

StoryScapes101: Introduction to the StoryScapes platform

Module 2 - Composing StoryScapes 1.0

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This work was adapted from an original GeoAcademy course and continues to be modified and improved. Credit to GeoAcademy for inspiring this open course format.

Introduction

In this module, students will learn the basics of using the StoryScapes composer. By the end of the Module the student will have published a simple StoryScape using StoryLayers imported by others.

This module includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 1 – Setting Up a StoryScape
- Lesson 2 – Adding and Styling StoryLayers
- Lesson 3 – Adding StoryPins and StoryFrames

Each lesson is planned to take about XXXX minutes to complete. Combined, this module should take XXX hours to complete (assuming ten minute breaks between each Lesson).

Lesson 1: Setting Up a StoryScape

Objective

In this lesson students will learn how to plan for and begin composing a StoryScape. ### Lecture A “StoryScape” is a form of 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.

First Steps

To get started making your own StoryScape, first launch the “StoryScapes Composer” from the top of your screen.

SCREENSHOT

You can also launch a new StoryScape by going directly to a StoryLayer page and clicking “compose StoryScape”. Using this link will launch composer with that particular StoryLayer included in Chapter 1.

SCREENSHOT

Once you enter into composer, your first step is to give your StoryScape a title. A good StoryScape title is similar to a good book title. It should indicate what the StoryScape is about.

In addition to a Title, you’ll need to give your StoryScape a Summary. The Summary serves a similar purpose as article abstract. It describes what the StoryScape is about and why it is significant.

Finally, assign your StoryScape to one of the fixed Categories that most applies.

Don’t worry - you can change the Title, Summary and Category later.

Outlining Your StoryScape

Just like any piece of writing, it is a good idea to outline your StoryScape before proceeding too far. To outline your StoryScape consider the following:

- Has someone already published a StoryScape similar to the one you envision? If so, think about how your StoryScape will make a unique contribution.
- How many chapters will your StoryScape have? For example, a StoryScape about the American Civil War might have a chapters for each major battle - i.e. Bull Run, Gettysburg, Antietam).
- Each chapter will need a summary of its own. This should be a paragraph or two that describes the chapter and its significance.
- What StoryLayers will you use in each chapter? You’ll need to search for StoryLayers to make sure they exist on the platform to use in your StoryScape. For example, a StoryScape about the American Civil War with chapters for different battles will need StoryLayers that depict aspects of these battles, such as the location of troop movements.

Demonstration

Now that you have an understanding about the what’s involved in setting up a StoryScape, let’s watch someone begin a new StoryScape:

Watch this video. VIDEO.

Tasks

Now it's your turn! Your task is to start a new StoryScape:

1. Start a new StoryScape and give it a Title, Summary and Category
2. Create chapters and give each chapter a Summary
3. Save your StoryScape as a draft

Lesson 2: Adding and Styling StoryLayers

Objective

In this lesson students will learn how to add StoryLayers to a StoryScape, and apply Simple and Unique styles to StoryLayers.

Lecture

Add StoryLayers to a chapter

StoryLayers form the foundation of your Chapters. To add StoryLayers to your Chapter, click "Add StoryLayers". A window will pop up where you can input StoryLayer titles. Click "use" to add the StoryLayer to your chapter.

SCREENSHOT

You can add multiple StoryLayers to each chapter. Once added, you can click and drag the Chapters around in order to change which StoryLayer

Once a StoryLayer is added, you can control how it looks by styling it. A Style is just the color associated with a StoryLayer, and the rules set that determine the color. Each StoryLayer in StoryScapes has a default style applied to it to start (orange). Once you create and save your own style, that style will appear on your StoryScape when it is published. StoryScapes supports four types of styling: - Simple - Unique - Choropleth - Graduated

In this Module we will cover Simple and Unique styling only. In a future Module we will cover Choropleth and Graduated styling.

Apply a Simple style to a StoryLayer

With Simple style, all aspects (size, width, color and shape) of the symbol are uniform on all features of the StoryLayer. This style is often used if features don't necessarily have to be differentiated from one another.

SCREENSHOT

Apply a Unique style to a StoryLayer

Unique style is useful if features can be grouped into categories. It represents features based on the values listed on a particular attribute. For example, perhaps your StoryLayer depicts cutting down of trees, and you have an attribute for “Tree Type”. With unique, you could present each Tree Type with its own color.

SCREENSHOT

Demonstration

Now that you have an understanding about the what’s involved in adding StoryLayers to a chapter and applying Simple and Unique styles to StoryLayers, let’s watch someone build a new StoryScape.

Watch this video. [VIDEO](#).

Tasks

Now it’s your turn! Return to the draft StoryScape you started building in Lesson 1. Now, add at least one StoryLayer to a chapter in your StoryScape. Change the color of all features in the StoryLayer by using Simple styling. Then, change the color of features based on an Attribute in the StoryLayer using the Unique Styling. Save your draft StoryScape.

Lesson 3: Adding StoryPins and StoryFrames

Objective

In this lesson students will learn how to add basic Storypins and StoryFrames to their StoryScape in order to deepen their narrative.

Lecture

Many beginning users of the StoryScapes platform have difficulty understanding the difference between a StoryLayer and a StoryScape. While they are similar, there are key differences between them. These differences start to become clear with the creation of StoryPins and StoryFrames.

A *StoryLayer* is simply a spatio-temporal dataset. A StoryLayer describes a single phenomena at a single timescale and geographic extent. A *StoryScape* goes beyond mere description to address how and why phenomena play out as they do. StoryScapes combine one more multiple StoryLayers with narrative elements like StoryPins and StoryFrames to drive home an interpretive argument.

Adding simple Storypins

StoryPins let you add more qualitative information that doesn't quite make sense as part of the StoryLayer data. For example, perhaps you want a pin with a newspaper article that was important, or you want to pin a video that helps explain what the viewer is seeing in your StoryScape. Or, maybe you just want to add some clarifying text that a viewer can click to understand more about something at a specific moment in time.

In this lesson we will build StoryPins that only have text. In a future Module we will build StoryPins with embedded media, like images and videos.

To create a StoryPin, navigate to the StoryPins tab in composer. This will open up a form for creating your StoryPins. There are two ways to create StoryPins: - one at a time - uploading several all at once with "bulk upload"

Adding StoryPins one at a time

To add StoryPins one at a time, just give your pin a title and description and add it to the map. Once it's added to the map, define a start and end time, and determine if you want it to appear on the map and/or on the timeline. Also determine if you want its content to pop-up automatically when the start time is reached, or if you want to require the viewer of your StoryScape to click your StoryPin.

SCREENSHOT

Creating lots of StoryPins at once with Bulk Upload

To add lots of StoryPins at once, you will download a blank .CSV file with pre-set column headers for the information you need to have for each StoryPin. Once you've populated the CSV with your StoryPin information, return to the composer and upload your StoryPins.

SCREENSHOT

Adding StoryFrames

StoryFrames give you an ability to control the zoom level on the map at various points in time in your chapter playback. For example, at the start of your chapter you may want a zoom level that shows the whole world. But part way through your chapter you may want the map to zoom in closer to a specific country or even town or household. Every chapter can have as many StoryFrames as you want, although remember too much zooming around on the map might make it hard for the viewer of your StoryScape to make sense of your StoryScape!

To create a StoryFrame, open up the StoryFrame form. Give your StoryFrame a brief title and description, just to help you remember the purpose of creating the StoryFrame. Your StoryFrame title and description won't show up on your

published StoryScape. Next, set your StoryFrame zoom level, and give it a start and end date. That's it!

SCREENSHOT

Demonstration

Now that you have an understanding about the what's involved in adding StoryPins and StoryFrames to a StoryScape, let's watch someone go through this process:

Watch this video. [VIDEO](#).

Tasks

Now it's your turn! Return to the draft StoryScape you've worked on in earlier lessons. Add at least one StoryPin and one StoryFrame to a chapter. Save your draft StoryScape. Then hit "Publish" and watch your published StoryScape. Share the StoryScape link with a colleague so they can view it too.

Conclusion

In this Module you have learned to how to set up a new StoryScape, add and style StoryLayers, and add simple StoryPins and StoryFrames.

With these skills, you can quickly and easily compose and publish a StoryScape that utilizes StoryLayers already imported to the StoryScapes platform. And, using the skills you built in Module 1, you can share your published StoryScape with colleagues and use it to strengthen your briefings and presentations.

In future Modules we will cover more advanced features in the StoryScapes composer, such as using complex styles on StoryLayers and adding media to StoryPins.

Discussion Questions

Before moving on to the next Module, take fifteen minutes to reflect independently or in a group on the following questions: 1. In this Module you started building a StoryScape of your own. Why did you pick the topic you did to practice with? 2. Now that you have a better understanding of how the StoryScapes composer works, what is a StoryScape you'd like to try and work on? 3. XXXX 4. Can you think of topics that cannot be explained within a spatio-temporal framework like StoryScapes? If so, what other types of methods might you use to convey those topics? 5. What other comments, questions or concerns do you have about this Module?