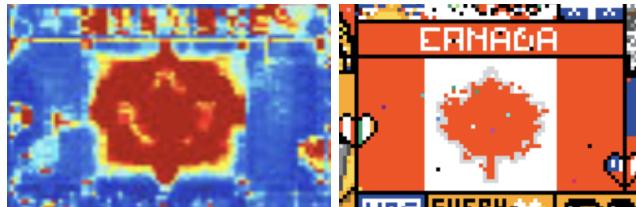
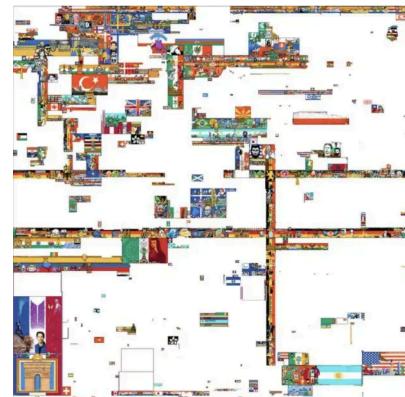


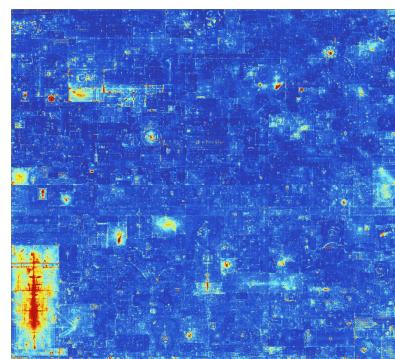
Sri Bala

Contention Of The Canadian Flag In r/place

With over 10 million users battling on a 4 million pixel map, I was interested in analyzing the most contested regions on the map. Notably, many countries fought for representation through flags and symbolism on the map. For example, the French region in the bottom corner had [over 1 million users](#) place pixels, with twitch streamers forming alliances and encouraging their viewers to take over that region. I wanted to narrow the focus, I found it quite interesting how the Canadian flag leaf had some of the highest activity as seen on heatmaps.

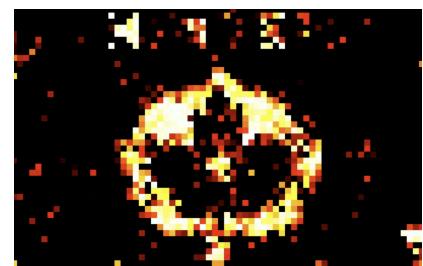


I used the r/place atlas to find the coordinates of the Canada flag and determined that 423522 distinct users placed pixels in this region. That's 4.08% of all users on r/place.



Why did the Canadian flag have some of the highest activity levels on the map?

Using a [script by u/DeathByElectives](#), I generated a heat map of the region to determine where users were placing most of the pixels. ([see canada.mp4](#)) This revealed that the outer region of the maple leaf had the most consistent activity.



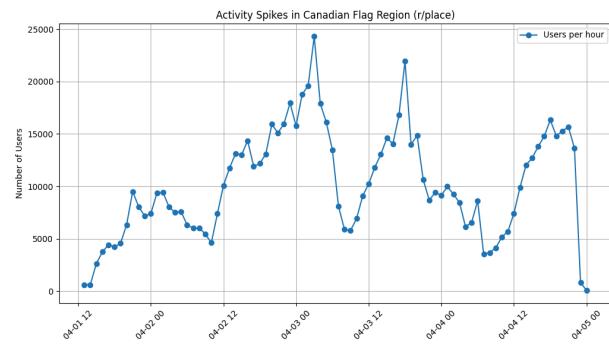
Why did the leaf border have the most contention? Many users battled over the shape of the maple leaf. Timelapses and numerous reddit comments explain how early on, the leaf repeatedly shifted between a traditional maple shape and a marijuana leaf shape. In fact, the Canadian flag quickly became a known meme on the r/place canvas.

Why was it amusing that Canada could not draw their leaf? Many found it amusing that Canada struggled to get the shape of their leaf, meanwhile other communities and countries were creating expansive and intricate pixel art. The leaf was often referred to as “Merple Lerf” on the r/place reddit. Other communities also tagged along to tease the mess of the Canadian maple

drawing. i.e- Germany created a perfect representation of the maple leaf within 3 minutes on their own flag. This attention, combined with the meme made out of the distorted shape, made the Canadian flag a target for vandalism and “griefing”.



Why were users intentionally disrupting the Canadian flag? Since this was specifically an r/place meme, users who were scrolling the subreddit likely wanted to prolong the meme by continuously altering the shape, despite the efforts of the Canadian community to maintain an accurate design. As memes, timelapses, and content creators drew attention to the Canada flag, users increasingly interacted with the flag. This explains the activity peaks in later stages.



Besides the typical colors found on the Canadian flag, bright green, yellow, and lime green had noticeably high pixel counts.

- *expected flag colors:* orange-red: 592101, white: 263148, grey: 117553, black: 60623
- *unexpected flag colors:* lime green: 61070, yellow: 29796, green: 14355

Why were users placing unconventional colors on the Canadian flag?

The 75425 green pixels align with attempts to turn the maple leaf into a weed leaf. Additionally a Spanish streamer Rubius gathered his community to color the Canada flag green and replace Canada with a profane spanish word. In r/place, users would also independently pick up on patterns and take advantage of internal volatility. This manifested on the Canadian flag through users periodically trying to change the flag into a “Banana” flag.



PySpark vs. DuckDB on analysis queries: Excluding the matplotlib calculations, the DuckDB queries ran in 16.244879625 seconds. The same queries with the PySpark framework ran in 25.582267584 seconds. Overall DuckDB had better performance.

references

["Timelapse of Canada struggling to make a leaf for 48 hours" - 113K upvotes](#)

[Heat Map Generator Repo](#)

[HeatMap Image](#)

["Can we not gang up on Canada"](#)

[HackerNews comments](#)

["Poor Canada"](#)

[How Reddit's r/Place reflects the State of Play of our World Today](#)

["Canada Ended On A High Note"](#)

["The Germans are showing Canadians how to do it!"](#)

[The r/place Situation Explained](#)

["Who decided to create the banana flag?"](#)