

Storytelling with Mapping: KnightLab StoryMap

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HIST 5237: Issues and Methods of Public History

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Fall 2022



Workshop Agenda

- Learn about maps as modes of conveying data and content, and understand how narrative maps (StoryMaps) function
- Learn about StoryMap as a mode of conveying data and content
- Best practices and questions to consider before creating your StoryMap
- Steps for using Knight Lab's StoryMap
- Start building!

Slides, handouts, and data available at:

<https://bit.ly/fa22-nieves-storymap>



Learning Objectives

- Articulate the choices you make when telling a story using a map
- Follow a step-by-step guide for creating, saving, and publishing maps using KnightLab's StoryMap
- Upload data into StoryMap, including location information, images, and text
- Navigate StoryMap's map markers and location-finding system



What is a “story map”?

Telling a **story** using **maps!**

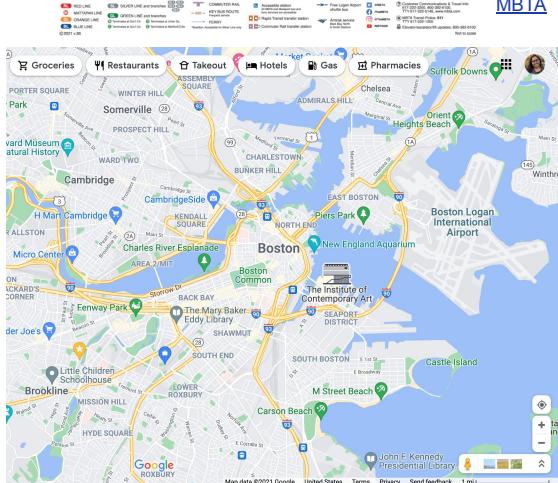
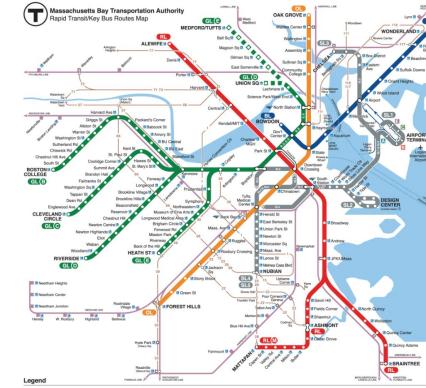
“You combine authoritative maps with narrative text, images, and multimedia content. They make it easy to harness the power of maps and geography to tell your story.”

- ESRI Story Maps Website



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.
- [True Size of Each Country](#)



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



Map of Ireland and engraving of wild Irishman and woman

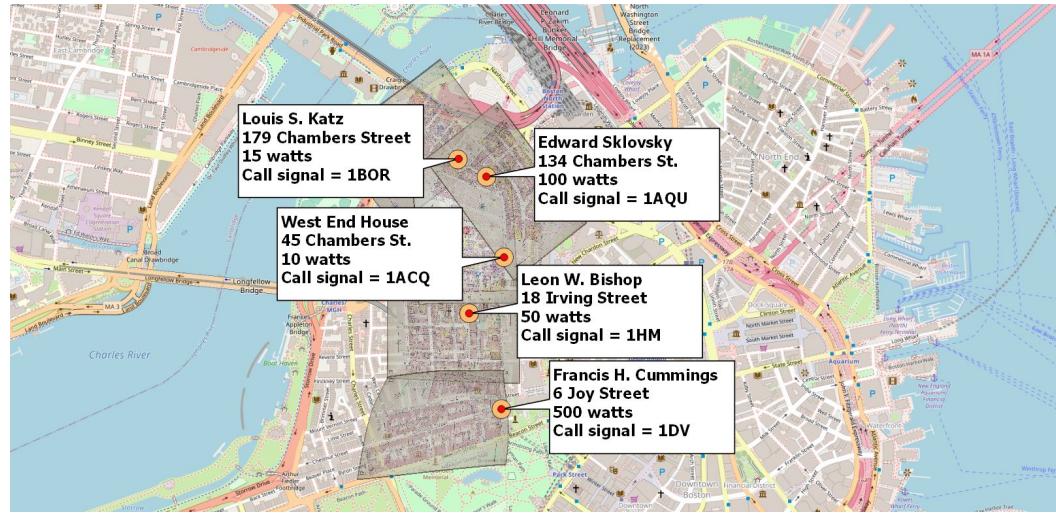
- Part of John Speed's work, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* in the 17th Century.
- First atlas to present 'an exact geography' of Great Britain and Ireland, helping to solidify the notion of a coherent British 'Empire'.
- Depicts different classes of Irishman and woman – 'wilde', 'Civill'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



Mapping Amateur Radio Stations in the 1920s West End

Overlaying historic maps of the West End over a map of present-day Boston - The West End Museum

- contextualize the locations of amateur radio stations in the West End during the 1920s.
- “Georeferencing has a special significance for the history of old neighborhoods, such as the West End, that have largely been erased from maps today.” - Adam Tomasi



Georectified map of West End radio stations in 1922. The Sanborn fire insurance maps of 1909 are overlaid above the streets of present-day Boston, which ensures that locations of West End radio stations in the 1920s are visualized in their historical context. (Map produced by Adam Tomasi)

Power of Imperial Maps

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



StoryMap Basics



StoryMap: 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.
- **However, no digital tool or technology is perfect!**



Example Projects Using Maps to Tell Stories

- “[Boston Parks and Playgrounds: Community Scan](#)”: uses a mix of textual, image, and geo-location data to tell a story about playgrounds in Boston’s neighborhoods.
- “[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.
- “[Commonwealth: A Offshore wind hub](#)”: uses textual, image, video and geo-locations data to showcase key infrastructure of Massachusetts Clean Energy Center’s (MassCEC) Offshore Wind Energy Initiative.



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



Optional: 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, do not 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	I	J	K	
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/d201581723	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.)



Adding to StoryMap

Once you're happy with the organization and order of the items in your spreadsheet, you can copy from these into StoryMap, following the directions above for adding images, locations, and so on.

This can help you stay organized and keep track of your resources. It's a quick way to storyboard your project, making sure that your flow between locations makes sense, your writing is consistent, and you have the right amount of research and info at each location.

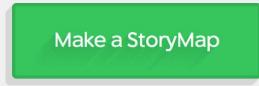


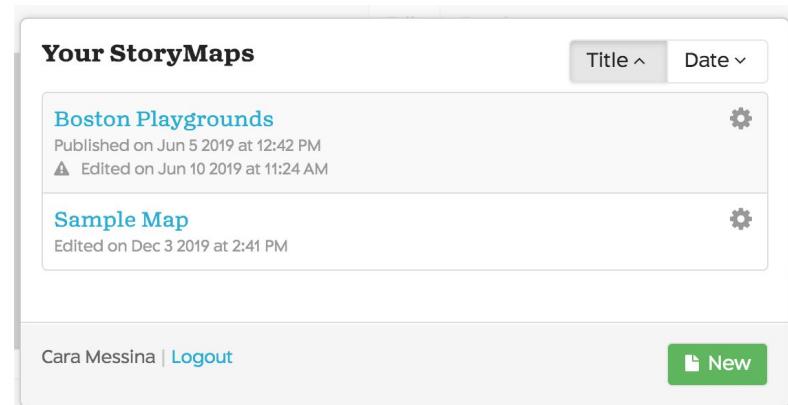
Building Your StoryMap



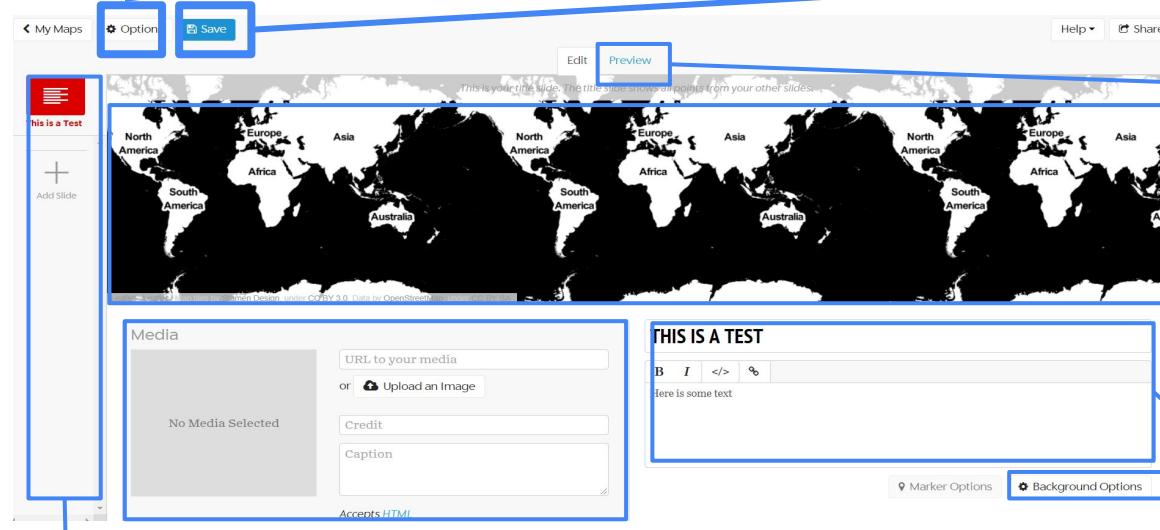
Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

Create a StoryMap

- Go to <https://storymap.knightlab.com/>
- Click “Make a StoryMap” 
- Either create a new account or sign in through Google
- Once you’re signed in,
click “New Map” (once you have
created your map, it will be there
for you to work on)
- Name your project



Your StoryMap



Overall options
(like changing map layout)

SAVE OFTEN!

Preview your slides

Preview the
geographic points in all
of your slides

Title and content of
your text box

Check out and add new
slides here

Uploading photos
or other media!
Document what
you upload

Color or image for text box
background



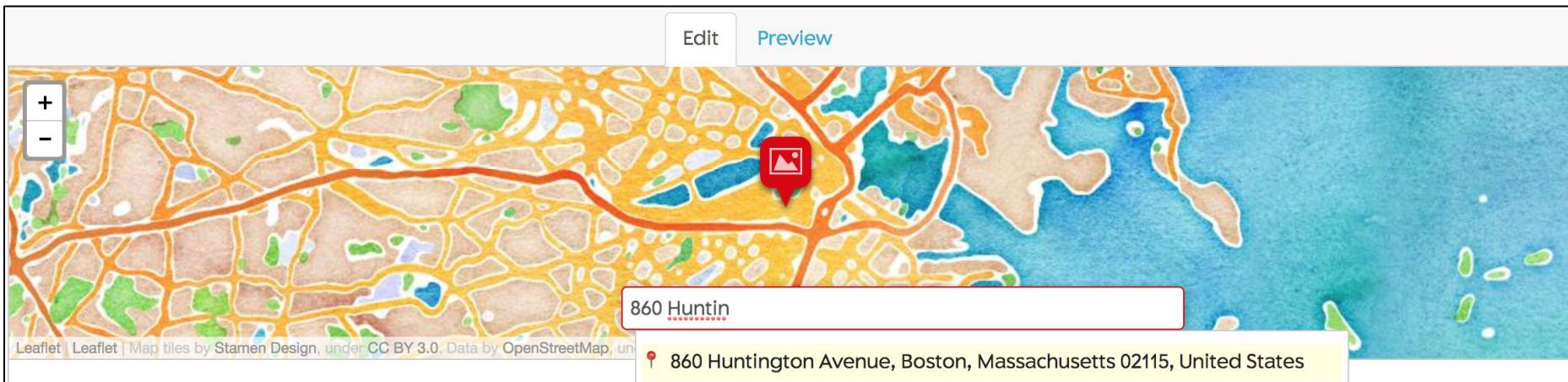
Slides, or map markers

Each slide is a different marker point on your map/image. Each slide contains:

- Title and text. The text box reads basic HTML.
- A background image/color.
- A map marker, which can be placed using Google Maps locations or by placing the marker manually.
- Media: images, videos, and sound files can be uploaded. Since only *one* media file can be uploaded per slide, you can use the text box's HTML to integrate an image or another media type.



Add A Location



KnightLab StoryMap uses **Google Maps** to locate addresses

StoryMap, however, does **not** always recognize place names; you might need to know the **address** or location of particular structures

You can also **drag and drop the map markers** to the specific location

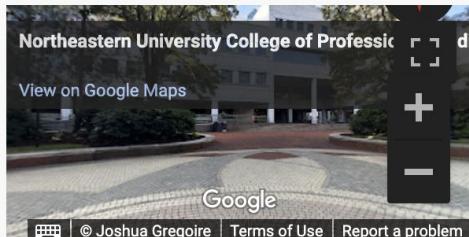


Add Google Street View to a Slide

As with other media, you can insert a Google street view map into a slide by entering its **URL**.

- Click “Share or embed image” from the menu, and copy the **HTML** link from the “Embed a map” tab.
 - Make sure the link has the `<iframe src:“URL”></iframe>` code (it should automatically, but the map won’t work without it!).
- Enter the URL into the “URL to your media” box.

Media



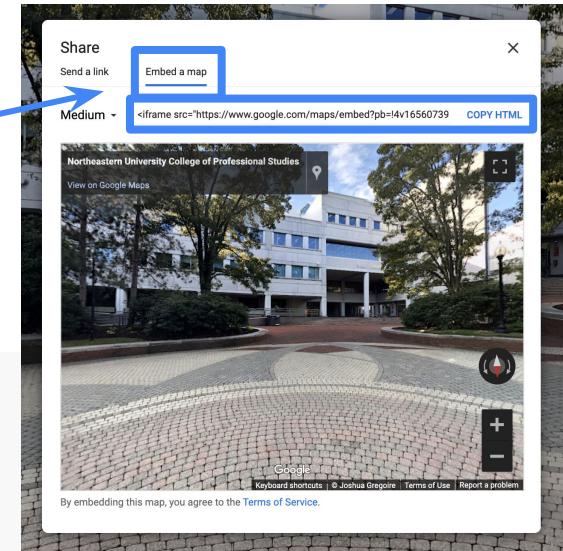
`<iframe src="https://www.google.com/maps/embed?`

or Upload an Image

Credit

Caption

Accepts [HTML](#)



Add Media and Images to a Slide

Media

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Tgleg4deDZM

or Upload an Image

Credit

Caption

TEST SLIDE

B I </> %

If you already have an image, insert another image using basic HTML!
To insert an image, make sure the image is uploaded with a URL. You can use Flickr or Imgur to create a URL for your image. Wikimedia Commons is a great source of images online, don't forget to cite! Turn tagging on, then, use the HTML image tag.

Marker Options Background Options

Use “media” to upload files. You can upload an image or put a **URL** of an image OR a video (like a YouTube video). If you want to include your own video, you will first have to upload it to YouTube and copy that link.

If you have an image or a video in the “media” section, but want to include an image in the **text**, you can! The text box reads basic HTML.

1. Click the </> button (turn on HTML)
2. Get a URL of your image. Wikimedia Commons is a great source of images. Make sure to use the embed file code--don't forget to cite!
3. Use the HTML `` tag to insert the image.
4. Check the “Preview” to see the image

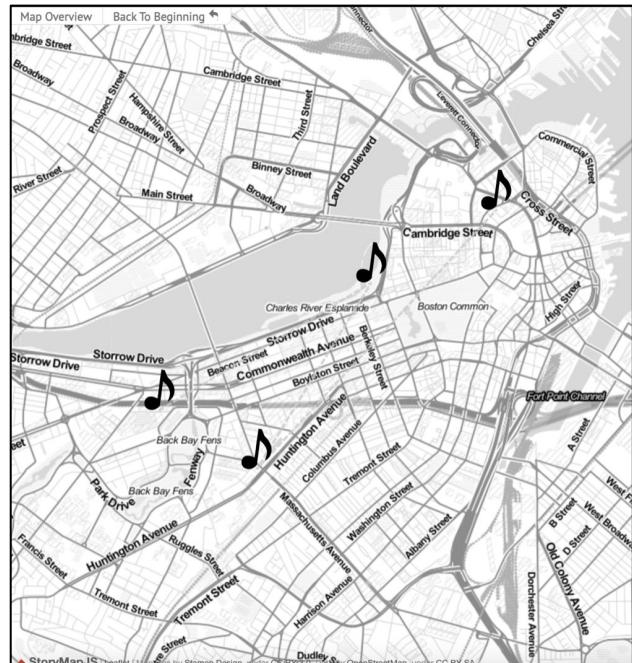


Adding Audio to StoryMap

- Use “media” to upload audio files
- StoryMap can upload URLs from SoundCloud directly through the “media” section
- If you have your own sound recording, upload it to SoundCloud and use the URL to embed it into your StoryMap



StoryMap Demo



A photograph of a concert stage with bright orange and yellow lights illuminating the scene. In the foreground, the silhouettes of many concert-goers are visible, their hands raised in the air. The photo is set against a dark background.

Photo by Vishnu R. Nair, unsplash.com

CONCERT VENUES IN BOSTON

StoryMap On this slide, you can give an introduction to your map. StoryMap on this slide, you can give an introduction to your map. You may want to provide background information, explain the map's significance, or point out things that you want your readers to notice.

To show emphasis, you can make text bold or *italicized*. Using the link button, you can direct your readers to [outside sites](#).

You can also change **the color of your text**. Using a tag in HTML.

And what about the button you see below? It comes with a default text, but you can change it through "options" at the top-left of your screen.

[Let's Go!](#)

[Demo Map Link](#)



A Note on Save States

StoryMap does not keep older versions of your project, so once you make and save changes, **you cannot retrieve a previous version.** You can also accidentally overwrite 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.



Hands-On Demo

1. Identify **your** hands-on practice and troubleshooting needs—this practice time should work for **you!**
2. Practice setting up **map markers**
3. Practice adding **video or images** to your markers
4. Try using HTML to embed an image to your map



Thank you!

Taught by Benjamin Grey

Digital Integration Teaching Initiative
DITI Research Fellow

Ana Abraham

Digital Integration Teaching Initiative
DITI Research Fellow

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

- We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here:
<https://bit.ly/diti-feedback>

Link to Online Materials: <https://bit.ly/fa22-nieves-storymap>



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