

Digital Storytelling with Mapping: Introduction and Data Collection

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FRENCH 2102: Intermediate French

Nouha Gammar

Spring 2022



Workshop Agenda

- Learn about maps as modes of conveying data and content, and understand how narrative maps (StoryMaps) function
- Review best practices and questions to consider before creating a StoryMap
- Articulate the choices you make when telling a story using a map
- Review a template for gathering data to be used in Knight Lab's StoryMap

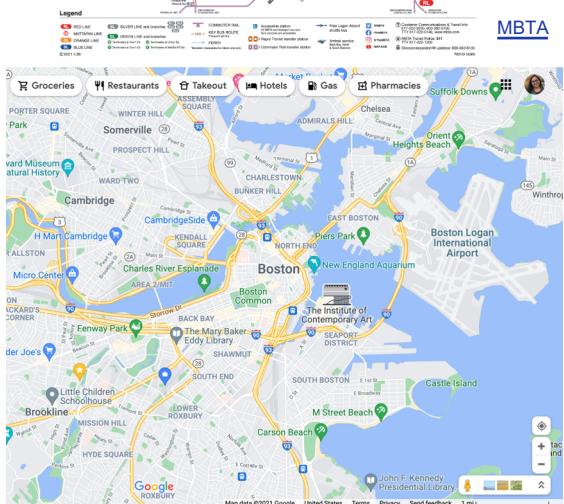
Slides, handouts, and data available at:

https://bit.ly/diti_spring22_gammar_storymap



What are different uses for maps?

- Maps are powerful tools for conveying geospatial information
- Well-made maps can quickly and easily give **content** and **context**, but poorly made maps can be misleading
- How do you use maps in your everyday life?
 - How does a subway map compare to a Google map?
 - What are these maps doing? How do they shape your expectations and experiences?



How do maps represent reality?

Maps certainly reflect the intention of the map-maker, but maps are also *inherently limited*.

- Boston is as much a human idea as a physical space, and thus maps both represent and *create* reality. [Laura Herbert, [“What Do Maps Really Do?”](#)]
- The simplicity and clarity of maps is deceiving, and we should question it. But the artificial clarity is necessary for the map to be *useful*. Think of the maps that are useful to you: they filter out less relevant information so you can focus on the details you'll actually need.



How have maps been used in the past?



The Power of Maps in the Imperial World

Map-making was a pillar in the projects of colonialism and imperialism.

For example, the *Imperial Federation Map, 1886* showcased British trade routes and also projected glory within Britain and emphasised to others the global power held by the country.



Bernhard Struck, Power of Colonial Maps, Institute for Transnational & Spatial History, School of History, University of St Andrews



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Map of Ireland and engraving of wild Irishman and woman

- Part of John Speed's work, The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine in the 17th Century.
- First atlas to present 'an exact geography' of Great Britain and Ireland, helping to solidify the notion of a coherent British 'Empire'.
- Depicts different classes of Irishman and woman – 'wilde', 'Civill' and 'gentle' – alongside a description of the area and its people.



Power of Maps, continued

Maps were treated as known “facts” and helped to construct the European public’s knowledges about Indigenous and non-white peoples as “savage” or uneducated. These ideas were used as rationale for colonization, and still persist as racist ideology today.

- “The implicit geography of the natives is made explicit by geographers; the local knowledge of the savages becomes the universal knowledge of the cartographers; the fuzzy, approximate, and unground beliefs of the locals are turned into a precise, certain, and justified knowledge.” (216).
- Cartographers are “not so much interested in this place as they are in bringing this place back first to their ship, and second to Versailles.” (217)

Bruno Latour, “The Domestication of the Savage Mind” in Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987): 215-219



StoryMaps: Big Picture

With StoryMap we can use maps to tell stories about not just places but also people, culture, and experiences.

- StoryMaps are powerful teaching tools and rich archival artifacts.
- StoryMaps allow us to participate in the Archival process (by using images, descriptions, and other contextual data to generate scenes). Other times, they help us tell histories that have been forgotten or erased. Beyond, textual artifacts we can use oral histories and other visual media element to document the past.
- In other cases, it helps us learn, preserve and share a bit more about specific communities and how they lived.



Example

Boston Parks and Playgrounds: Community Scan: Tour of parks and playgrounds around NU campus, analysis of spaces and types of play encountered.



Analysis of Examples

StoryMaps are distinctive for their ability to combine narrative slides with each location on the map. Knight Lab encourages you to **devise a strong location narrative** so that the points on your map do not feel disconnected to the reader.

As you examine the examples, think through the following questions:

- What does this project reveal about what one can do with StoryMap?
- How did the projects present the narrative structure and geospatial layout? Or, how did the authors put space and place at the center of their story?
- How can these techniques be applied to your own project?



Example Projects Using Maps to Tell Stories

- “[Mapping Black Paris](#)”: uses a mix of textual, image, and archival data to tell a story about where African American expats (fleeing Jim Crow America) built communities in Paris before 1950
- “[Mapping American Childhoods](#)”: a repository of final projects from University of Vermont undergraduate students, all of which include StoryMaps among other research materials
- “[Mapping Shared Spaces: A Visual History of Boston’s Black and Jewish Communities](#)”: presents the story of migration of Boston religious communities by following the changing locations of places of worship.



StoryMap Best Practices

- Think carefully about the **audience** you are trying to reach with your map. This will impact your language, the order of your points, and the media that you choose.
- Think also about the **tone of the map**: the default for StoryMap can be very upbeat and informal, and that may not match the content you are sharing (think, for example, about renaming the button that says "start exploring")
- **Test your map** after you have created it, to make sure that all the narrative points flow and that the language is clear and concise



Demo - French Colonial Architecture Trail



A StoryMapJS map showing the global distribution of French colonial architecture. The map includes a legend for 'French Colonial Architecture' and a 'StoryMapJS' watermark. A red dashed line connects several locations marked with small French flags across North America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia.

Map Overview | Back To Beginning ↺

FRENCH COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE TRAIL

"French colonial architecture includes several styles of architecture used by the French during colonization. It has a long history, beginning in North America in 1604 and being most active in the Western Hemisphere (Caribbean, Guiana, Canada, Louisiana) until the 19th century, when the French turned their attention more to Africa, Asia, and the Pacific." [Wikipedia](#).

This StoryMap takes you on a tour of some of the prominent examples of French colonial architecture around the world.

Let's Explore ➤

StoryMapJS | Leaflet | © OpenStreetMap and contributors, under an open license

StoryMap Link: <https://bit.ly/3mdZH5Q>

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Brainstorming/Sharing

What is Your StoryMap Idea?

How can you integrate all the projects in one StoryMap?



Spreadsheet Template

Make a copy of the StoryMap template below and use it to fill in the different sites you want to map, images you want to include, and so on.

Important: make a copy, don't edit the main template!!

(Go to File > Make a copy)

StoryMap Spreadsheet Template

–Template based on the StoryMap Spreadsheet Template created by Molly Brown, Reference and Outreach Archivist, Northeastern University Library.



Spreadsheet data collection

fx	http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20158126											
1	Slide #	Site Name	Site Location	Image URL/File Location	Image Credit	Image Caption	Headline	Historical Profile/First Person Narrative	Citation(s)	Additional Media	Additional Media Caption & Credit	
2	Title Slide	n/a	n/a	http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20158126	Freedom House Records, Courtesy of Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections	Walking the Emerald Necklace		This is an introduction to the project that will continue on. Two men tend community garden in the Back Bay Fens. A public water building can be seen on the left. The Back Bay Fens (also called The Fens, or Fens) is a freshwater marsh and lagoon area within Boston's larger Emerald Necklace park system.				
3	Site 1	Back Bay Fens Community Gardens	42.344888, -71.093221	http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20157723	Freedom House Records, Courtesy of Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections	Community garden in Back Bay Fens.	Back Bay Community Gardens					
4												
5												
6												

1. The slide number can serve as the order in which your sites appear on your map and the site name can be used to label sites on your map

2. The site location is used to identify a point on your map where the site is physically located (address or coordinates)

3. The image URL/File location is useful in keeping track of images of sites. Always credit your images to indicate their origin. Also include a caption describing your image

4. The headline can serve as the official title or label of your site. Including a narrative provides more context as to why your site is important.

5. Don't forget to cite your sources! Also, you may want to include additional media related to your site (e.g. newspaper clippings, additional photos, etc.)



Gathering Data for your StoryMap

When collecting data for a group project, it is important to organize the data in one communal place, such as a Google spreadsheet. This will help you to:

- Keep track of your resources
- Add and edit collaboratively with your team
- Storyboard your map
- Communicate with Knight Lab in case of any issues (they ask for a spreadsheet as well as the webpage of the StoryMap)



A Note on Save States

StoryMaps does not keep older versions of your project, so once you make and save changes, **you cannot retrieve a previous version**. You can also write over new content if you have your StoryMap open in multiple browser tabs or windows at once.

This is one reason why it is a good idea to plan out your StoryMap in a separate document: if you lose progress, you will have your content saved somewhere else.



Next Steps

Use the [Github link](#) to download the handouts. Review them!

Make a copy of the [demonstration/workshop data spreadsheet](#) for the French Colonial Architecture Trail.

In the next session, we will cover how to build a StoryMap and you will start building one using the demo data.



Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact us at nulab.info@gmail.com

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Schedule an appointment with us! <https://calendly.com/diti-nu>



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