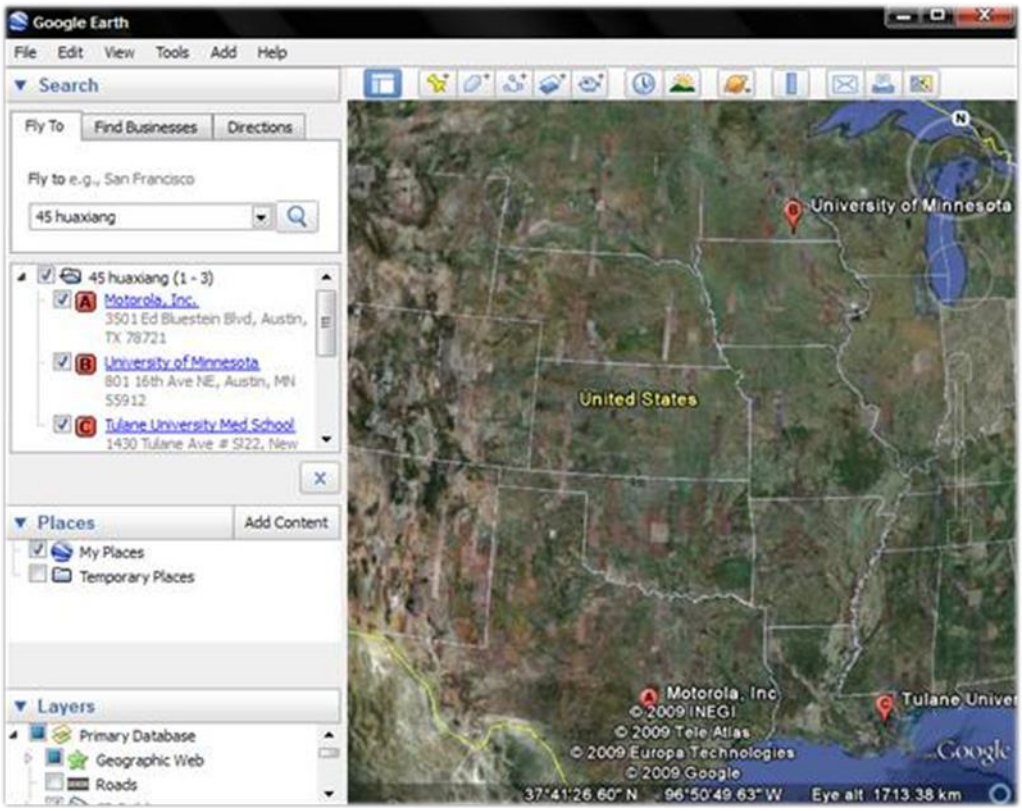
Searching in Google Earth (using the Visualization Tool)

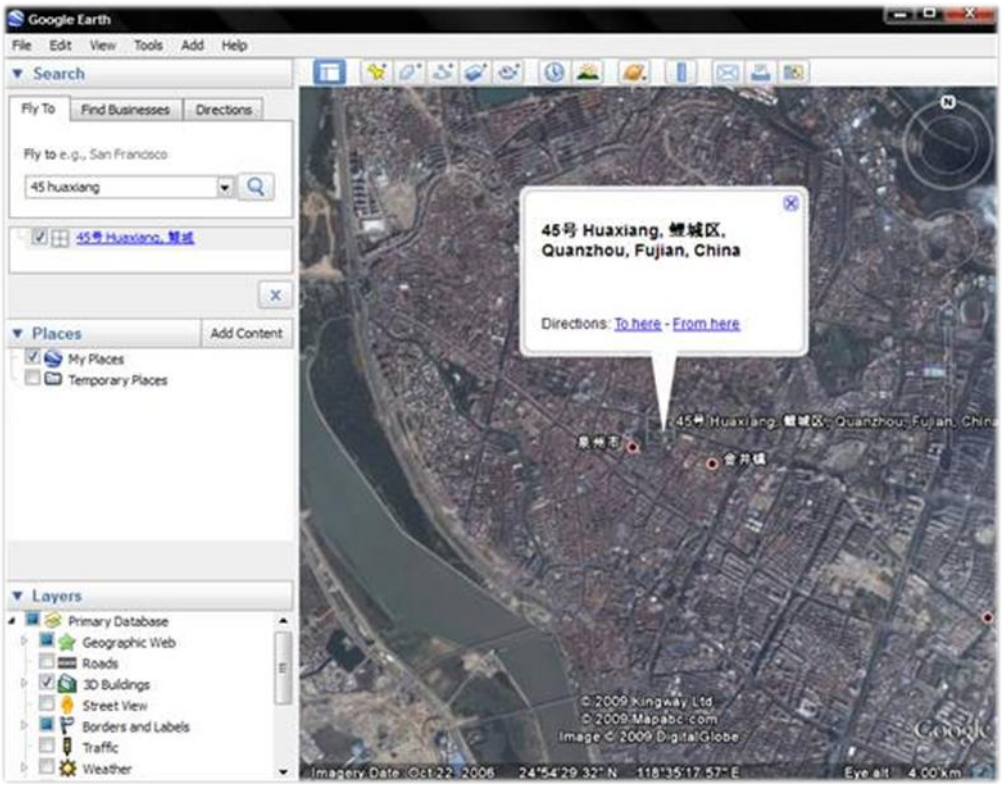
When it comes to searching for exposure locations in Google Earth, it's a little trial and error really. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is start with a broad definition of the region you're looking for, such as country and county, and then add more detail to the search. Google uses a localized search algorithm, so if you search a little known street address, without any context, Google doesn't stand a chance of knowing what you mean. For instance:

Searching **45 huaxiang** when hovering over the **US** will return these garbage results:

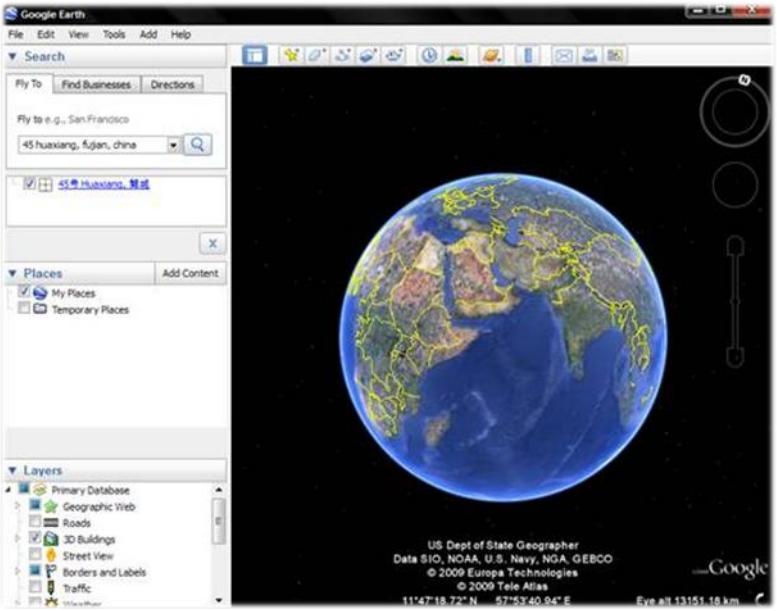


Searching for it over **Zambia** actually generates an error dialogue:

But searching over **China** finds the street you're looking for.

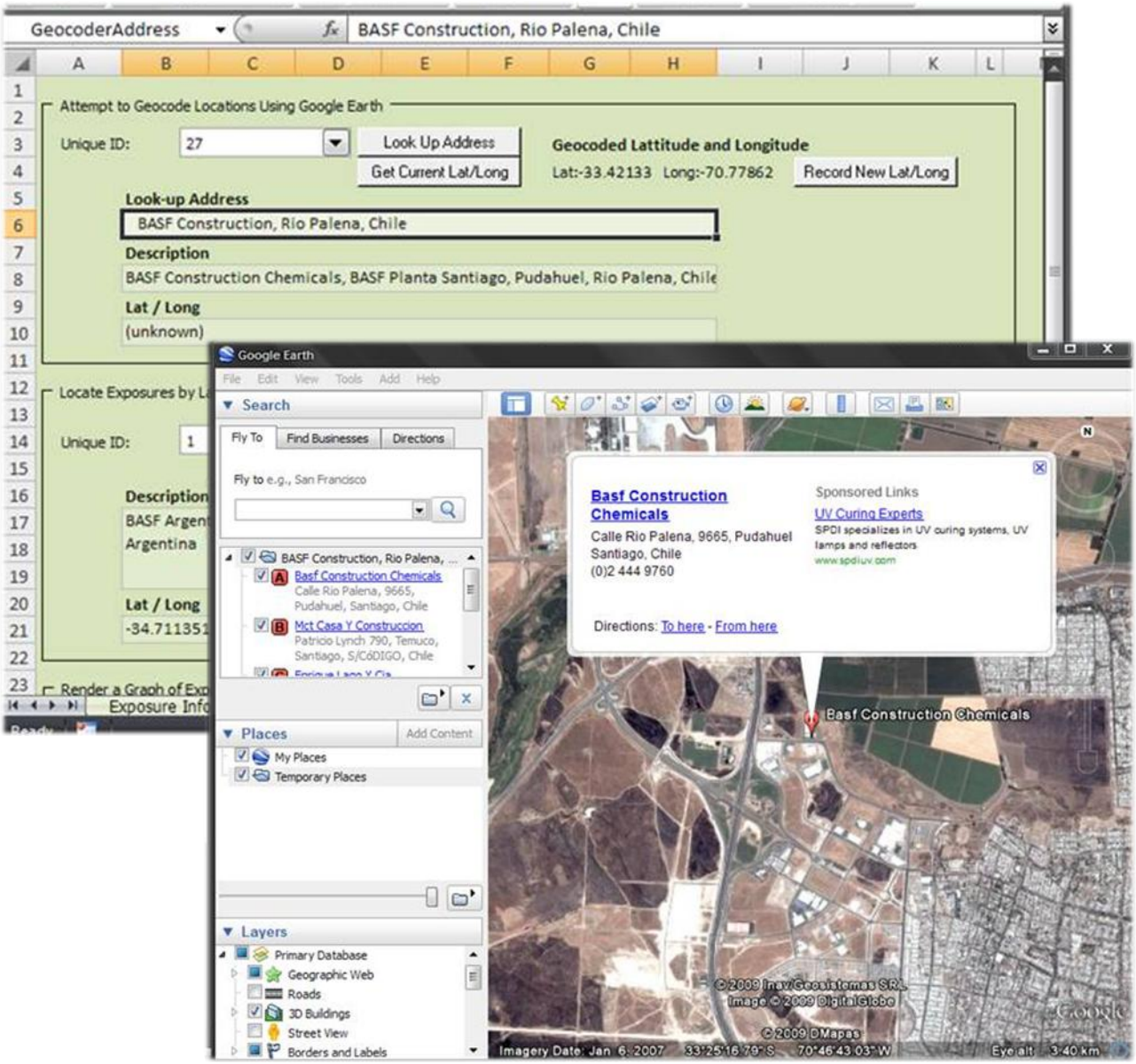


Since many exposures passed on to you might lack context, it might take some background knowledge to get good results out of the geocoding portion of the tool. If I were given this street address, and I just searched for it, I would probably end up with Garbage results like in the first picture, but if someone who knew that the exposure set was for china and could provide that context in the search string, such as "**45 huaxiang, fujan, china**" Google will be able to locate it from anywhere without any trouble:



Note that when typing an address or business into our tool to look up, and clicking ‘Look Up Address’, we are just plugging directly into the Google Earth search feature, so it’s just as effective to search in one as the other.

In this example with business data, I started with the full Address string shown in the ‘Description’ field: **BASF Construction chemicals, BASF Planta Santiago, Pudahuel, Rio Palena, Chile**. That failed, so I edited it to say just **Pudahuel, Rio Palena, Chile**. This took me to Rio Palena, Pudahuel, Santiago, Chile on the map. I then changed the search to **BASF Construction, Rio Palena, Chile**, and as shown below, this successfully returned the address of the exposure we were looking for. After that, all that’s needed is to click ‘Record New Lat/Long’ so that it’s stored in the sheet and we can find it more quickly later.



It takes a little practice, but in the end I think it’s the most effective way of identifying exposure locations while keeping a human being in the loop.