

StoryScapes101: Introduction to the StoryScapes platform

Module 1- Conveying Intelligence with StoryScapes

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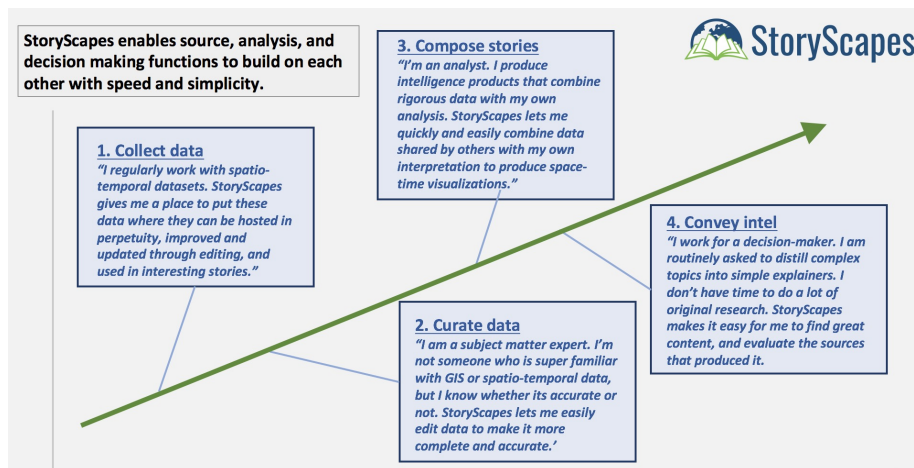
Introduction

StoryScapes empowers geospatial intelligence professionals to generate mission-critical analysis that is rooted in both space and time. The goal is to enable source, analysis, and decision making functions to build on each other with speed and simplicity.

The StoryScapes platform is organized around four critical user actions, which we call the '4 C's'. These are:

1. Collecting data (or 'StoryLayers')
2. Curating Storylayers
3. Composing StoryScapes
4. Conveying intelligence

The graphic below describes some of the user statements that speak to each of these four critical actions:



In this first Module we will begin with ‘Conveying Intelligence’ since it is the action that requires the least amount of technical know-how. Anyone with access to the StoryScapes platform can *view* published content, such as StoryLayers or StoryScapes, and share it with colleagues or use it as part of presentations, much like they would with powerpoint slides.

In this module, students will build a profile on StoryScapes and learn to explore and use content to make presentations that convey critical geospatial intelligence to a variety of audiences. This module lays critical groundwork that will enable StoryScapes users (or “StoryTellers”) to engage in more creative and complex actions in later modules.

This module includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 1 – Build a Profile
- Lesson 2 – Search and Share
- Lesson 3 – Present with StoryScapes

Lesson 1: Build a Profile

Objective

In this lesson students will learn to login and build a StoryScapes profile.

Lecture

The Role of Identity

StoryScapes is designed as a ‘high attribution’ environment. This means that all actions taken within the platform are tied to the StoryTeller who has performed the action. What’s more, StoryTellers should be represented as human beings with real names, rather than as anonymous figures using only usernames. Since

StoryScapes is a knowledge platform, akin to an academic journal or professional resource, it is important that StoryTellers be able to assess the experience and credentials of people who contribute content.

Who is StoryScapes for?

StoryScapes was built to enable knowledge-sharing amongst stakeholders across the United States National Security Community, from analysts to diplomats to soldiers.

Technical requirements to use StoryScapes

- Personal computer or laptop
- Internet connection
- Software program for creating tabular data (i.e. Microsoft Excel) *if importing point StoryLayers.*
- Software program for creating shapefiles, such as ArcMap or GIS *if importing polygon StoryLayers.*

Skill requirements to use StoryScapes?

StoryTellers require a range of skills, depending on the actions they want to perform. These skills might be grouped into the following three levels:

*In order to **convey** StoryScapes content created by others, you need to be able to:* - Perform basic computer and internet functions, like clicking, typing and navigating a web browser

*In order to **curate** StoryLayers created by others, you need to be able to:*

- Perform basic computer and internet functions, like clicking, typing and navigating a web browser

*In order to **collect** and import StoryLayer data, you will need to be able to:*

- Perform basic computer and internet functions, like clicking, typing and navigating a web browser
- Have expertise about the StoryLayer you are importing, such as when and where events occurred
- Have experience using Excel spreadsheets to prepare .csv files (for StoryLayers made up of just points)
- Have experience using a desktop GIS such as ArcMap or QGIS to prepare .shp files (for StoryLayers made up of lines or polygons)

*In order to **compose** a StoryScape, you need to be able to:*

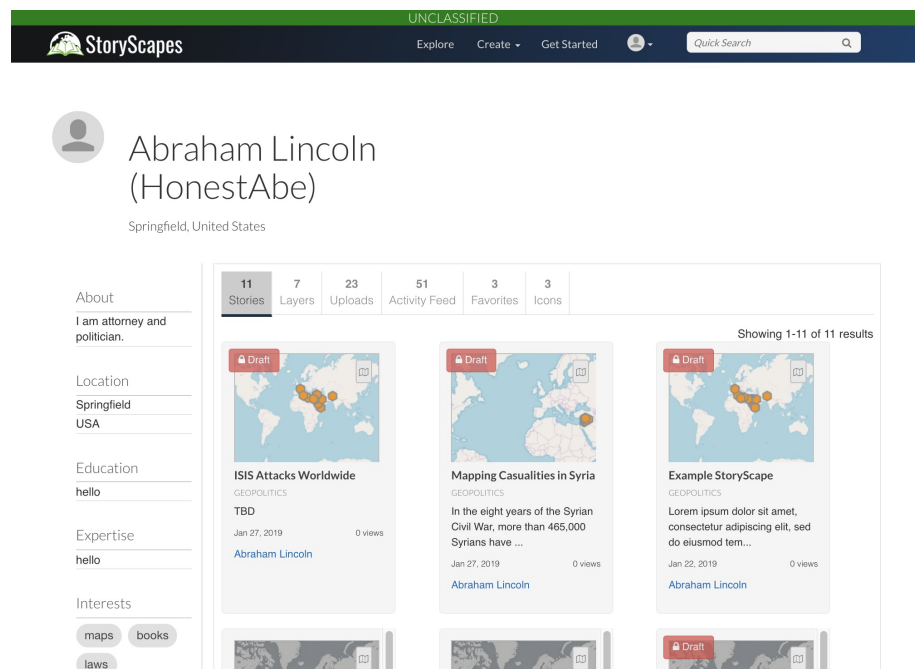
- Perform basic computer and internet functions, like clicking, typing and navigating a web browser

- Have expertise about the StoryScape you want to compose so it conveys a meaningful and accurate narrative
- If you want to use more advanced styling functions in the StoryScapes composer, you will need to have basic knowledge of choropleth and graduated cartography techniques

The Anatomy of a StoryScapes profile

The StoryScapes profile was designed to serve as both a place to manage your work, as well as an e-portfolio to share your work with the StoryScapes community.

You can always access your profile by clicking on the avatar at the top of your screen, located between the **Get Started** button and **Quick Search** box.



Sidebar fields

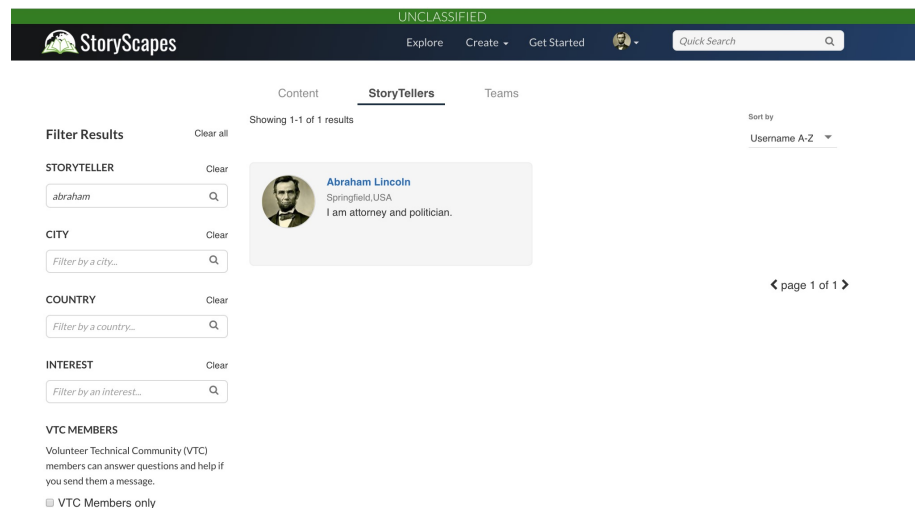
On the left side of the Profile you'll see space to display your brief bio summary, the location where you spend most of your time, your education background, and your tags and interests. You should complete these sections with as much detail as you feel comfortable. Doing so will help other users discover you and your work through searches.

Along the top

On your public Profile you'll see a set of tabs going across the center of the page where you can filter for your **StoryScapes**, your **StoryLayers**, your **Uploads** (data you've uploaded but not published yet as a StoryLayer), your **Activity Feed** (a chronicle of your activities on StoryScapes), and your **Favorites** (StoryLayers and StoryScapes you've favorited) and your **Icons** (any Icon svgs you've uploaded). You'll learn more about all of these items in future lessons.

Profile in Explore

Anyone logged on to StoryScapes can search for and view the profile of any other StoryTeller. Click **Explore** at the top of the screen. Then filter for **StoryTellers**. In a future lesson we will look in detail at the various ways users can search for StoryTeller accounts. For now, it is important to be aware of the various ways you and other StoryTellers can access your public Profile. Here we show the StoryTellers explore section filtered by a search by a user named "Abraham"

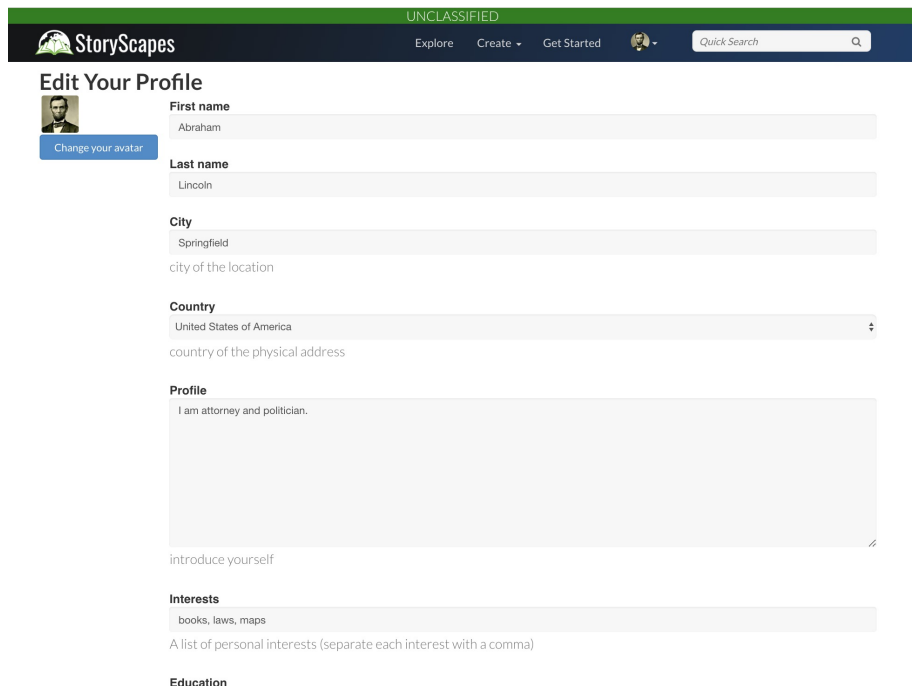


Identity Representation

As you start to take action and create content in StoryScapes, your name will frequently appear in conjunction with these actions. For example, if you import a new StoryLayer, your name will appear as the owner of that StoryLayer. Or if you compose and publish a StoryScape, your name will appear as the owner of that StoryScape. And, if you make an edit to a StoryLayer, your name will appear alongside that edit. This will become clearer in future lessons that focus on these topics. For now, it is important to understand that when using StoryScapes, you do so as an attributed StoryTeller. StoryScapes is a collaborative platform designed to advance collective knowledge, not a private space to do your own work in anonymity.

Managing Your Profile

To add, modify and delete personal information in your Profile, click your Avatar at the top of your screen. This will generate a drop-down menu with an option for **Edit Profile**.



The screenshot shows the 'Edit Your Profile' interface in the StoryScapes application. At the top is a green navigation bar with the StoryScapes logo and links for 'Explore', 'Create', and 'Get Started'. Below this is a dark blue header with a user avatar and a 'Quick Search' bar. The main content area is titled 'Edit Your Profile' and features a 'Change your avatar' button next to a placeholder image. The form includes several input fields: 'First name' (containing 'Abraham'), 'Last name' (containing 'Lincoln'), 'City' (containing 'Springfield' with a hint 'city of the location'), and 'Country' (a dropdown menu showing 'United States of America' with a hint 'country of the physical address'). There is a large text area for the 'Profile' (containing 'I am attorney and politician.' with a hint 'introduce yourself') and a text input for 'Interests' (containing 'books, laws, maps' with a hint 'A list of personal interests (separate each interest with a comma)'). The 'Education' section is partially visible at the bottom.

Tasks

Now it's your turn! Your assignment is to build your Profile in Storyscapes. When you are finished, ask a colleague to find your StoryScapes profile in **Explore** and confirm it includes the following elements:

- [x] First and Last name
- [x] About statement
- [x] City and Country
- [x] Education and Expertise
- [x] Interests
- [x] Avatar

Lesson 2: Search and Share

Objective

In this Lesson students will learn to find content and share it with colleagues.

Lecture

Once you're logged in with a StoryTeller account and have built a Profile, the next thing to do is spend some time exploring the content that is already in StoryScapes.

StoryScapes is designed to let StoryTellers easily browse and explore for content based on their interests.

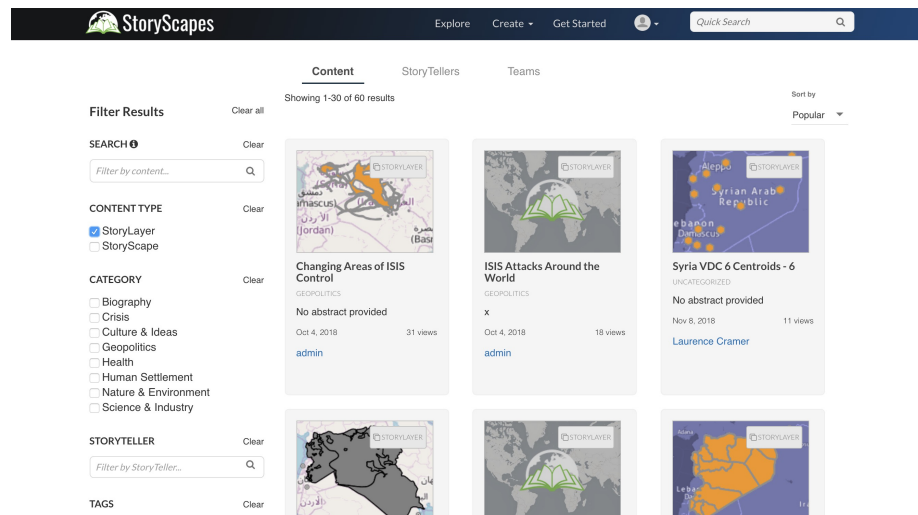
Types of Content to Explore

In StoryScapes there are three types of content a StoryTeller can search for - StoryLayers, StoryScapes and Storytellers.

StoryLayers

A StoryLayer is a data file that is used to display geographic information with temporal attribute(s). Module 3 will cover StoryLayers in more detail.

To find a StoryLayer, click **Explore** at the top of your screen. Make sure you are filtering for **Content**. On the leftside, check the **StoryLayers** box so only StoryLayers show in the **Content** filter.



The sidebar in **Explore** also lets you refine your search on a number of parameters. You can filter content by pre-set **Categories**, by user-generated **Tags**, or by the Storyteller that imported the StoryLayer.

Click on a StoryLayer card. This will take you to the StoryLayer's page.

Changing Areas of ISIS Control

UNCLASSIFIED

Download Layer

Metadata Detail

Edit Layer

Download Metadata

Legend

Create a story using this layer

Click the button below to generate a new story based on this layer.

Compose Story

Use on Organization Page

Syria Research Group

Clear the Server Cache of this

Info Attributes Share Ratings Comments GeoGig

Title Changing Areas of ISIS Control

Abstract No abstract provided

From there you can take a variety of actions, including:

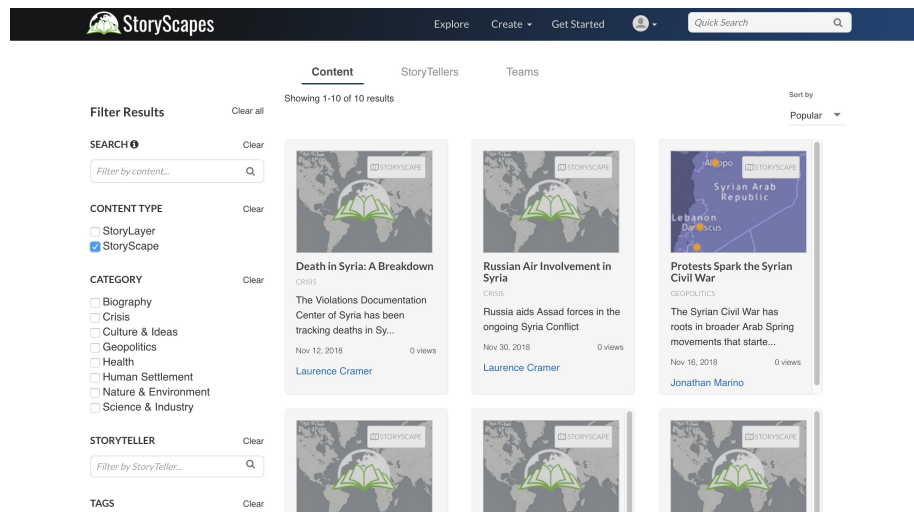
- Hit “play” and watch the StoryLayer data animate over space and time
- Peer review the StoryLayer (more details in Module 4)
- Edit the StoryLayer to make it more complete and accurate (more details in Module 4)
- Use the StoryLayer to compose a MapStory (more details in Modules 2 and 5)

StoryScapes

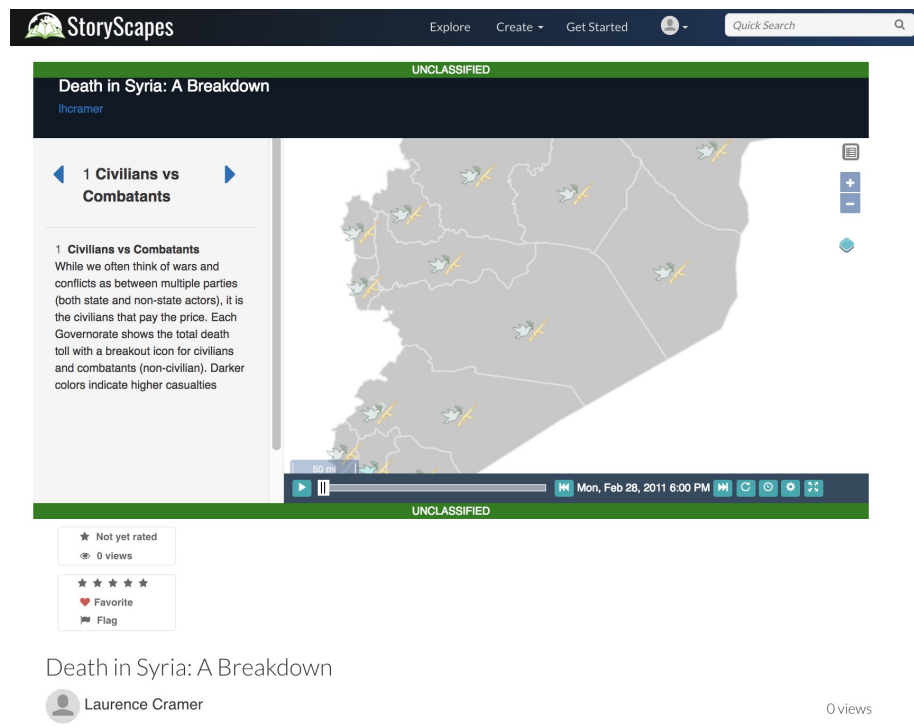
A StoryScape is a geospatial narrative. By combining StoryLayers with other mixed media (video, image, text) a StoryScape seeks to visualize and explain phenomena of spatial change over time.

You can search for StoryScapes in much the same way that you can StoryLayers. Go to **Explore** at the top of your screen. Make sure you’re filtering for **Content**. On the left-side, check the filter for **StoryScape** so you only see StoryScapes.

You can further refine your search by filtering StoryScapes by pre-set **Categories**, by user-generated **Tags**, or by the Storyteller that composed the StoryScape.



Once you find a StoryScape you'd like to view, click on the StoryScape card. This will take you to the StoryScape's page.



From this page, you can take a variety of actions, such as:

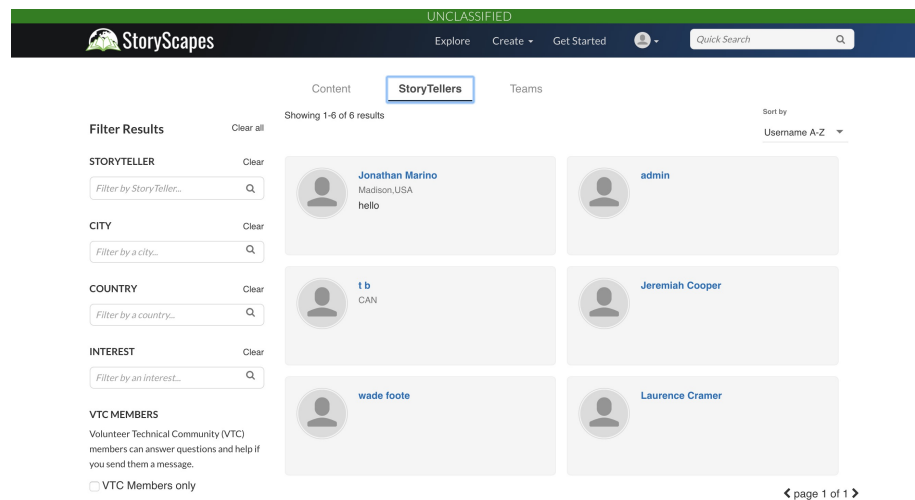
- Hit “play” and watch the StoryScape play over space and time
- Peer review the StoryScape (more details in Module 2)

- Share the StoryScape (more details in Lesson 3 of this module)

StoryTellers

In StoryScapes, we refer to individual users as “StoryTellers”. You can browse all Storytellers by clicking **Explore** at the top of your screen and then going to the StoryTellers tab.

Filters on the left side of the screen help you narrow your search for StoryTellers. You can search for individual StoryTellers by name or filter by the city or country where a StoryTeller is located or by the Storyteller’s topical interest areas.



Sharing StoryLayers and StoryScapes

StoryLayers and StoryScapes can be shared with colleagues, much like you might share a video on the internet.

Share with a Link

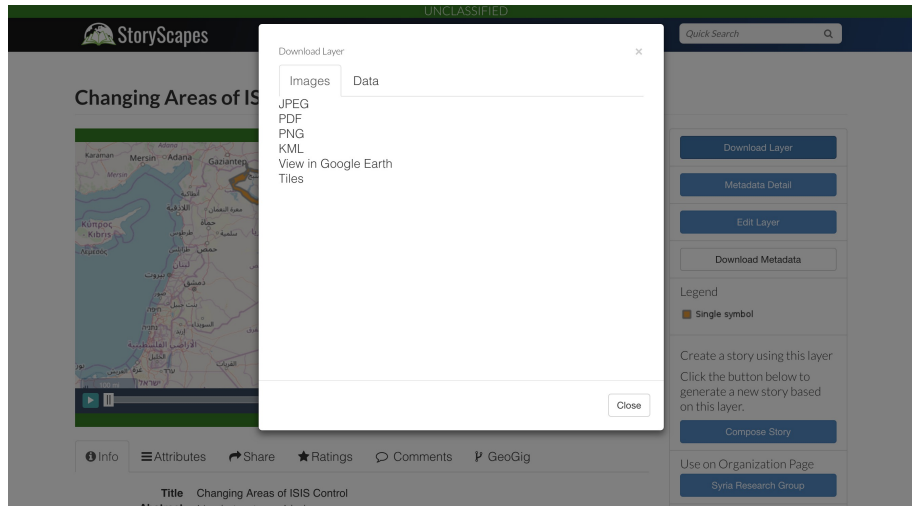
Simply grab the hyperlink for any StoryLayer or StoryScape page and share the link with a colleague.

Embed

Embedding allows you to place content directly on another webpage or a blog entry. To embed a StoryLayer or StoryScape, go to the “Share” tab and copy the Embed code. This code can be pasted on to the website where you want to embed the StoryLayer or StoryScape.

Download Data (StoryLayers Only)

You may want to download a StoryLayer's data in a common format, such as a CSV or Shapefile, and share it with a colleague. This capability is available to any registered StoryTeller. Navigate to any StoryLayer page and click **Download StoryLayer**. Then select the format for your download.



Tasks

Now it's your turn! Prove to a colleague that you can complete the following steps:

- [x] Indicate a subject area you're interested in finding content about (i.e. a region or an issue)
- [x] Use the StoryScapes **Explore** page to find a StoryLayer or StoryScape that addresses your issue area. Use filters and tags to narrow your search. (If you don't find anything, that means someone like you needs to create it! We'll cover content creation topics in future modules)
- [x] Share a StoryLayer or StoryScape with a colleague using one of the methods covered in the Lesson.
- [] *Challenge*: Embed a StoryLayer or StoryScape on a real site you have administrative access to.

Lesson 3: Present with StoryScapes

Objective

In this Lesson students will learn to use a StoryScape as part of a presentation to colleagues.

Lecture

Now that you know how to discover StoryScapes that interest you, you can learn how to incorporate a StoryScape published by you or any Storyteller into a presentation.

A published StoryScape is similar to other presentation oriented media, such as powerpoint slides and videos. StoryScapes are dynamic visual aids that can help a presenter drive home a point and provide perspective.

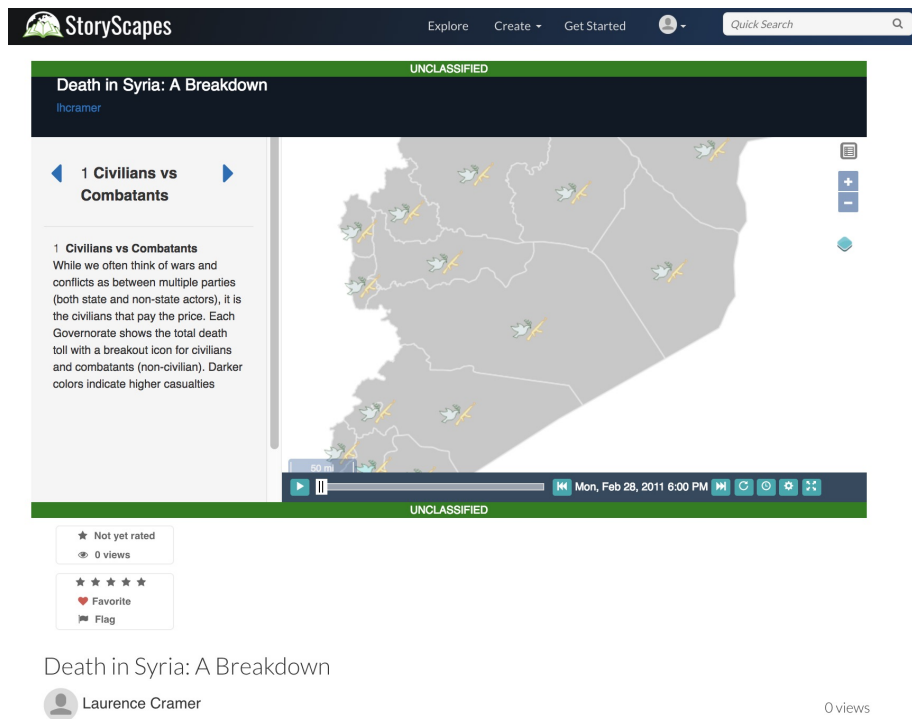
Once you have discovered a StoryScape you want to present with, first take some time to read about the StoryScape and the chapters it includes, if it has more than one chapter. Also take a look at the StoryLayers that were used to create the StoryScape to help you make judgements about the quality of data they contain. Who were the StoryLayers imported by? Do you trust these sources? Have the StoryLayers been edited much at all? How are they rated? These are questions to ask before deciding the StoryScape is of enough quality to use in your presentation.

__*Note - If in your assessment of the StoryScape you find any issues, flag them for follow up by an administrator. Flagging will be covered in more detail in Module 4.__

You can also click **Favorite** to have the StoryScape show up on your profile where you can find it more easily in the future.

Playback Features

To begin using a StoryScape in a presentation, first navigate to the page for the StoryScape you want to use.



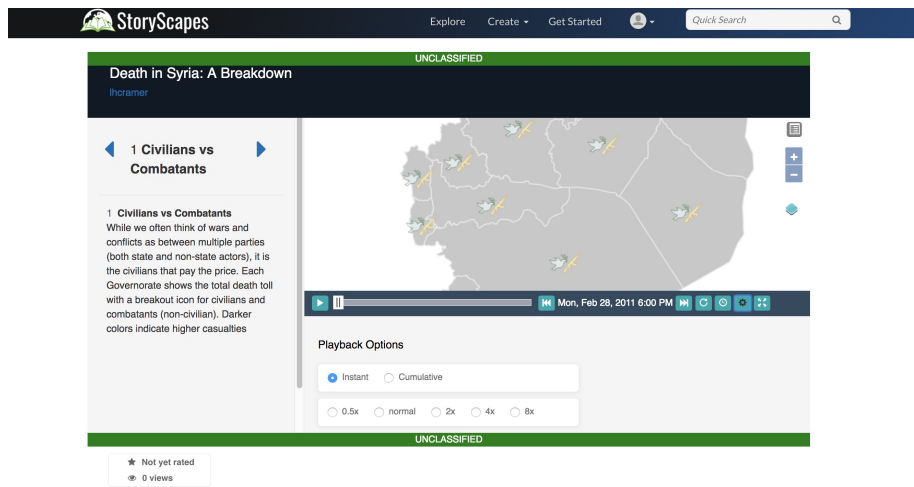
StoryScapes can be presented at small size, or expanded into full screen.

The summary description for the chapter is on the leftside of the map canvas.

To start the playback on a StoryScape, simply hit play. The map and timeline will start to advance. You can pause and restart the playback at any time.

You can change the speed of the playback by using the 'fastforward' and 'rewind' buttons or by opening the **Playback Settings** and selecting a different playback rate (i.e. 2x, 4x, 8x).

In the **Playback Settings** you can also decide if you want features to play instantly or cumulatively. In instant mode, features will only appear on the map from their start time to their end time. In cumulative mode, features will appear on the map from their start time until the end of the chapter.



Next to the Playback Settings there is a button to expand the timeline to see the distribution of features over time.

Next to the Timeline button there is a button to Loop a chapter, or Loop the whole StoryScape, if you want either an individual chapter or the whole StoryScape to keep repeating automatically.

If the StoryScape has any StoryFrames, they will cause the StoryScape to automatically zoom the map to different places at specific times. When there is no StoryFrame, you can use zoom buttons at the top-right of the map canvas to zoom in and out on the map, and you can use your mouse to click and move the map around.

If StoryPins were added, they will pop up on the map at specific times. If StoryPins have media (such as a video) the media will begin playing automatically if that is how the Storyteller set it up. If the media doesn't begin playing automatically, that means you can control the media's playback by clicking and pause as you prefer.

In the top right corner a Legend explains what the colors on the map features represent. You can minimize the Legend.

At the end of a chapter, click the arrows in the left-hand sidebar to advance the StoryScape to the next chapter.

Don't worry if you're confused by some of the terminology used here. We will cover these specific elements of a StoryScape, such as StoryPins and StoryFrames, in Module 2, when we look at how to compose a StoryScape.

Tasks

Now it's your turn! Your assignment is to find and present a StoryScape to a colleague. Your presentation should cover the following elements:

1. Explain what the StoryScape is about, what StoryLayers it uses, and why you feel this is a quality StoryScape to present, or perhaps any concerns you have about it.
2. Present in Full Screen mode for at least part of your presentation.
3. Adjust the playback rate to the most appropriate speed for your presentation.
4. Explain what the Legend is communicating, and then minimize the Legend.
5. Use StoryFrames and StoryPins in your StoryScape (if applicable) to help focus your spoken presentation.

Conclusion

In this Module you have learned how to build your StoryScapes profile, find the people and content on StoryScapes relevant to your work, and use content created by others as part of presentations to colleagues.

With these skills, you can quickly and easily add dynamic StoryScapes to your work, and help those you communicate with to better understand critical intelligence within space and time.

Discussion Questions

Before moving on to the next Module, take some time to reflect independently or in a group on the following questions:

1. What kind of work projects might benefit from the spatio-temporal lens of communication that StoryScapes emphasizes?
2. What challenges or obstacles do you foresee in using StoryScapes as part of work presentations?
3. What is a StoryLayer you would like to see imported into StoryScapes that would help you in your work?
4. What is a StoryScape that you would like to see published that would help you in your work?
5. What other comments, questions or concerns do you have about this Module?