

Storytelling with Mapping: KnightLab StoryMap

Ana Abraham & Benjamin Grey

FRNH 2102: Intermediate French 2

Prof. Austin Hancock

Spring 2023



Workshop Agenda

- Learn about StoryMaps as a mode of conveying mapped 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/sp23-hancock-frnh2102-storymap>



What is a StoryMap?

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

The image displays a StoryMap titled "Fenway Community Walk". The main part is a map of the Fenway-Kenmore area in Boston, showing streets like Commonwealth Avenue, Boylston Street, and Fenway Park. Overlaid on the map are several callout boxes containing text and images. One box on the right shows a photograph of a street with autumn leaves and a person's shadow. Another box contains a photograph of a Citgo sign and surrounding buildings. The map also features a legend for "Map Overview" and "Back To Beginning". Below the map, there is descriptive text about the walk's purpose and context, mentioning the Asset-Based Community Development (ABC) perspective.

Welcome to the Fenway

Welcome to this Community Walk! The purpose of this walk is to introduce people to the history and context of one of the neighborhoods that surround Northeastern. Most importantly, this walk is designed using an Asset-Based Community Development (ABC) perspective. ABCD is a philosophy that recognizes communities' abilities to achieve positive change using their own knowledge, skills, and lived experiences as well as existing resources and infrastructure.

Another way to think about it is to consider a community's strengths rather than deficits, or problems.

For example, instead of saying, "This community has a high crime rate and it can't be fixed," we say, "This community has an organization that serves the previously incarcerated and is collaborating within the community to work towards neighborhood, but will be over those have been."

Fenway Community Walk

Welcome to this Community Walk! The purpose of this walk is to introduce people to the history and context of one of the neighborhoods that surround Northeastern. Most importantly, this walk is designed using an Asset-Based Community Development (ABC) perspective. ABCD is a philosophy that recognizes communities' abilities to achieve positive change using their own knowledge, skills, and lived experiences as well as existing resources and infrastructure.

Another way to think about it is to consider a community's strengths rather than deficits, or problems.

For example, instead of saying, "This community has a high crime rate and it can't be fixed," we say, "This community has an organization that serves the previously incarcerated and is collaborating within the community to work towards neighborhood, but will be over those have been."



Why use a “Map” to tell stories?

- StoryMaps help us render visualized, spatialized, and contextual information about spaces **in the past or today!**
 - StoryMaps can be about places you've never been to. The goal is to help users “see” the spaces/places/routes as accurately as possible, and to get a sense of the people and things in the environment.
- **Think about StoryMaps as giving directions.** Take a moment and consider how you got to class today, using words only.
 - What visual markers you would use to convey your movement in/across space to be here today. How would a layperson know where to go?
 - How would it be useful if you combined text and images to help someone find their way? Can you think of some examples.



What are the limits?

- 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]
 - 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 the information that is less relevant to what you're using the map for.



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.



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



Big Picture: StoryMaps

StoryMaps are powerful teaching tools and rich archival artifacts.

Sometimes it's a matter of simple recording -- i.e., 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 a bit more about specific communities and how they lived.



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
- “[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.



StoryMap Basics



Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

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.



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).



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	Back Bay Fens, Boston, Mass.	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.)

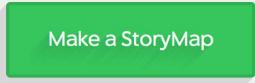


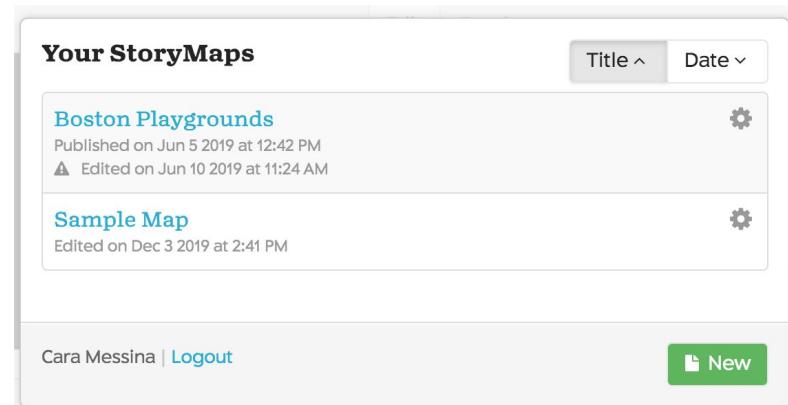
Making a StoryMap



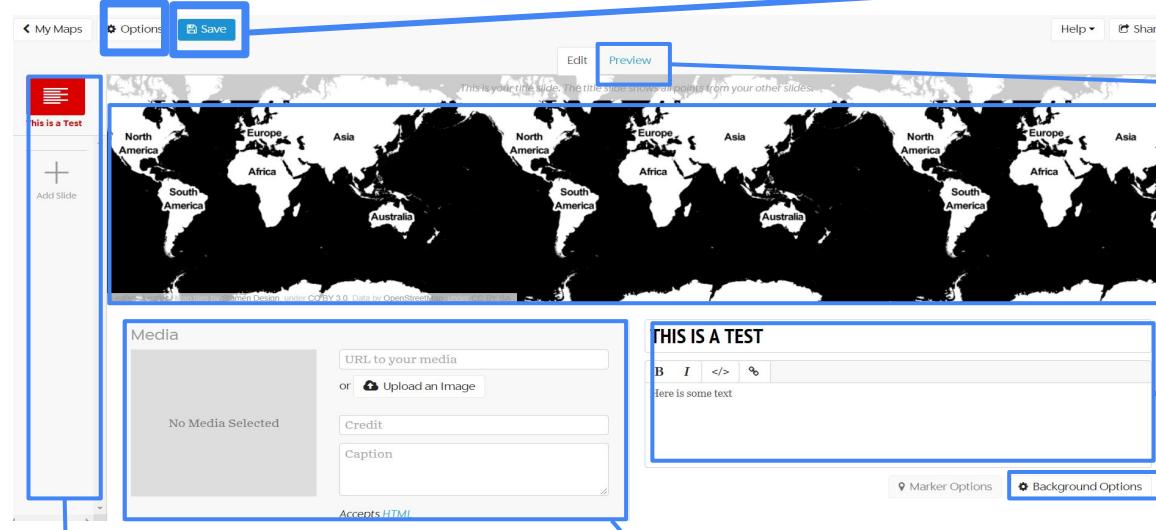
Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

Create a StoryMap

- Go to 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



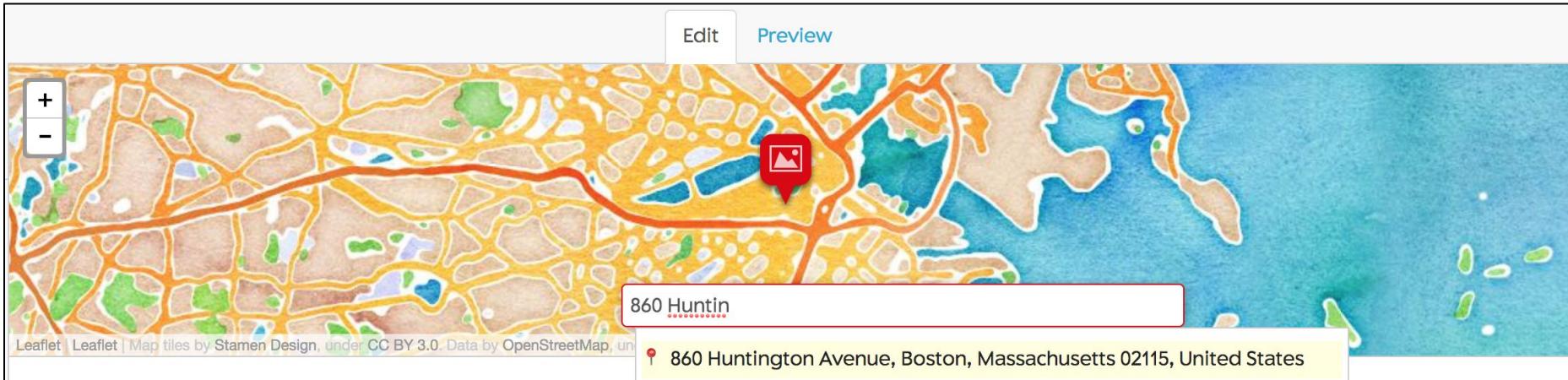
Slides, or Map Markers

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 Media and Images to a Slide

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.

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 or other online publisher 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. Use Wikimedia Commons to search images by content, and filter by license type and image size. Make sure to use the embed file code, and don’t forget to cite the source!
3. Use the HTML `` tag to insert the image.
4. Check the “Preview” to see the image. Smaller image sizes may appear as a thumbnail, so stick to larger image sizes and preview your end result!

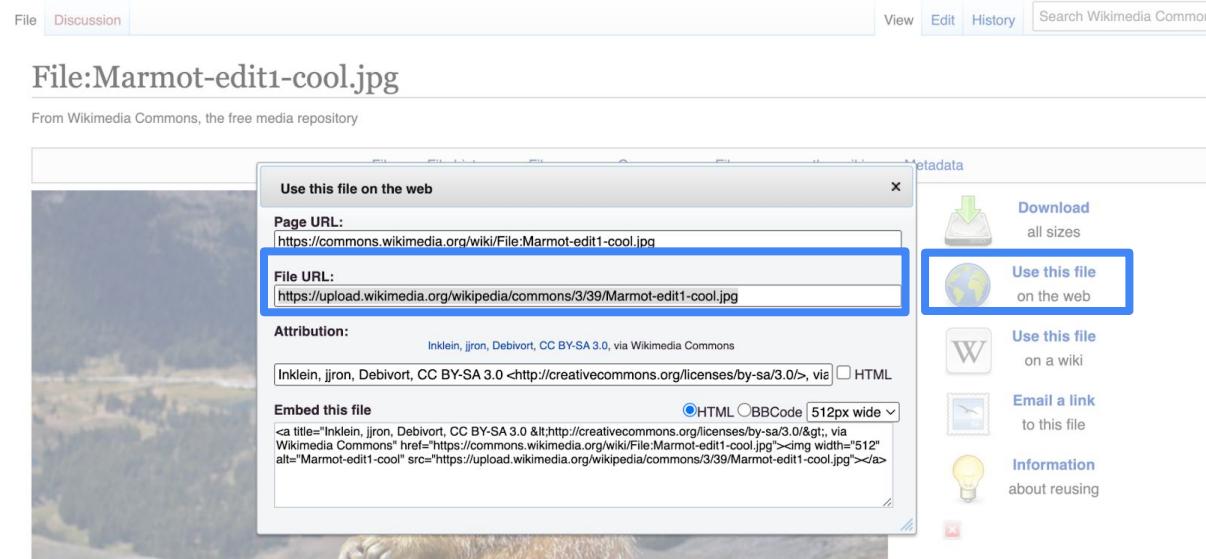


Embed Codes and Image Files

If you are adding an image via its URL, make sure that you select the link with **the image file itself**, not just a page with the image on it.

For example, to add an image from Wikimedia Commons, follow these steps:

1. Go to "More Details" and choose "Use this file on the web," or just choose "Use this file on the web" if you see that option.
2. Copy the "File URL."

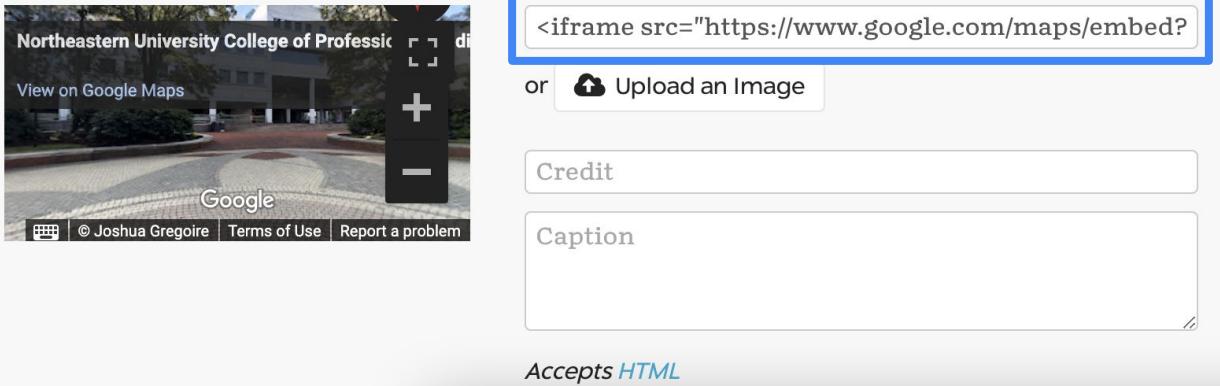


Add Google Street View to a Slide

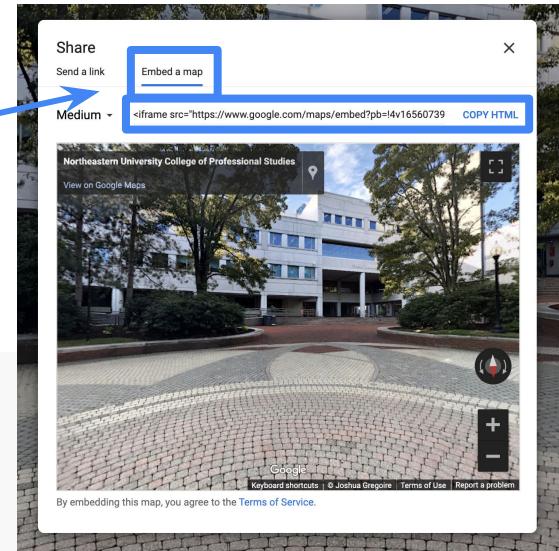
As with other media, you can insert a Google street view map into a slide by entering its **URL**.

- 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



The screenshot shows a presentation slide with a media section. On the left is a thumbnail of a Google Street View map of a modern building complex. To the right is a large input field containing the HTML code: `<iframe src="https://www.google.com/maps/embed?`. Below this input field is a button labeled "Upload an Image". Further down are fields for "Credit" and "Caption", both currently empty. At the bottom of the media section, the text "Accepts HTML" is displayed.



StoryMap Demo

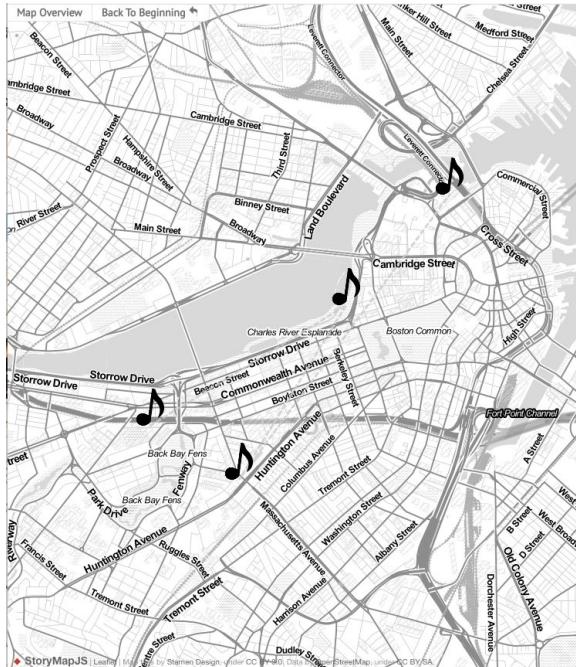


Photo by Vishnu R. Nair, unsplash.com.

CONCERT VENUES IN BOSTON

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.

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!](#)

[Sample Map Link](#)

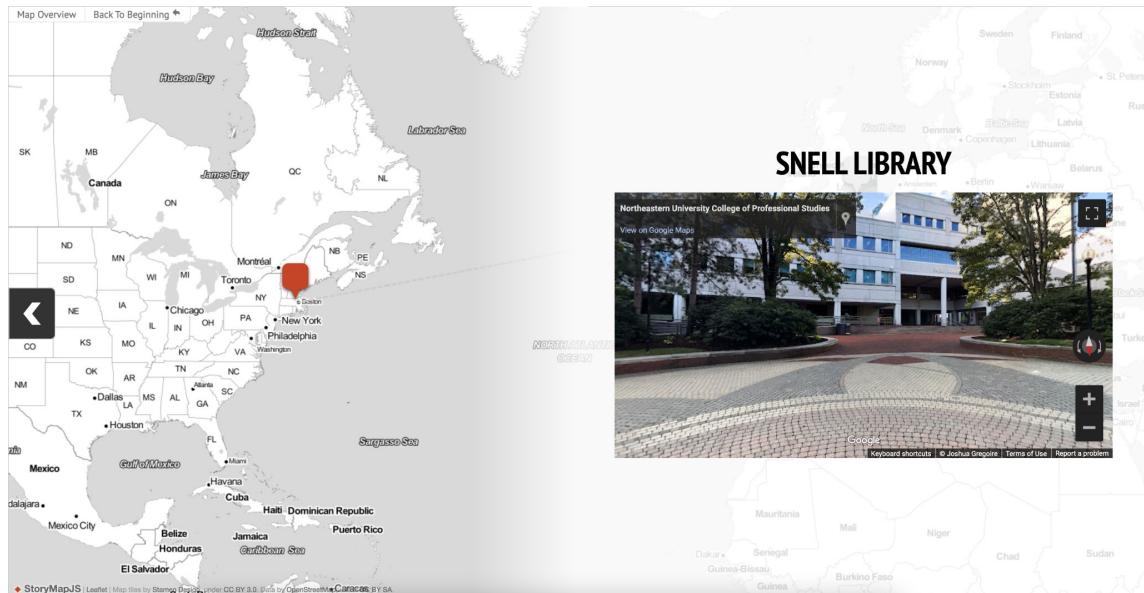


Things to Think About



A Note on Zoom Levels

Unfortunately, StoryMap does not let you set how far zoomed in or out your slides will be. The zoom level is determined automatically according to the distance between your locations: the closer the locations are to each other, the closer the zoom.



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 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.



Hands-On: Make a StoryMap Your Own!

1. Download the “[French-Colonial-Demo](#)” spreadsheet and **create a new map** with different design choices than this demo map: bit.ly/3mdZH5Q.
2. Use the data to practice setting up 2-4 **map markers**.
3. Practice adding **video or images** to your markers.
4. Try using HTML to embed an image to your map.

Identify **your** hands-on practice and troubleshooting needs—this practice time should work for **you**!



Thank you!

Taught by

Ana Abraham

DITI Research Fellow

Benjamin Grey

DITI Research Fellow

We love feedback! Please fill out our 2-min survey: bit.ly/diti-feedback

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

Or schedule an appointment with us: calendly.com/diti-nu

Link to today's online materials:

<https://bit.ly/sp23-hancock-frnh2102-storymap>



Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks