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Activity: Practice

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For this activity I revisited the Open Weather get/post activity and made small tweaks here and there. I added in some Google maps interactivity, tweaked the various settings the user could set when making a request to the OW API, and tried to add a location detector which would automatically send a query using your current location.

Some of the challenges I ran into were mostly related to integrating the Google Maps. There is a rather decent guide of how to set it up on the Open Weather site, but I ran into some strange CORS issues that I couldn't wrap my head around. I spent several hours debugging (i.e. staring at it and not understanding what was going on) until I realized it *may* have been the two plugins I use for ad/cookie blocking (it was the cookie extension causing problems).

Another smaller issue I had was when I would send a GET request using various user-options. The OW API strings itself together and lets you set various options like the unit of measurement, whether you want to test against the Zip or City (this one was a little challenging), and other things. For some reason when I would make the API call, it would update again with the old city information rather than the new one. I investigated this and turns out there's some finnicky stuff with storing the session and making another async call to the API. It reads in the new session to the storage cache, but outputs the old data (before it's overwritten). I tried to force the cache to reset but it wasn't having any of it. I had to scrap storing each call in the local cache, and just do a plain old call and display when the information was received.

I tried to add some fun overlay states to each call (if it's raining the background is blue, if it's cloudy it's grey, etc) but I struggled with the vanilla javascript to get it up and running. That's probably been my biggest Achille's heel for this entire course. I've forced myself to avoid jQuery for activity assignments because while it simplifies everything, I rob myself of the ability to understand vanilla JS better. jQuery is pretty much running vanilla JS under the hood either way so there's nothing magical going on.

Overall the activity of extending the original functionality of the ajax activity wasn't too bad. I went overboard with it when it was originally assigned in Week 4 because of how new some of it was to me and the fact that it was actually fun trying to work with an API and getting through the quirks.