uploaded the picture to a website specializing in buying and selling photos, Westlight. Two years later, Bill Gates' company Corbis acquired Westlight. Of the thousands of photos posted on the platform, this photo of Charles O'Rear has been chosen by Microsoft as the default Windows XP wallpaper thanks to features consistent with the operating system's "philosophy".



Photographer Charles O'Rear returns to the place where he used to photograph in the past

A photo taken 10 years later from the same location Bliss was taken shows a completely different scene: The green, green-grass hill once turned into a vineyard.

If you want to see the scene of the location where "Bliss" was taken for yourself, you can search for the coordinates "38.248966, -122.410269 on Google Maps, then use the Street View feature to view a 360-degree image of a green hill. smooth old years.

It is known that photographer Charles O'Rear captured the aforementioned grass hills with a mechanical camera. Quite surprisingly, the image looks rather 'virtual' and unnatural, completely without going through any digital processing, according to the photo's author. When Microsoft bought the copyright, its engineers only made the blue in the image more 'darker'.



When looking through Google Maps, the green grass hill once turned into a vineyard

Interestingly, since "Bliss" was stored as a film photo, the FedEx shipping service refused to ship the photo to Microsoft. Due to the large value of the photo, FedEx cannot guarantee the insurance money if there is an error in the shipping process. Finally, Microsoft sent airline tickets invited author Charles O'Rear to headquarters to deliver the original photo.

So how much money did O'Rear get for taking one of the most famous photographs of all time? A nondisclosure agreement (NDA) with Microsoft prevents the photographer from revealing the actual number. But according to information posted by the Napa Valley Register page, the number O'Rear received 'is extremely generous, just a little less than the salary paid to a photographer who captures the scene of President Bill Clinton. 'stealing' with secretary Monica Lewinsky "- or about \$ 100,000.

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