

Intro to ArcGIS StoryMaps

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October 6, 2022

https://libguides.brown.edu/gis_data_tutorials/storymaps

Introduction

This tutorial introduces the basic technical functionality of ArcGIS StoryMaps using the Free Public Account (information about the licensed account is available at the end of this document). Before you begin, download the tutorial data file `storymaps_sampledata.zip` from https://libguides.brown.edu/gis_data_tutorials/storymaps. Save it on your desktop or in the downloads folder, and unzip the file.

Conventions used in this tutorial:

- Summaries of steps appear in **bold face**.
- Names of windows, tabs, and tools appear in *italic face*.
- Names of files, layers, and fields appear in `typewriter` face.

Before creating your own StoryMap, think about the actual story that you would like to tell and create a rough outline. You can also look at examples of other StoryMaps to get ideas. Be aware that some examples may use tools that are only available from a licensed account, or may include content that was created outside of StoryMaps (such as interactive thematic data maps created in ArcGIS Online). StoryMap Gallery: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/stories>.

1 Getting Started

In this section we will create a new project.

1. **Log In:** Go to <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/> and click *Sign In*. If you don't have an ArcGIS Public Account, go through the steps of creating one.
2. **Create New Story:** On the *Stories* landing page, click the green *New Story* button in the upper right-hand corner to create a new StoryMap. Choose the option to Start from Scratch. This will launch the StoryBuilder. Starting from scratch allows you to create a linear, scrolling StoryMap where you can embed different content and multiple map widgets. The other options allow you to use a single widget, like the *Guided Map Tour*, as a template for the entire StoryMap.

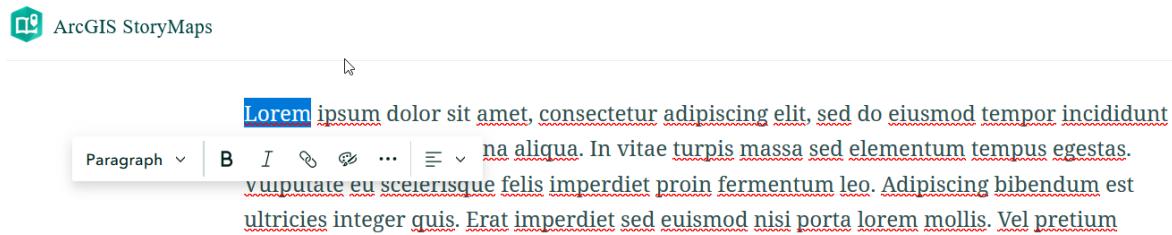
2 Adding Basic Content

In this section we will add text, images, and video, and learn how to adjust and style content.

- Add title and subtitle:** With StoryBuilder launched, replace the "Title your story" text with "My StoryMap Experiment". For the subtitle enter "This is a Test".

- Add a text block:** Click the plus sign beside the "Tell your story..." text. Choose the *Text* option to create a new text block. Minimize your web browser for the moment, and navigate into the `storymaps_sampledata` folder that you downloaded. Open the `text_sample1.txt` file. Copy the nonsense text that's in the file. Reopen your browser, and paste this text into the text block. Highlight the first word of the pasted text, and note the options you have for

changing the text block (paragraphs, headings, lists, etc.) and changing individual text (bold, italics, links, color, etc.).



3. **Add a photo and caption:** Scroll below the text and hover over the plus symbol to add a second block. Choose the *Image* option. Browse your files and select *photo.jpg* from the sample folder. Add it to the story. In the caption under the image, type "Brown University".
4. **Modify photo options:** Hover over the top of the photo to see options. You can float the image so text will flow around it, change the image size, and modify options (gear wheel) to provide attribution for the image and alternative text (important for citing your sources and creating ADA compliant websites).



5. **Add more text and move blocks:** Scroll below the photo and add a text block. Repeat step 2, and paste text from the *text_sample2.txt* file into this block. Notice when you hover over a block, in its upper left-hand corner a series of grey dots appears. Hover over these dots, hold down the left mouse button, and you can drag blocks to move them above or below other blocks. Experiment with changing the order of the photo and text blocks.
6. **Add a cover photo:** Scroll to the top of your StoryMap. Click the *Add cover image or video button*. Browse the sample files and select *cover_photo.jpg*. Hover over the cover photo, and note that you can access its properties (gear wheel) to add attribution and alternative text.
7. **Change design options:** At the very top of the page click the *Design* button. These options make global changes to your entire StoryMap. Experiment with the options to alter the *Cover* and *Theme*. Choose ones that you like (or keep the defaults).

The screenshot shows the StoryMap Design interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Design', 'Preview', and 'Publish'. The 'Design' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a placeholder image of a city skyline. To the right of the image, there are sections for 'Cover' (with three options: grid, card, and list), 'Optional story sections' (with 'Navigation' and 'Credits' checked), and 'Theme' (with five options: Summit, Obsidian, Ridgeline, Mesa, and Slate). A navigation bar at the bottom of the page includes 'Introduction' and 'More Details'.

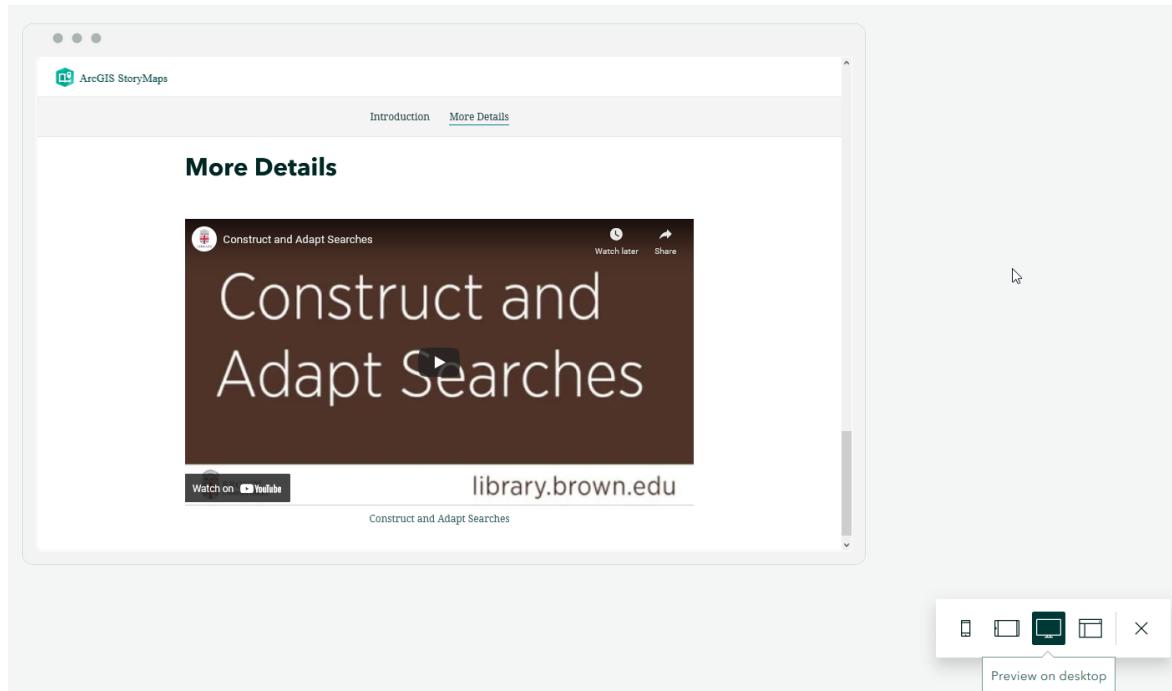
8. **Add navigation and headings:** In the *Design* window, check the option to turn *Navigation* on. Click off the menu to close it. Scroll down to the beginning of the first text block. Put your cursor in front of the first word and hit enter to move the block down. In the blank space above, hover and hit the plus symbol to add a new text block. Change the dropdown from *Paragraph* to *Heading*. In the new block type "Introduction". Notice this adds an "Introduction" heading below your cover photo in a new navigation bar. Now, scroll to the bottom of your StoryMap and add another heading text block called "More Details". Now, if you click the headings in the navigation bar you will jump to different sections of your StoryMap.

The screenshot shows the StoryMap editor with the 'Introduction' heading selected. The heading text is: "sectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. In vitae turpis massa sed elementum tempus egestas. Vulputate eu scelerisque felis imperdiet proin fermentum leo. Adipiscing bibendum est". The 'Introduction' heading is underlined, indicating it is active. The text is styled with a blue background and white text.

9. **Add video:** Under the new "More Details" section, add a new block, and select *Video*. Instead of uploading, choose the Link option. In the sample data folder, open the *video.txt* file, copy the link, and paste it into the link box in StoryMaps, then hit *Add*. This embeds a

YouTube video into the story. Hovering just above it allows you to modify the same options we have seen for images.

10. **Preview your content:** So far, we have been working in the StoryBulider edit mode. To see what visitors to your StoryMap would see, at the top of the screen click the *Preview* button. This launches a preview mode, and allows you to view how the StoryMap would look on different devices. Hit the X on the preview device bar to return to edit mode.



3 Adding Maps

In this section we will learn about some of the different map widgets that we can add to a StoryMap.

1. **Add map - Express map:** Scroll below the video block. Add a new block, and choose *Map*. The next page allows you to add maps from several sources, such as ArcGIS Online (if you've created any there) and ESRI's Living Atlas. Click the *New express map* button in the upper right-hand corner, which allows us to create a new, simple, custom map.

Add a map

+ New express map



The screenshot shows the ArcGIS website interface. At the top, there are tabs for "My Maps", "My Favorites", "My Groups", and "Living Atlas". A search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the word "Search" is located at the top right. Below the tabs, there are three map cards:

- My First Map**: Shows a map of New York City with various neighborhoods outlined. It was edited on April 9, 2020.
- Percentage of Children that Lack Intern...**: A choropleth map of the United States where darker shades of blue represent higher percentages of children lacking internships. It was edited on March 25, 2020.
- Sample Map - Inwood, Manhattan, NYC**: A detailed map of the Inwood neighborhood in Manhattan, showing streets, parks, and landmarks like "Park Terrace Section". It was edited on October 28, 2019.

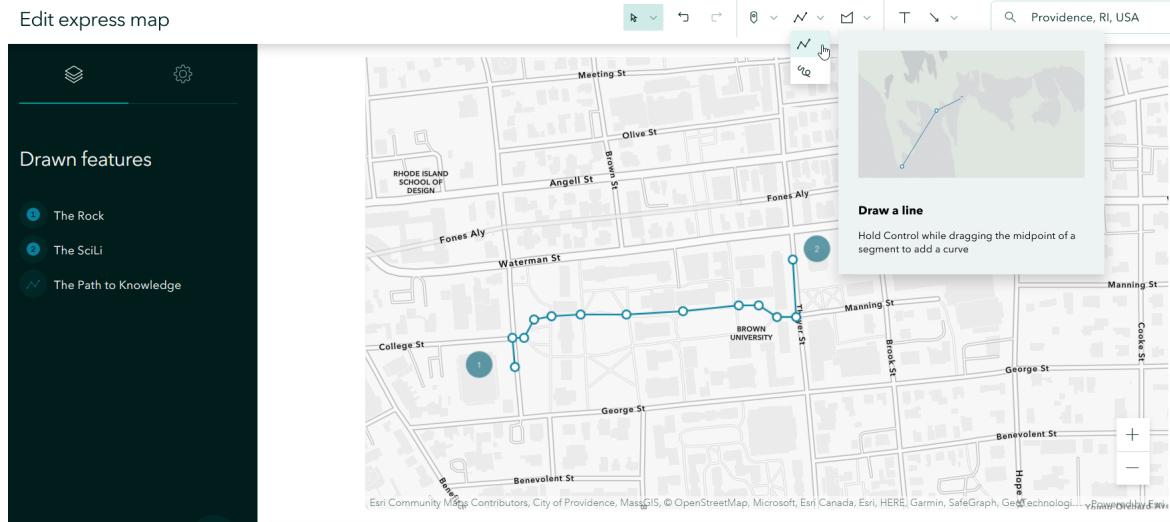
Each map card has a "Done" button at the bottom left and a "..." button at the bottom right.

2. **Add points:** Use the search box in the upper right-hand corner to search for Providence, RI. When prompted, close the icon for Providence (do not add it as a map feature). Zoom in to the campus for Brown University. In the drop down above the map, click the point button, and choose the numbered point option. Click on the large building on the corner of College and Prospect Streets (the Rockefeller Library). In the feature box on the left, type "The Rock" for name, and for the image add the rock.jpg file. Hit the *Done* button in the ***lower left-hand corner*** under the info about the Rock. Then, repeat these steps to add a second point for the Sciences Library, aka "The SciLi" at the southeast corner of Waterman and Thayer streets.

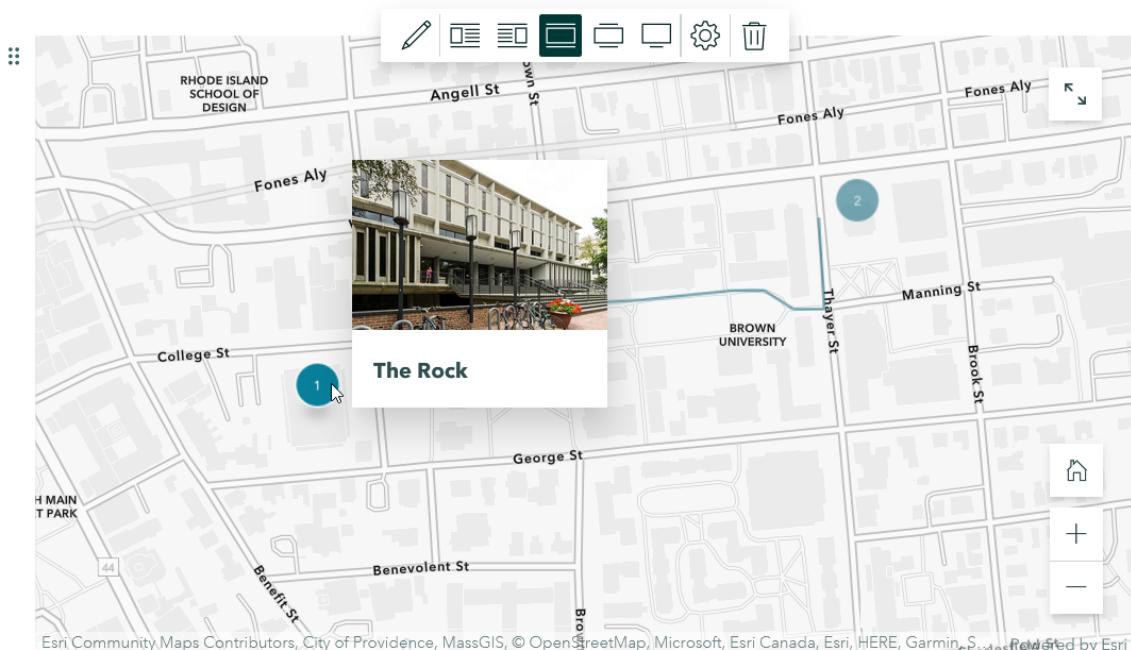
The screenshot shows the "Edit express map" interface. On the left, there is a sidebar with a thumbnail image of a tall building, the name "The SciLi", a "Description (optional)" field, and a "Style" section with a dropdown menu. At the bottom of the sidebar is a "Done" button. The main area is a map of the Brown University campus in Providence, RI. The map shows streets like Cushing St, Meeting St, Olive St, Angell St, Fones Aly, Waterman St, Thayer St, Manning St, Brook St, George St, and Benevolent St. A callout box on the right says "Add numbered points" and "You can reorder these by rearranging them in the drawing panel". There are two numbered points on the map: one near the center labeled "1" and another near the bottom labeled "2". The status bar at the bottom of the map window says "Express maps overview".

3. **Add lines:** Hit the line button. Starting at The Rock, draw a line in segments that follow paths across campus to the SciLi, left clicking on the mouse to draw individual segments. When you get to the final point, double-click to end the line. For name, type "The Path to

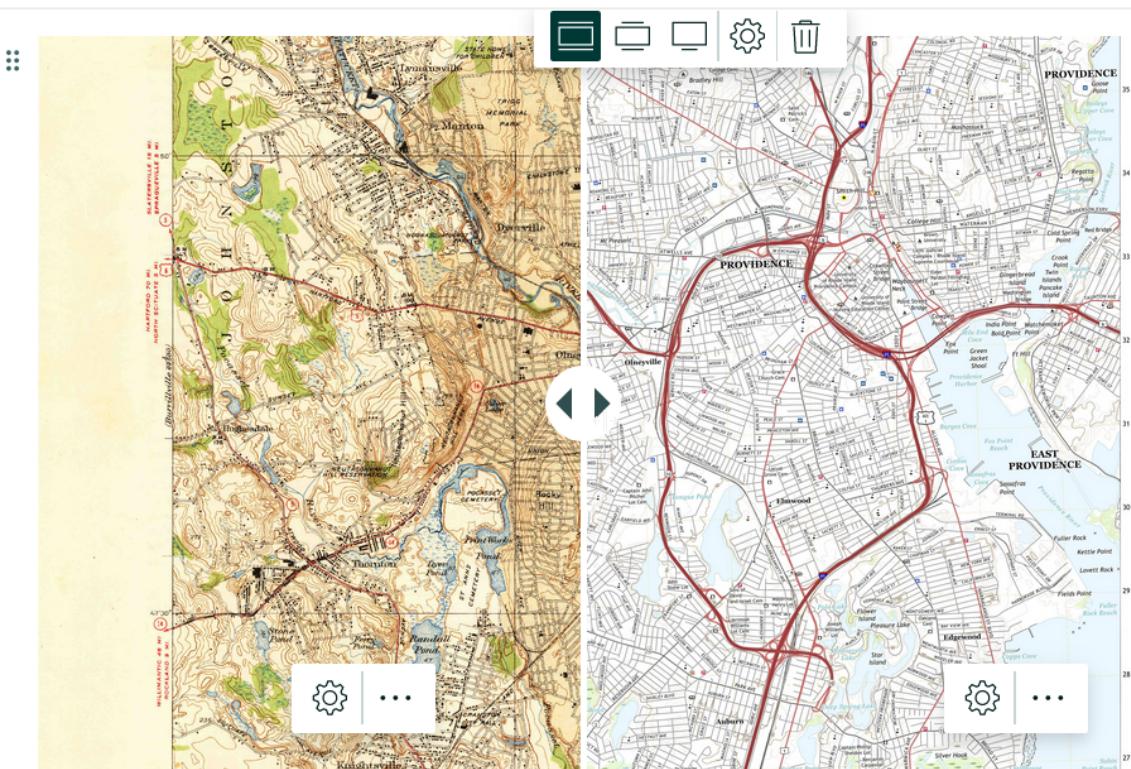
Knowledge". Hit the *Done* button in the lower left-hand corner. Adjust the map so that it's centered to depict the libraries and zoomed in close enough to see the details of the streets.



4. **Configure map options:** In the *Drawn Features* legend on the left, hit the gear button to view the map's properties. Note the configuration options. These will affect how viewers interact with your map once it's in your StoryMap. Note at the bottom that you can change the basemap; the underlying reference map on which your features are drawn. Experiment, then hit *Done* in the lower-right hand corner to exit the Express Map editor.
5. **Resize and caption:** Back in your StoryMap, hover over the Express Map and choose the option to make it smaller. Add a caption underneath, "The Path to Knowledge". Hover over the icons in the map to see the info about the libraries. If you ever need to modify your map, use the pencil button in its toolbar to return to the Express Map editor.

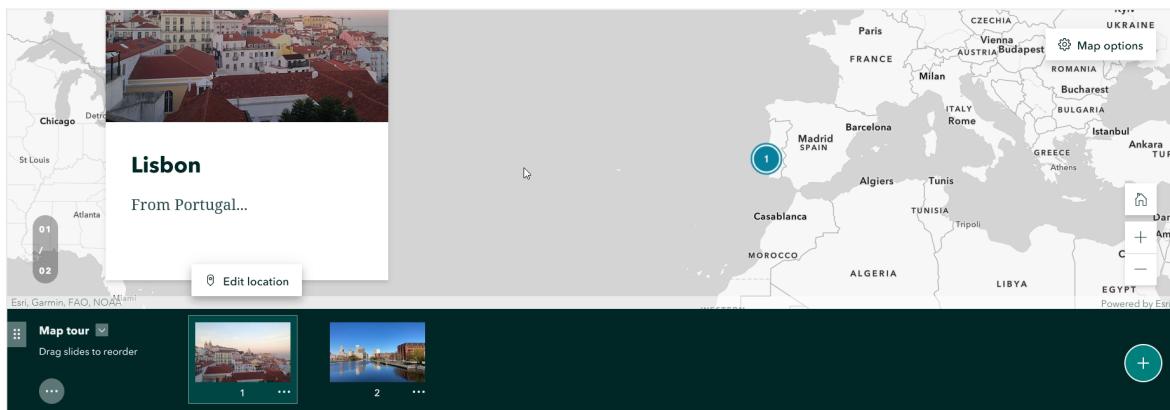


- 6. Slide map:** Add a new block under your Express Map, and choose the *Swipe* option. In the blank map on the left, add an image, and choose RI_Providence_1939.jpg from the sample data folder. On the right, add the RI_Providence_2021.jpg image. Add a caption below the map "Providence in 1939 and 2021". Note you can add attribution and alternate text using the gear wheel icon for each image. Slide the slider back and forth to see how the city has changed over time. This example "works" because these USGS topographic maps cover the same area at relatively the same scale. You may need to crop and adjust images in a graphic design package so the alignment will be correct (or use one old map and an Express Map that you can adjust).

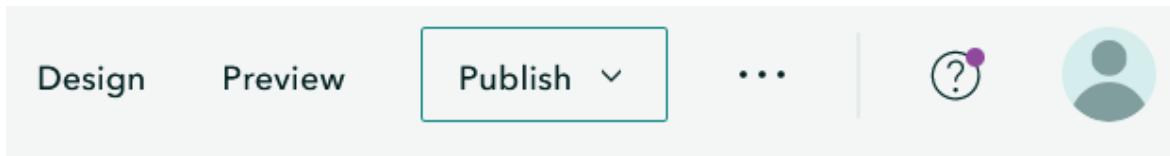


Providence in 1939 and 2021

- 7. Add map tour:** Add a new block below your Swipe map, and choose the *Map Tour* option. When prompted, choose *Start from scratch*, and then the *Guided* layout, then *Map focused*.
- 8. Create map tour:** Scroll down on the left, so you can see the *Add location* button under the blank slide labeled 1, and click it. Do a search for Lisboa, Portugal. When prompted, click *Add to map* and then *Add to location*. In the slide change "Title" to "Lisbon" and "Description" to "From Portugal...". Add an image, and select lisbon.jpg from the sample data folder. In the lower right-hand corner, hit the plus symbol to add a second slide. Repeat the same steps for Providence; do a location search to add Providence to the map, add "Providence" for the slide title, "...to Providence!" as the description, and cover_photo.jpg for the image. Scroll up and down, and you will see the map moves the viewer from Portugal to Providence.



9. **Preview, publish, copy, sign out:** At the top of the screen, hit the *Preview* button to see how all of your maps will be seen by an end user. Exit the preview, and hit the *Publish* button to make your StoryMap visible to the world! Note that you can hit the ellipses button ... and choose *Duplicate* to make a copy of your StoryMap, if you want to preserve the original and work on a new copy. All of your work has automatically been saved as we moved along. Hitting the little person icon allows you to log out. When you sign in again, you'll be able to choose an existing StoryMap to edit, or start a new one.



4 More Information

Tutorials and Examples

Getting Started with ArcGIS StoryMaps :

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cea22a609a1d4ccb8d54c650b595bc4>

Creating and Editing StoryMaps Content :

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/543a366850b243378ebddba643847f13>

StoryMaps Gallery (examples) :

<https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/stories>

Copyright and Image Sources

Pay attention to copyright when using images and videos! You can find Creative Commons and public domain material at Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/> and Flickr (do a search, then filter for Creative Commons material) <https://www.flickr.com/>. Use the attribution option in StoryMaps to reference these sources. US federal government sources, like the

USGS topographic maps used in the map slider example, are public domain but should be cited.

Map sources, for images that you can use (check permissions and cite sources):

- Perry-Castañeda Library UT Austin: <https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/>
- Library of Congress Maps: <https://www.loc.gov/maps/>
- NYPL Maps and Atlases:
<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/lane/maps-atlases>
- UN Maps & Geospatial Services: <https://www.un.org/geospatial/mapsgeo>

Free Public vs Licensed Accounts

The benefit of using the ArcGIS Public Account is that it's free and is yours indefinitely. It's flexible enough that you can use it for many projects. You can embed text, video, and images, create Express Maps, embed ArcGIS Online content, use Swipe Map, Slideshow, Sidecar, and Map Tour widgets. However, there are many features that are not available. You cannot embed audio or external dynamic content, use Timeline or Image Gallery widgets, customize the design and layout beyond set templates, create custom URLs, or create group or shared projects.

Many universities, including Brown, have an ESRI site license that provides access to the full version of StoryMaps. Current Brown students, faculty, and staff can request an ArcGIS Online and StoryMaps account by emailing the Software Services division of the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at Software_Services@brown.edu. Account creation is not instantaneous; it could take a few days to a week to process.

The benefit of the licensed account is that you will have access to all the tools, you can create group projects, and you can customize your StoryMaps. The downside is that if you leave Brown, you lose your account and any content you create will eventually be removed.

See the links below for details about licensed account features for creating groups, sharing templates, and duplicating content.

Optimize group settings :

<https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/story-maps/constituent-engagement/optimize-group-settings-to-share-stories-like-never-before/>

Working across ArcGIS Online Organizations :

<https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/arcgis-online/sharing-collaboration/partnered-collaboration-working-together-across-arcgis-online-organizations/>

Duplicating stories :

<https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/story-maps/sharing-collaboration/duplicating-stories-in-arcgis-storymaps/>