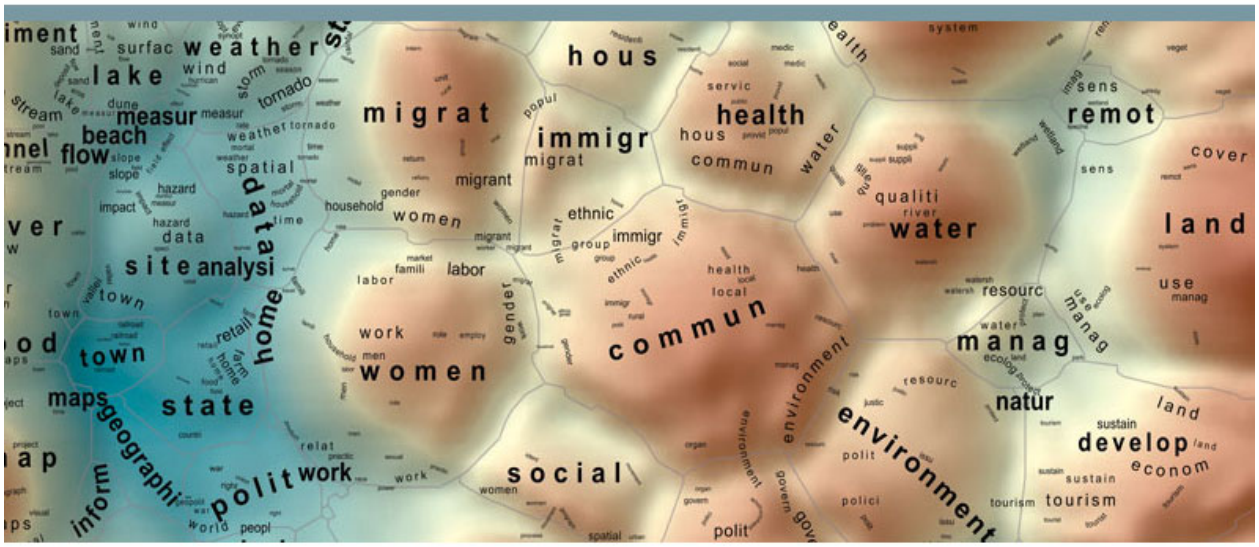
Places & Spaces: Mapping Science

By Natalie Duggan | February 19, 2016

PLACES & SPACES
MAPPING SCIENCE



In Terms of Geography: courtesy of André Skupin

(http://www.cdc.gov/museum/exhibits/mappingscience.htm)

Without maps, we would be lost. For centuries, cartographic maps have guided the human quest for vast exploration across earth and water. They have enabled the discovery of new worlds while also marking territories inhabited by the unknown. The earliest known map of the world was created in 6th century B.C. by Anaximander, an ancient Greek philosopher. However, the functionality of maps spans far beyond the need to plot a course from point A to point B. In the age of big data and information overload, mapping allows for large amounts of information to be displayed and communicated in insightful, visual ways.

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Data visualization is a powerful tool that helps both scientists and the public quickly understand the scope and context of complex health threats. In keeping with its commitment to public health education and disease prevention, the David J. Sencer CDC Museum is currently featuring the *Places & Spaces: Mapping Science*

(http://www.cdc.gov/museum/exhibits/mappingscience.htm) exhibition until June 17, 2016. The wide range of cross-disciplinary maps explores how to best track and communicate human activity and scientific progress on a global scale, showing how data visualization helps us confront some of the world's most significant challenges.

During her inaugural lecture at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Data Visualizations—Drawing Actionable Insights from Data," Dr. Katy Börner of Indiana University asked the audience, "How can we communicate the beauty, structure and dynamics of science to a general audience?" The answer is high-quality data visualization, which helps us understand complex ideas and processes, such as the impact of air travel on the spread of infectious disease and how that forecasts the next flu pandemic. Data is at the heart of every scientific breakthrough and rich visualizations can significantly help communicate those important findings.

Curated by the Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center at Indiana University, *Places & Spaces: Mapping Science* (http://www.cdc.gov/museum/exhibits/mappingscience.htm) is presented by the David J. Sencer CDC Museum and CDC's Office of Public Health Scientific Services, with additional support from Thomson Reuters through the CDC Foundation. All of the maps on display can also be viewed online at scimaps.org (http://scimaps.org).

Admission to the David J. Sencer CDC CDC Museum and parking are free, although parking may be limited. Visitors need a valid, U.S. government or state-issued photo ID. Vehicle inspection is required. The museum is open Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., with extended hours to 7:00 p.m. on Thursday and is closed on all federal holidays. For more information, visit the CDC museum website (http://www.cdc.gov/museum/visitor.htm).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Natalie Duggan is a communications specialist for the CDC Foundation.