

MIGHTY MAPS

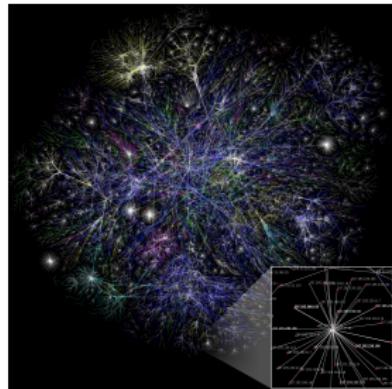
GEOSPATIAL VISUALIZATION WITH GOOGLE EARTH AND KML

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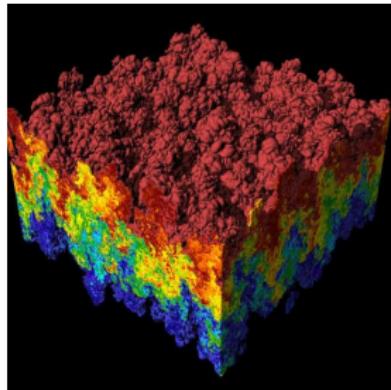
COOL KIDS DO DATA VISUALIZATION



Everyone seems to have data, and lots of it. Everyone seems to want pictures of their data.

The Opte Project

COOL KIDS DO DATA VISUALIZATION

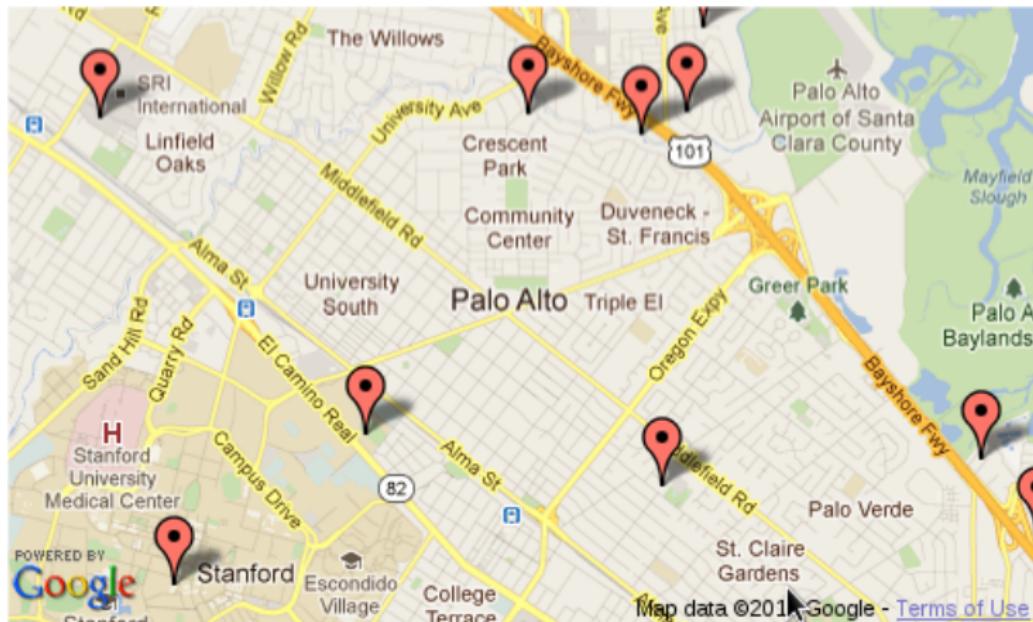


Visualization has become a vibrant field of study. People blog about visualizations.

Lawrence Livermore
National Laboratory

COOL KIDS DO DATA VISUALIZATION

In particular, people love geospatial visualization. Perhaps because everyone has geographic data, and Google's Maps API is easy.



COOL KIDS DO DATA VISUALIZATION

...or other APIs, if you prefer...



GEOSPATIAL VISUALIZATION

Geospatial visualization is ...

- It's easy to understand, compared to dots and lines. Everyone understands maps
- The selection of APIs makes it easy to do
- Everyone has geographic data
 - Who browsed my website, from where? (GeoIP)
 - Where do I ship most of my orders
 - What, in fact, are the migration patterns of African and European swallows?

EVERYONE HAS GEOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE

Although everyone has geographic data, it's not necessarily important data.

EVERYONE HAS GEOGRAPHIC DATA

NOTE

The fact that particular data are unimportant or even meaningless rarely prevents people from trying to make a picture out of them.

There are some cool things happening in geovisualization...

GOOGLE EARTH

Google Earth is essentially Google Maps in 3D.



WHAT'S GOOGLE EARTH?

- Desktop application for Linux (and Mac and Windows, if you insist)
- Free, but not open source ;(
- There exists a paid “professional” version
 - Allows rendering of video, more flexible editing of large data sets, and a few other things
- Also exists in browser plugin form with JavaScript control; this works only on Mac and Windows
- Began as a project by Keyhole software, which Google eventually bought

HOW TO USE GOOGLE EARTH

Google Earth accepts files written in Keyhole Markup Language

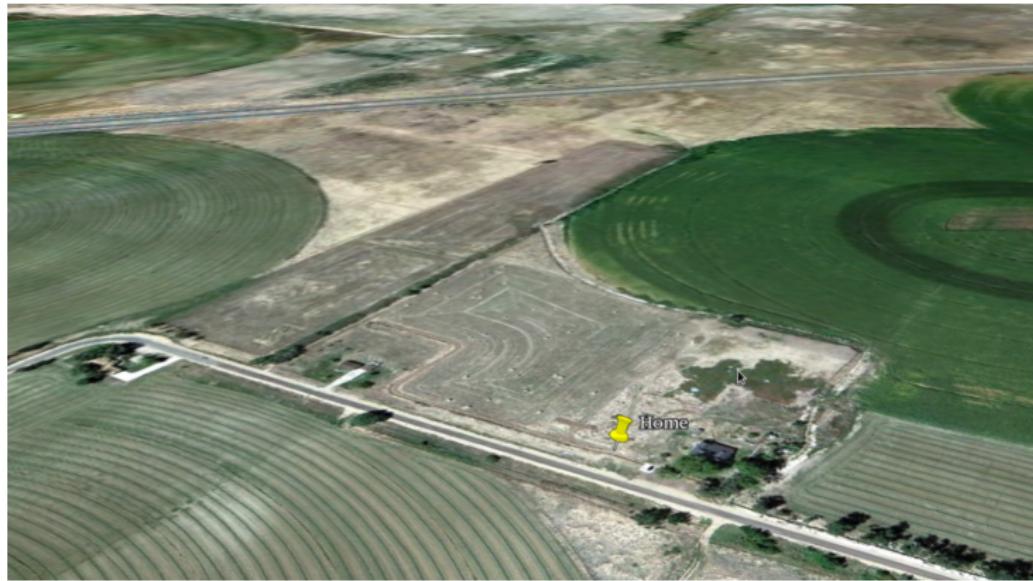
- XML-based
- Can be created automatically through Google Earth; IMO this is not terribly flexible
- Can be written by hand; IMO this is like chewing glass
- Can be generated by various helper projects
 - Kamelopard: Ruby-based. I wrote it, and use it a lot.
 - PyKML: Python-based. More polished and consistent, but seemingly less capable than Kamelopard

ASIDE

This presentation won't show you much KML. Its point is to show some of what can be done, leaving the KML as an exercise for the reader.

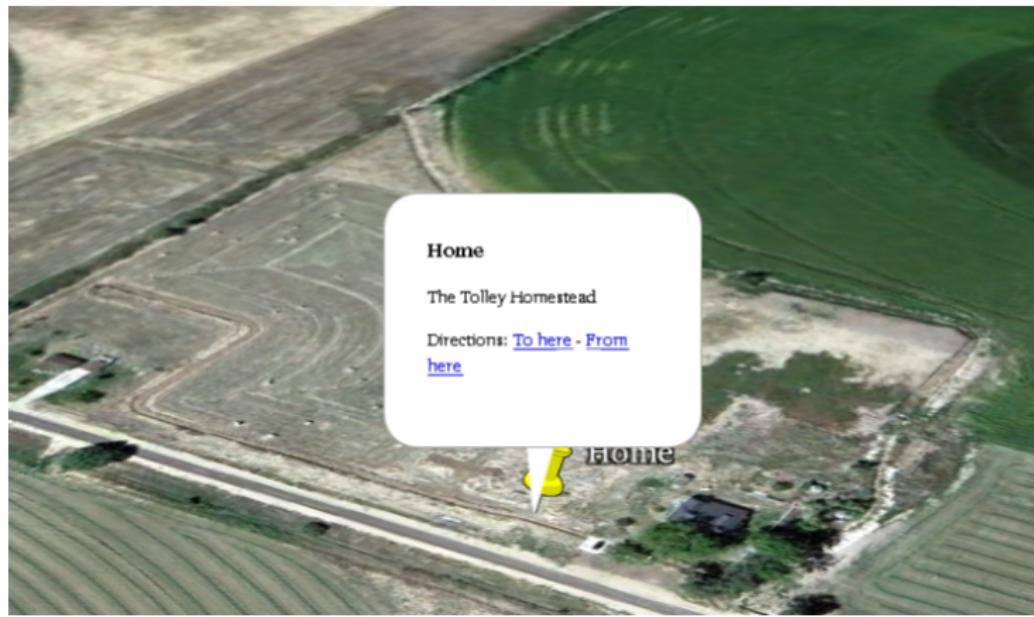
AN EXAMPLE

I live on a small farm, where we are growing 12 acres of wheat and raising various poultry. It's here. This is a KML Placemark.



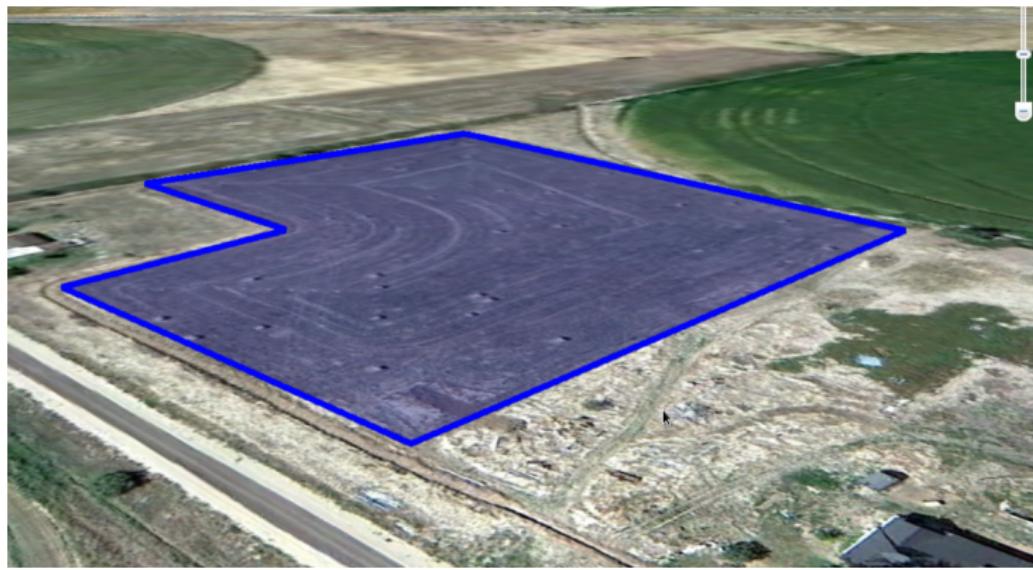
AN EXAMPLE

These placemarks have descriptions, which can pop up in balloons, like this one. This can include CSS, images, or even Flash video.



AN EXAMPLE

As I said, we're growing wheat this year. This shows the wheat field, outlined with a KML polygon. KML also allows other objects, like lines and 3D models, in various styles.



AN EXAMPLE

Some of these KML objects can include time data



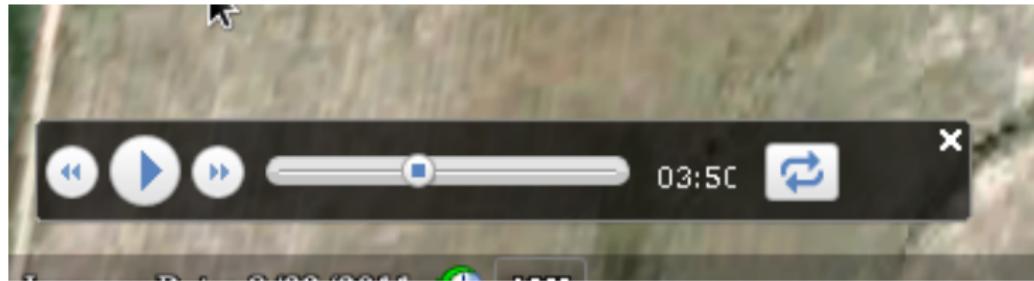
AN EXAMPLE

Google Earth allows a few different kinds of added images in a scene, called “Overlays”. This is a Screen Overlay.



AN EXAMPLE

Images, placemarks, overlays, etc. can be grouped and animated in a “Tour”



Tours navigate the viewer automatically, displaying and hiding objects at precise locations and for well-defined durations. They can include background audio.