

DIVERSICROP Training School

Data mapping and visualisation: from scattered datasets to a StoryMap

Creating a StoryMap JS

A guide by Meriel McClatchie, University College Dublin

With thanks to UCD Library for guidance: https://libguides.ucd.ie/findingmaps/show_your_data

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What is StoryMap JS and why use it?

StoryMap JS is a free online tool that helps you tell stories associated with locations on a map. StoryMap JS was developed by Northwestern University Knight Lab in the United States, who are ‘a community of designers, developers, students, and educators working on experiments designed to push journalism into new spaces.’ (<https://storymap.knightlab.com/>). StoryMap JS enables you to create narratives about your research. This can help you engage people and share your research findings with the wider world. You can view StoryMap JS examples at https://libguides.ucd.ie/findingmaps/show_your_data.

To build your StoryMap, you can use:

- Text to introduce, describe and reflect on your data.
- Related images and/or links to online resources (including X [Twitter], Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Google Maps and more).
- Spatial data, such as latitudes/longitudes for specific locations relevant to your data.

TIP Before you start a new StoryMap JS, collate your planned text, images and links. Collate them in a dedicated folder on your computer, e.g. ‘Resources for StoryMap’.

StoryMap JS is free-to-access software, but you do need a Google account to get started. Your Google account allows you to login to StoryMap and edit your projects.

Remember that **you are telling a story**, so think about your narrative – what do you want to say?

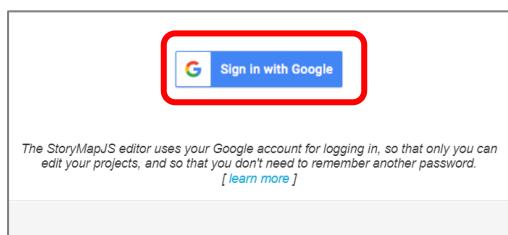
Getting started

StoryMap JS works best using the **Chrome** browser. **Go to the StoryMap JS website:** <https://storymap.knightlab.com/>.

Click on ‘Make a StoryMap’.



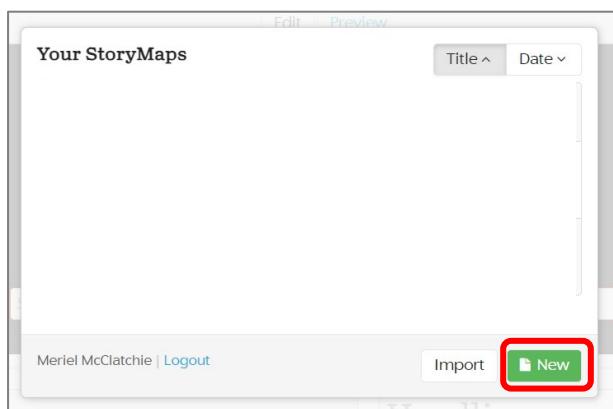
You will be asked to **sign in**, so left click on ‘Sign in with Google’.



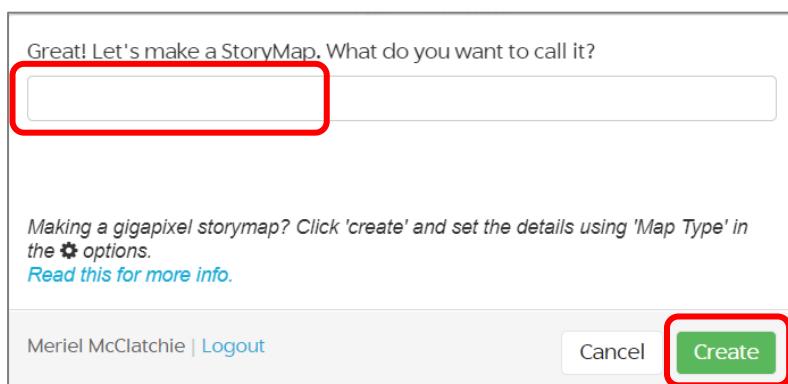
TIP If you are **having trouble signing in**, this may be because you were already working in your Google account (and sometimes this creates a conflict for opening your StoryMap). Close down your Google account, then log in again, then open StoryMap JS. That should fix the issue.

If you want to **enable multi-use editing of a StoryMap JS** (e.g. for a team project), one team member can create a separate Google account and share the log-in details with the team. To avoid edit conflicts, only one team member should be logged in to edit at any one time.

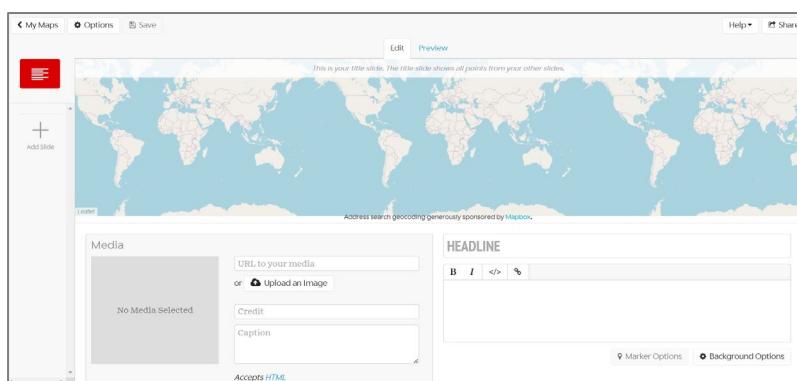
Left click on 'New' to **create a new StoryMap**.



You will be asked to enter a file name for your StoryMap. Left click into the box and **enter a name**. Then **click 'Create'**.

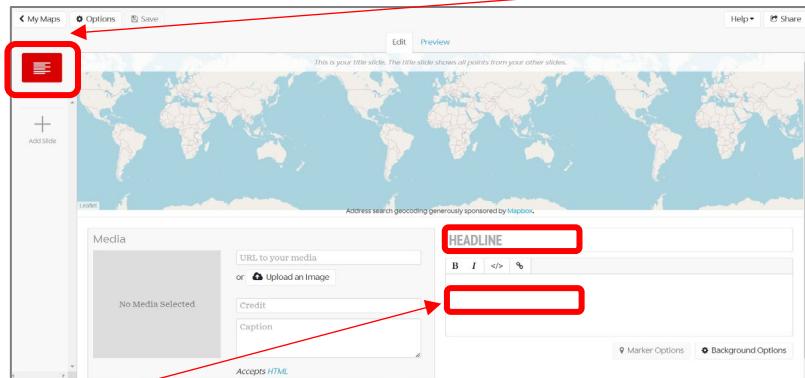


You will then see this page, which allows you to create your StoryMap.



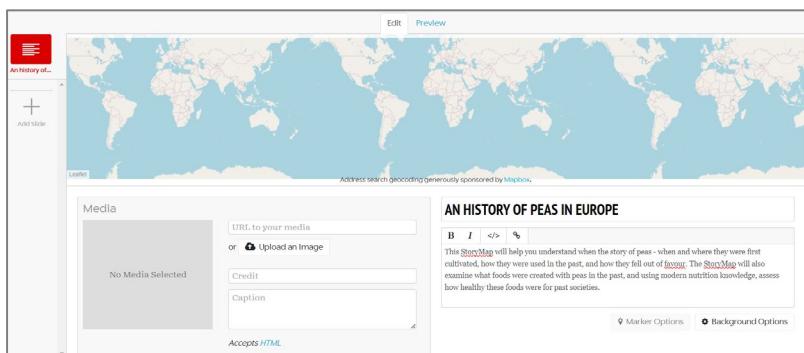
Creating a title/welcome slide

Your opening slide provides both a title page and an introduction. In the ‘Headline’ field, give your StoryMap a **title name that reflects your narrative** – you can change the name at a later time if you like. When you enter a title name and press ‘return’, it will automatically **appear here**.



Add **introductory text**. You can type it in or paste it in from another file.

This is an example of how the title and introductory text will appear.



As you build the StoryMap, the **map on the title page** will automatically populate with locations entered on the following slides.

TIP Remember that that **title page name can be different to the StoryMap file name** (that you entered earlier). The file name should reflect your digital filing system (so that you can find the file easily on your computer). The title page name should help the reader understand what the StoryMap is about.

Don’t worry too much about completing everything on this slide at this early stage. You just need the basics (title and introduction), and you can return to it later to edit and add more.

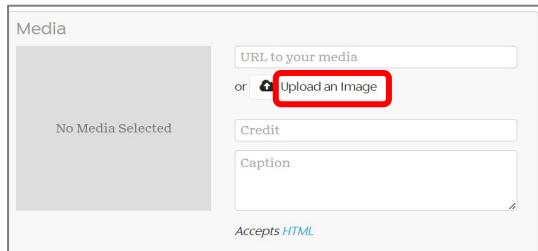
Add an image

You can only provide **one media example on each slide**, so take some time to choose the most relevant image (e.g. jpg), video, soundfile, social media link, etc. for that location.

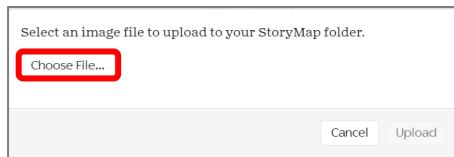
To add media, you can ‘**Upload an image**’ or add a **URL link**. Where possible, have an image ready in your files so that you can choose the ‘Upload an image’ option – this ensures that your

StoryMap will not be impacted if the URL changes or disappears. If you are having trouble uploading your file, try changing the format (e.g. to jpg).

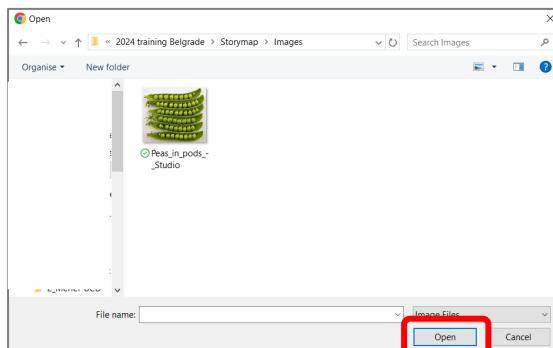
If you choose to upload an image, left click onto ‘Upload an image’.



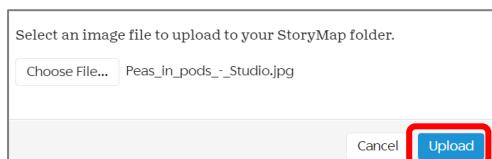
A new window will appear, asking you to **choose a file**. Left click on ‘Choose file’.



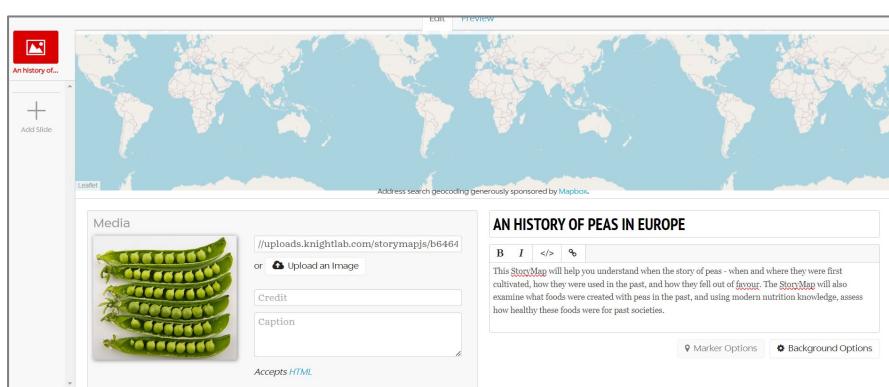
Find your folder containing the images for the ‘StoryMap’. Left click on your chosen image, then left click ‘Open’



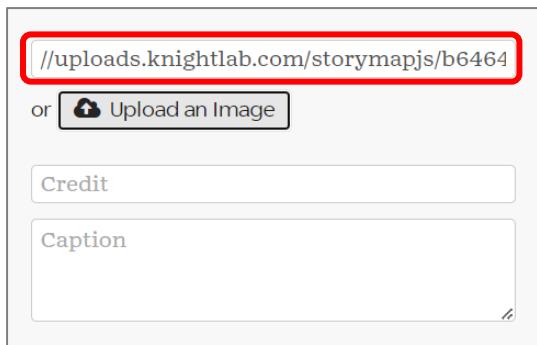
Then left click **Upload**.



Your image will now appear in the ‘Media’ section of the slide, on the left.

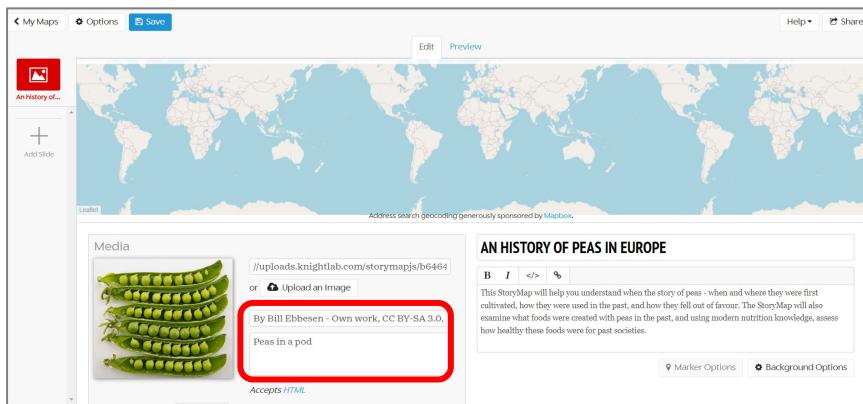


StoryMap JS has also created a media link for you.



It is important that you provide a **title for the image** ('Caption' in the image above) to explain what the image is and its relevance to the slide. You may also need to include a **credit** ('Credit' in the image above) to provide an attribution and link for the source of your image.

Make sure you are allowed to share the chosen image if you download it from an online source. Check the licensing/sharing options and make sure you credit the image correctly.

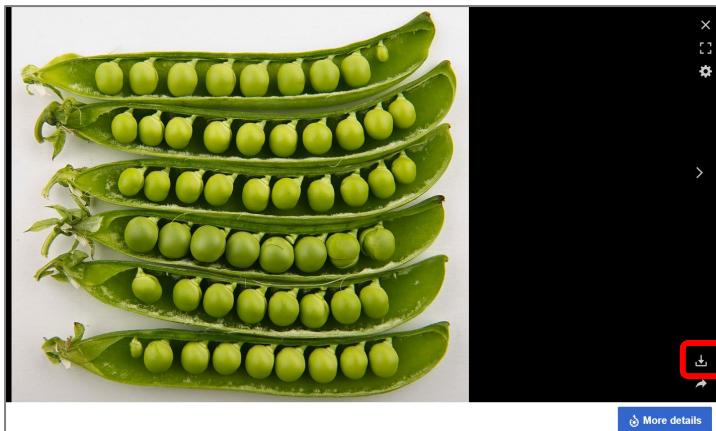


Example of how to add an image

The image in this example is taken from Wikimedia Commons, via Wikipedia:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pea>.

A screenshot of the Wikipedia article on "Pea". The page shows the edit history tab selected. On the right side, there is a thumbnail image of several green pea pods. The image is described in the caption as "Peas contained within a pod". The main text of the article discusses the plant's life cycle, propagation, and various uses.

If you click on the first image on this link, you are given the option to download it.



If you download an image from an online resource like this, you may be able to choose the file size of the jpeg – larger is better.

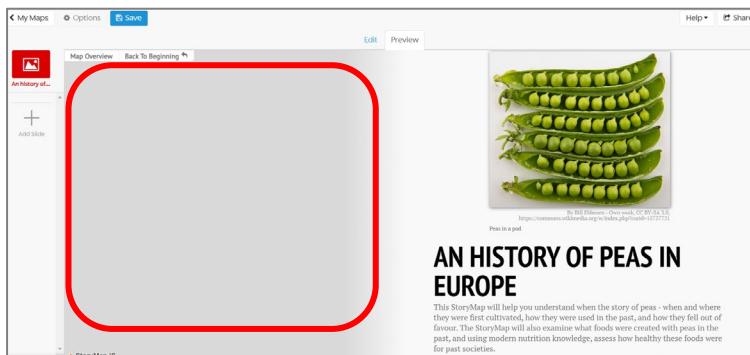


Advice on how to credit the image (attribution) may also be provided here. If advice is not provided here, it is your responsibility to track down the appropriate credit and add it.

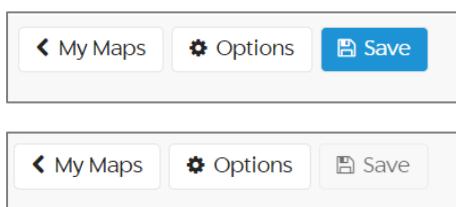
After you add your image and the accompanying text, you can check to see how it will look to readers, by left clicking **Preview**.

The StoryMap interface includes a sidebar with 'My Maps', 'Options', 'Save', 'Edit', and 'Preview' buttons. The main area features a world map with country boundaries. Below the map is a media section with an image of pea pods, a URL ('//uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/b6464'), an upload button ('Upload an Image'), and the attribution text 'By Bill Ebbesen - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0.' The preview section contains the title 'AN HISTORY OF PEAS IN EUROPE' and a descriptive paragraph about the story of peas in Europe.

When you are in ‘Preview’, you will see a large space on the left. This is where your map will be located when you start adding locations in the following slides.

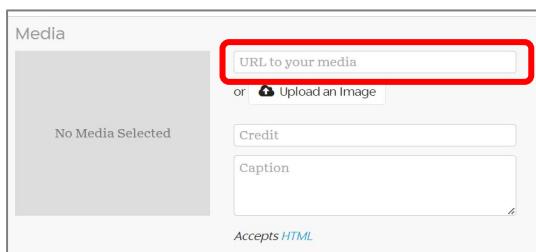


When you return to **Edit** (by left clicking on the ‘Edit’ option beside ‘Preview’), check the top left of the screen to see if the **Save button** is highlighted in blue. **When the Save button appears blue, changes are waiting to be saved.**

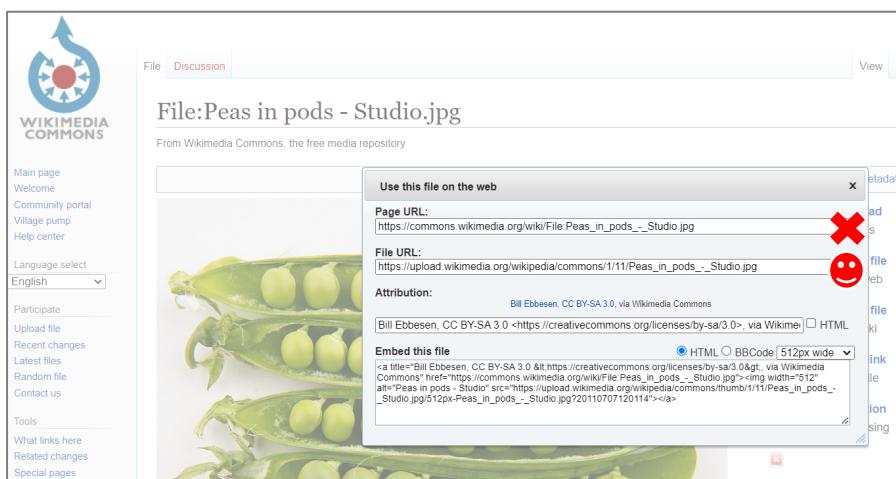


Instead of uploading an image, you may choose to provide a link to an image. You can do this by entering the link into **URL to your media**.

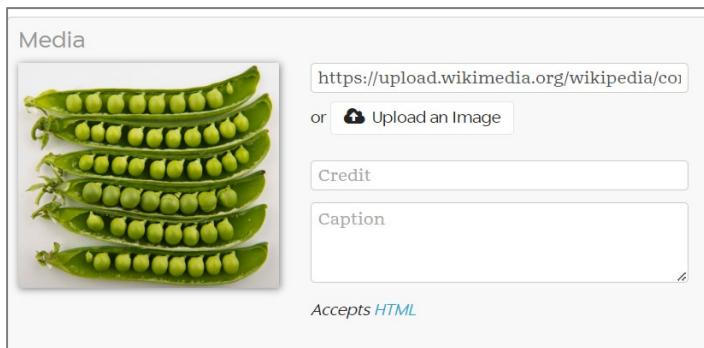
Enter the link here, press return, and the image should appear.



Make sure you link to an **image file** (file URL), rather than just a web page (page URL).



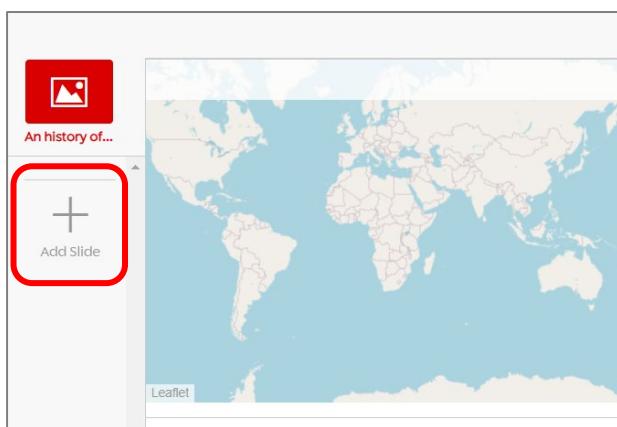
When you enter the link to an image file, the image should appear automatically.



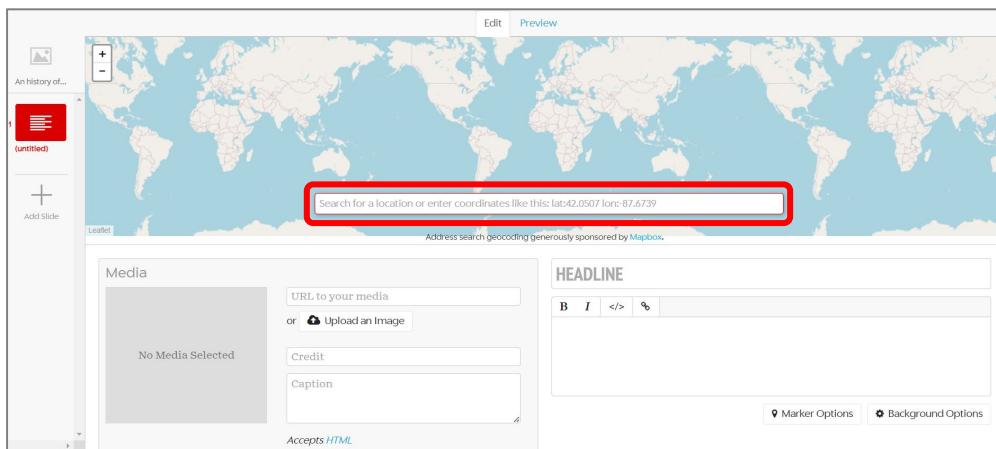
Remember to include text for the **Credit** and **Caption**, as required.

Add a slide

To add a slide, go towards the top left of the screen, and left click on **Add slide**.

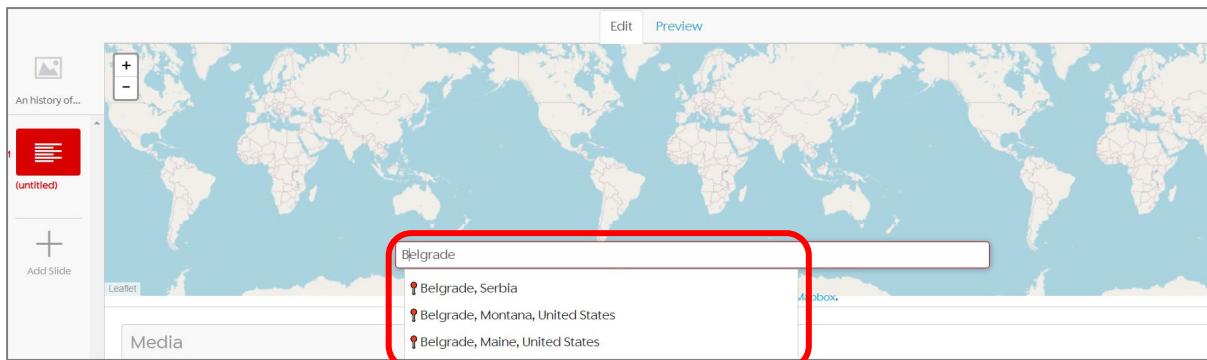


This slide looks very similar to your title slide, but there is one important difference – this slide includes a **Search** box, where you can enter a location point using specific coordinates (latitude/longitude) or you can search for a placename (which is enabled by Mapbox). You can also search for coordinates in Google Maps, and then copy them into the StoryMap Search box.

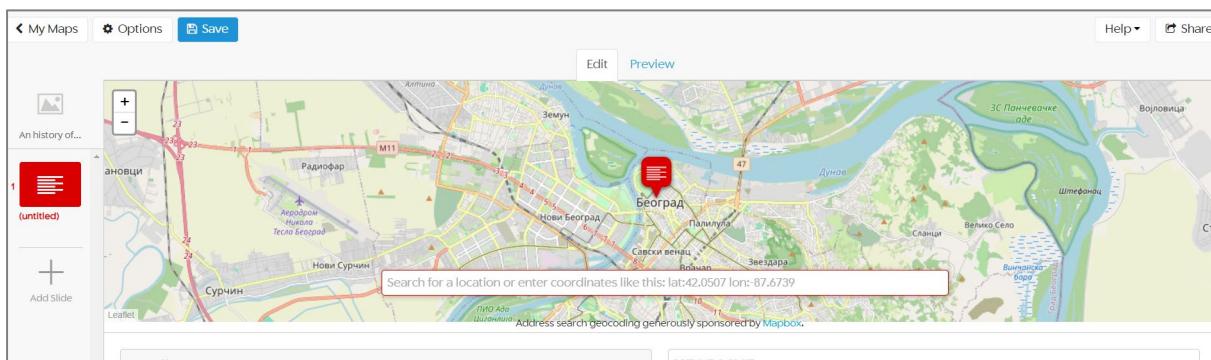


Let's use Belgrade as an example.

If you type in Belgrade, you will see several options.



Left click on your preferred option, and a point on the map will be assigned, via a marker.



If the marker is not in the exact place that you want, you can move the marker, by **left clicking** on it and **dragging to the correct location**.

Let's move the marker to the location of this COST Action training school.

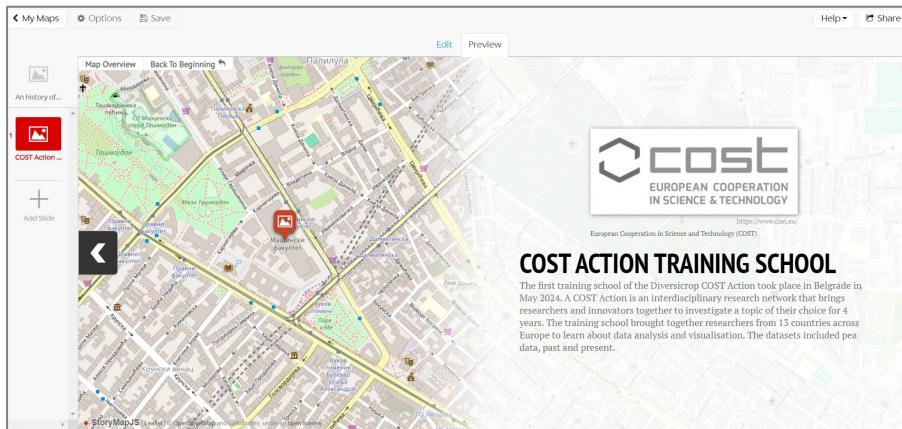
You can either enter the address 'Kraljice Marije 16, 11000 Belgrade' or drag the marker to the correct location (now that you know your way around Belgrade!).

Then you can **enter a Title (Headline) and Description** on the right, and **upload or link to an image** on the left. You can download the COST logo from its website, <https://www.cost.eu/>.

A screenshot of a map interface showing a specific area in Belgrade. A red marker is placed on the map. To the right, there is a card with the following information:

- Media:** A logo for 'COST European Cooperation in Science & Technology' and a link to <https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymaps/b6464>.
- Title:** COST ACTION TRAINING SCHOOL
- Description:** The first training school of the Diversicrop COST Action took place in Belgrade in May 2024. A COST Action is an interdisciplinary research network that brings researchers and innovators together to investigate a topic of their choice for 4 years. The training school brought together researchers from 13 countries across Europe to learn about data analysis and visualisation. The datasets included pea data, past and present.
- Options:** Buttons for 'Marker Options' and 'Background Options'.

When all of this is entered, you can **preview your slide** (or preview it at any time during the process).



Add a video

Now we are ready to **add the next slide**. Use the **Add slide** option again towards the top left.

Let's enter information about a key source for our datasets at the training school: the UN FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations). The FAO's European headquarters are located in Budapest (find the address at <https://www.fao.org/europe/about-us/our-offices/en>).

Enter a **Title and Description**. Remember to cite information properly in your text, if required (it is important to avoid plagiarism).

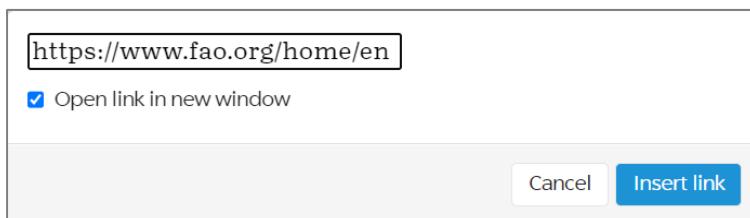
You can **provide a link to the FAO within the text**. Highlight the text and click on the 'link' option.

FAO DATA

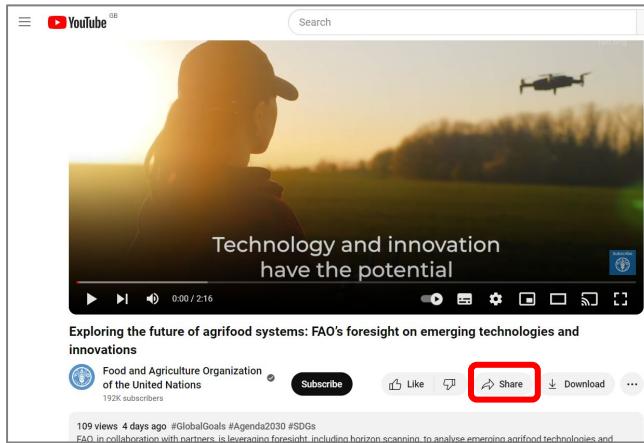
B I </> 

The COST Action training school in Budapest utilised data from the [UN FAO](#) (Food and Agriculture Organisation). The FAO is an agency of the United Nations (UN). The goal of the FAO is "to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy live" (<https://www.fao.org/about/about-fao/en/>).

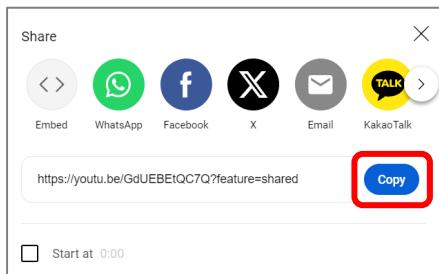
A pop-up box allows you to enter the address for the link, then click on **Insert link**. Your hyperlink will then be visible to the reader.



To add a video, we will use a video from the FAO, available on their [website](#). We will use this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdUEBEtQC7Q>. You will see an option to **Share** the video. **Left click on Share.**

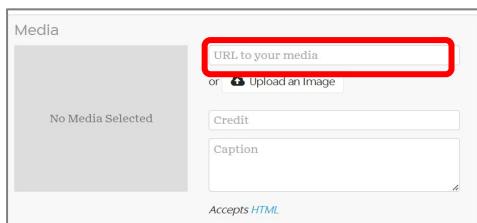


A sharing link will appear in a pop-up box. Copy the link by left clicking the blue **Copy** option.

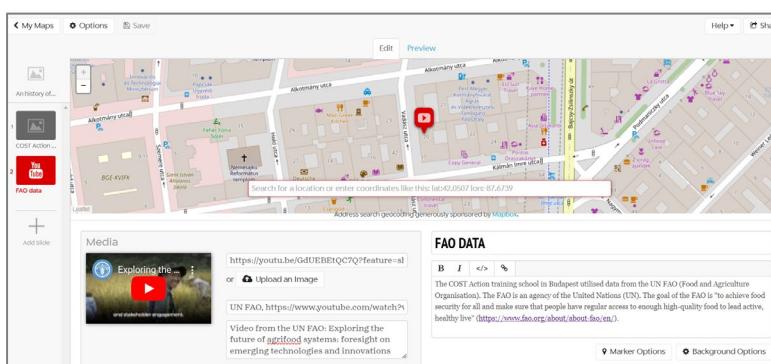


You can share a link so that the video starts at the beginning, or if you want to highlight a certain section of the video, you can copy the link to start at a certain time (tick the box at the bottom left of the pop-up box above).

Copy the link into URL to your media, and press return.



The video will then appear in your Media section.



When you preview the slide, it will look like the screenshot below.

The screenshot shows a StoryMapJS slide in 'Preview' mode. On the left, there's a sidebar with a history of previous slides (1. COST Action ..., 2. YouTube, 3. FAO data), a 'Add Slide' button, and a 'Background Options' button (highlighted with a red box). The main area features a map of Central Europe with several locations marked. To the right of the map is a video player showing a man in a field, with the text 'Exploring the future of agrifood systems: ...' and 'stakeholder engagement.' Below the video is a link to UN FAO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUEBEPQfQ>. At the bottom, there's a section titled 'FAO DATA' with a brief description of the COST Action training school's use of FAO data.

Add a background image

Instead of adding an image above the text, you can add a background image.

Add a new slide. Enter a Title (Headline) and Description. Left click on **Background Options**.

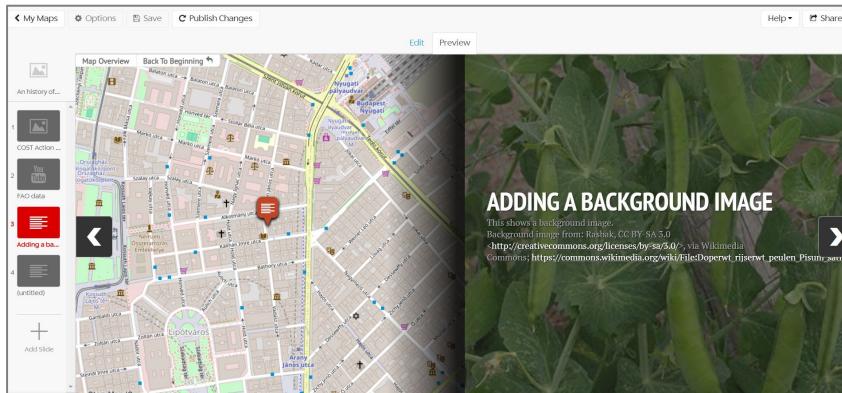
The screenshot shows a StoryMapJS slide in 'Preview' mode. The sidebar includes a history of slides (1. COST Action ..., 2. YouTube, 3. Adding a ba...), a 'Background Options' button (highlighted with a red box), and a 'Marker Options' button. The main area displays a detailed map of a city street with various buildings and landmarks labeled. On the right side, there's a 'Media' section with fields for 'URL to your media' and 'Upload an Image'. Below that is a 'ADDING A BACKGROUND IMAGE' section with a rich text editor and a note: 'This shows a background image'. At the bottom right of this section is a 'Background Options' button (highlighted with a red box).

Left click on Choose File. Navigate to your chosen image file. Left click on your file to import it.

The screenshot shows the 'Slide Background' dialog box. It has sections for 'Background Color' (with a color picker set to #ffffff) and 'Background Image' (with a dropdown menu and an 'Upload' button). Below these is a note: 'or upload an image to your StoryMap folder.' At the bottom left is a 'Choose File...' button (highlighted with a red box), and at the bottom right is a 'Close' button.

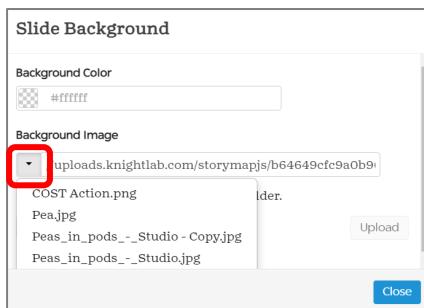
Left click on **Upload**. Then left click **Close**.

Left click on Preview to see the new background image. You will see that the location marker is automatically repeated from the previous slide, so you may wish to change it.



Make sure you enter information into the Description field to credit the image e.g. "Background image from...".

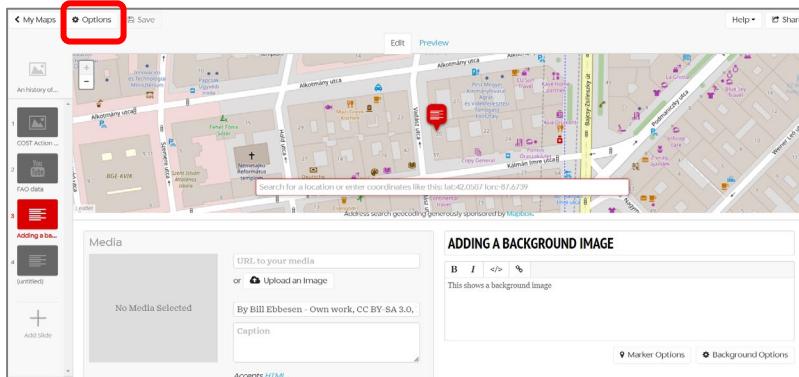
If you wish to change the image to one that you uploaded previously, click on **Background Options** again, and left click the arrow beside Background Image. This lets you view and choose all available files in your image folder.



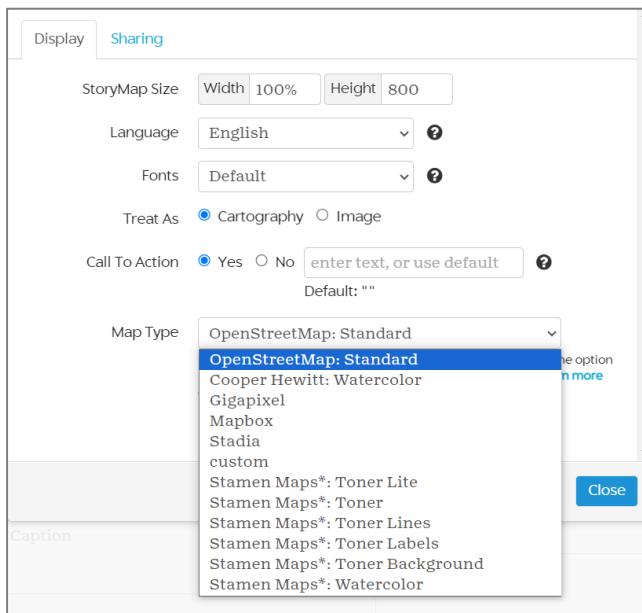
If you wish to change your file, highlight the link in **Background Image** and delete it. The file will be deleted from this slide but will remain in the image folder. Then you can choose another file.

Change the map style

If you wish to change the map style, left click **Options**.



Navigate down to **Map Type**, then left click on the **down arrow** here to see your options. Choose a map and left click **Close**.



Your main options are ‘Open Street Map: Standard’ and ‘Cooper Hewitt: Watercolour’. For other options (e.g. Mapbox), you may need to have a separate account, so not all maps will be available to you.

Remember if you change the Map in one slide, it **automatically changes it for all slides**.

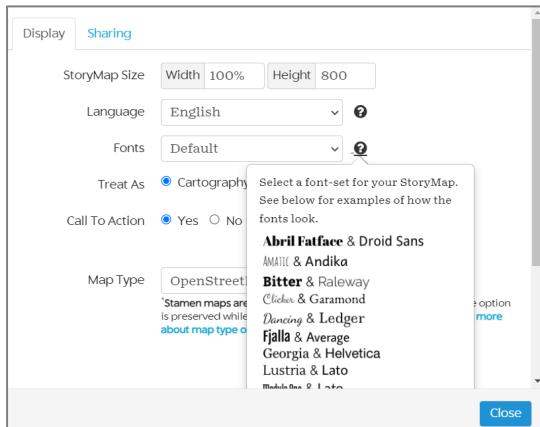
Change the title font

If you wish to change the Title font for one slide, it will automatically change for all slides.

Left click on **Options**. At the **Fonts** option, left click on **the question mark**, which allows you to view the styles of the fonts available.

To select a font, left click on the arrow to select the font. Left click on the font. Left click on Close.

At any time, you can return to the Default font by selecting it.

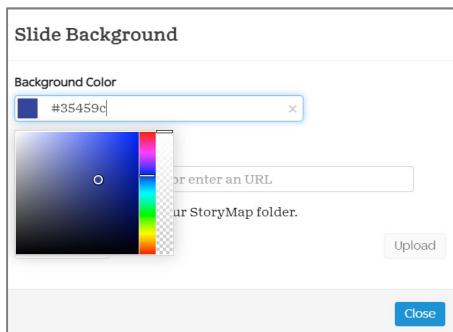


Change the background colour on a slide

Each slide can have a different background colour (but this might be quite distracting for the reader, so it might be better to choose just one).

Towards the bottom right of the screen, left click on **Background Options**,

Left click in the field for **Background Colour**, and colour options will appear in a box. At the bottom left corner of this box, you will see a small circle (click into the box if it does not appear). You will also see a slider towards the top right (there are two sliders – use the one on the left). Move these to select a colour. You can also change the transparency by moving the right slider.

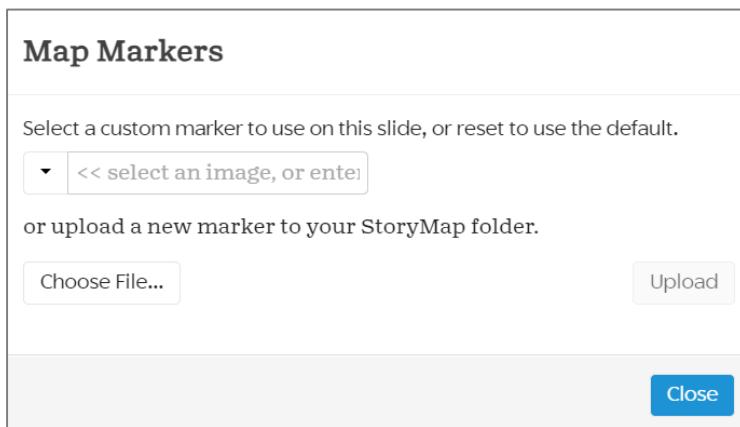


Left click on **Close**.

Change the marker icon

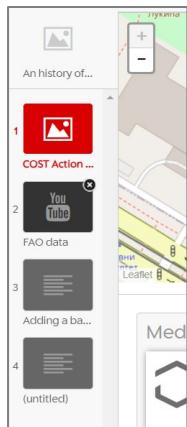
To change the marker on a slide, left click on **Marker Options**. Use an image already in your library (see your options by clicking on the down arrow beneath **Select a custom marker**). You can also **Choose File** if you wish to upload a file.

You can reset to default by choosing this option in **Select a custom marker**.



Delete or re-order a slide

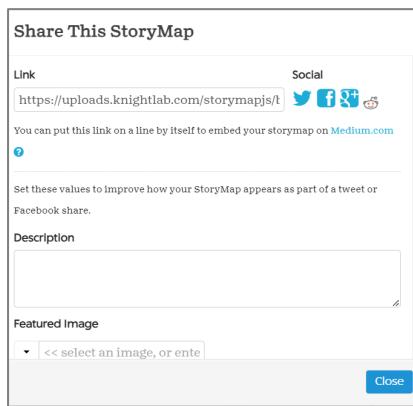
If you wish to delete a slide, bring your cursor to the left of the screen, until you reach the menu of slides towards the top left. Hover over a slide until you see a small circle containing 'X'. Left click on the **X** to delete the slide.



If you wish to change the order of a slide, **left click** on the slide and move it to the new position.

Share your StoryMap!

Make sure you **Save** your map before sharing it. Click on **Share** on the top right of the screen. You will see this window appear.



Left click in the **Link** field, and it will change colour to blue. **Right click** to copy the link.

To add the StoryMap to a website, scroll down to the **Embed** field, and use the HTML code.

You can make further changes to your StoryMap after you publish it. A **Publish changes** option will appear. Left click on this tab to update the changes.

Return to your StoryMap to edit

Open <https://storymap.knightlab.com/select/> and sign in to your Google account.