

Metropolist

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Metropolist

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We recommend acceptance of this manuscript in partial fulfillment of this candidate's requirements for the degree of Master of Software Engineering in Computer Science. The candidate has completed the oral examination requirement of the capstone project for the degree.

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Abstract

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This manuscript describes the development of a web-based map generator, which allows the user to create randomly generated fantasy maps of cities and additionally allows the user to annotate and edit city elements at a fine granularity.

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Glossary

Ajax

Ajax (short for asynchronous JavaScript and XML) is a set of web development techniques using many web technologies on the client side to create asynchronous web applications.

AngularJS

AngularJS is a JavaScript-based open-source front-end web framework mainly maintained by Google and by a community of individuals and corporations to address many of the challenges encountered in developing single-page applications.

Application Programming Interface (API)

In computer programming, an API is a set of subroutine definitions, communication protocols, and tools for building software. In general terms, it is a set of clearly defined methods of communication among various components.

Canvas

Canvas is an HTML element which can be used to draw graphics via scripting (usually JavaScript). This can, for instance, be used to draw graphs, combine photos, or create simple (and not so simple) animations.

Endpoints

Endpoints are important aspects of interacting with server-side web APIs, as they specify where resources lie that can be accessed by third-party software. Usually, the access is via a URI to which HTTP requests are posted, and from which the response is thus expected.

Express

Express is a minimal and flexible Node.js web application framework that provides a robust set of features for web and mobile applications.

Functional Requirements

In software engineering and systems engineering, a functional requirement defines a function of a system or its component, where a function is described as a specification of behavior between outputs and inputs.

Graphical User Interface (GUI)

The GUI is a form of user interface that allows users to interact with electronic devices through graphical icons and visual indicators such as secondary notation, instead of text-based user interfaces, typed command labels or text navigation.

MongoDB

MongoDB is a cross-platform document-oriented database program. Classified as a NoSQL database program, MongoDB uses JSON-like documents with schemata.

Node.js

Node.js is an open-source, cross-platform JavaScript run-time environment that executes JavaScript code outside of a browser.

Non-Functional Requirements (NFR)

In systems engineering and requirements engineering, a non-functional requirement is a requirement that specifies criteria that can be used to judge the operation of a system, rather than specific behaviors.

NoSQL

NoSQL is an approach to database design that can accommodate a wide variety of data models, including key-value, document, columnar and graph formats.

Object Related Mapping (ORM)

Object-relational mapping (ORM, O/RM, and O/R mapping tool) in computer science is a programming technique for converting data between incompatible type systems using object-oriented programming languages.

Representational State Transfer (REST)

REST is a software architectural style that defines a set of constraints to be used for creating Web services.

Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG)

SVG is an XML-based vector image format for two-dimensional graphics with support for interactivity and animation.

Single Page Application (SPA)

A SPA is a web application or web site that interacts with the user by dynamically rewriting the current page rather than loading entire new pages from a server.

Software Life Cycle Model (SDLC)

The SDLC is a term used in systems engineering, information systems, and software engineering to describe a process for planning, creating, testing, and deploying an information system.

Stakeholder

The stakeholder (also project stakeholder) is an individual, group, or organization, who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project.

Web API

A Web API is an application programming interface for either a web server or a web browser.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Generating content for computer games, CGI effects, feature films, print media, or Role-playing games is a significant bottleneck in terms of effort and resources. A typical game contains many thousands of audio files, images, textures, and 3D models. Procedurally generated content provides a cost-effective alternative to the manual creation of models, textures, images, and sound assets and can expand playability beyond what is otherwise possible. The video game “No Man’s Sky,” for example, was released in 2016 and relied on procedural asset generation to create over 18 quintillion planets each of which has a unique ecosystem composed of flora and fauna. Such a scale is, of course, beyond the reach of any manually created system. Figure 1 is a screenshot of a planetary terrain region of “No Man’s Sky.”

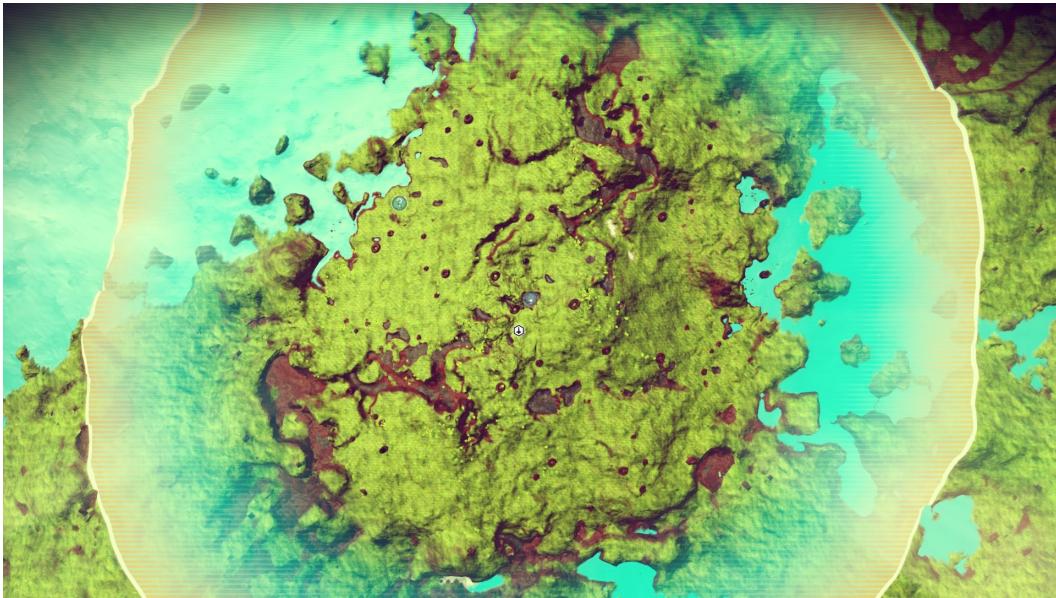


Figure 1. A screenshot of a planetary terrain region of “No Man’s Sky”

1.2. Similar Systems

1.2.1. Minecraft

“Minecraft” is a computer game that can produce massive worlds composed of fine details, like elaborate cliff faces and waterfalls. Moreover, it relies on procedural generation, which automatically creates environments and objects that are at once random but guided by rules that maintain a consistent logic. Mountains are always rocky and sprinkled with snow, for example, while the low lands are typically full of grass and trees. Figure 2 is a screenshot of “Minecraft.”



Figure 2. A screenshot of “Minecraft”

1.2.2. Medieval Fantasy City Generator(MFCG)

The “Medieval Fantasy City Generator(MFCG)” is a web application. This application generates a random medieval city layout of a requested size: small, medium or large, which is made up of different types of regions, and the generation method is stochastic. Furthermore, elements are provided for the user to add to the city, such as farm fields, citadel, plaza, temple, river, coast and so on. Because of the premise of medieval fantasy, the map always includes the walls and castle, but the user can decide whether to display them. It allows the user to edit the map to modify unsatisfying layers using a warping tool. The author also mentioned that the goal of the application is to produce a nice looking map, not an accurate model of a city. Finally, the user can save the map as an image in the “png” or “svg” format by using the export feature. Figure 3 is a screenshot of MFCG.

1.2.3. Azgaar’s Fantasy Map Generator(FMG)

The “Azgaar’s Fantasy Map Generator(FMG)” is another similar system, which is a larger scale world map. The size of the map made by FMG is not just an island, but a random fantasy map represents a pseudo-medieval world. Just like the real world, the map generated by FMG has constraints that the continent is always surrounded by the ocean and will never touch the border of the map. Although it is a randomly generated map, it is still based on real-world rules. While its most prominent feature is that the user can choose the type of map he likes, which provides the following 5 map types: political, cultural, height, biomes and pure landmass. It also supports user-defined map

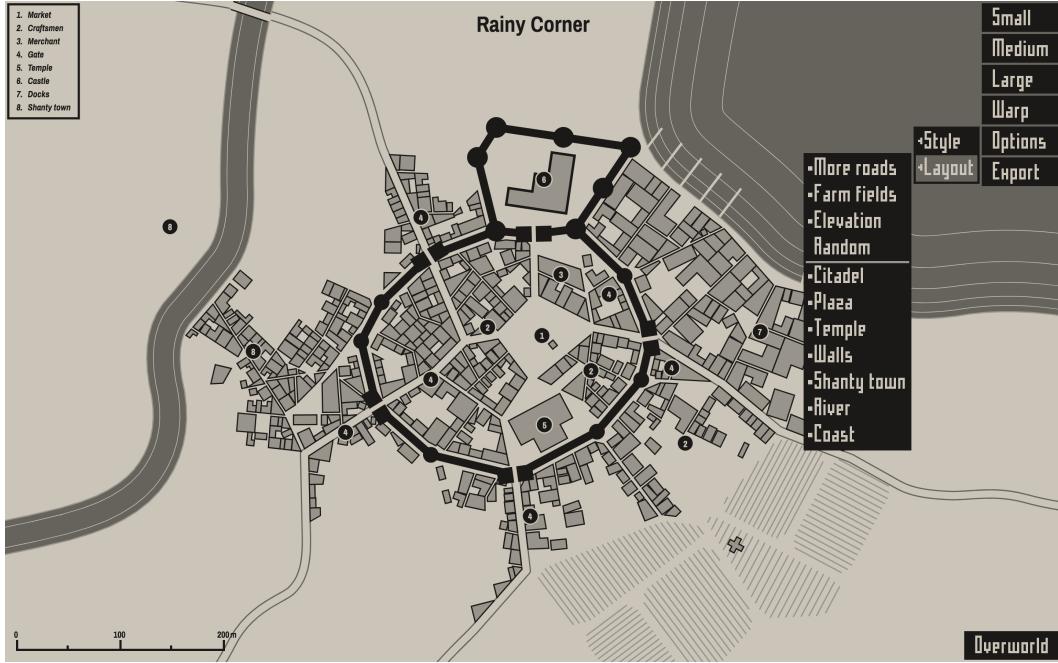


Figure 3. A screenshot of the Medieval Fantasy City Generator

type, and the user can add additional layers on existing map layers: rivers, temperature, and population. Also, it allows the user to annotate and edit the map using various such editors: layout, style, template, scale, countries, or cultural. It also supports exporting the map in the PNG or SVG format, but unlike the previous application, if the user wants to come back to edit the map in the future, he can save it in the “map” format. Figure 4 is a screenshot of FMG.



Figure 4. A screenshot of the Azgaar's Fantasy Map Generator

1.3. Project Goal

The goal of this project is to automatically generate city maps for use in role-playing games (RPG) or worldbuilding narratives. While the ultimate goal of this project is to procedurally replicate maps of a quality similar to the best cartographic hand-created maps by expert artists, we have obtained a modest approximation to the desired level of quality. Our system will have essential features, such as allowing the user to annotate or edit, allowing the user to export the map as an image in the PNG or SVG format, and allowing the user to save it to a database and retrieve it. Figure 5 is a screenshot of the final project.

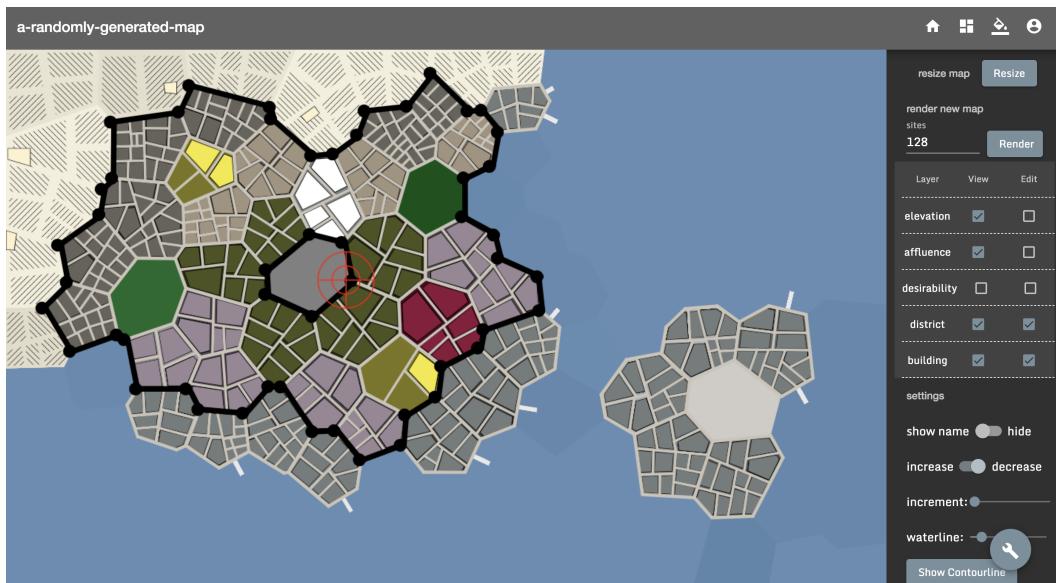


Figure 5. A screenshot of the current project

2. Requirements

2.1. Overview

Initially, this project was conceived by Dr. Kenny Hunt, who served as the advisor, and he gave almost all of the requirements [3] in the first meeting. Both the advisor, who is also the project sponsor, and the developer, who is also the author, are the stakeholders of the project.

2.2. Functional Requirements

There are two roles for this system: “admins” and “users.” As a result, the following functional requirements were established for the project:

1. As an admin or a user, I need to able to:
 - (a) Log in with a unique email and password
 - (b) Log out
 - (c) Edit my personal profile by changing my email, first name, last name, or password
2. As an admin, I need to be able to:
 - (a) View all users
 - (b) Enable or disable any user (not including admins)
 - (c) Search for a user using any combination of email, username, first name, and last name
3. As a user, I need to be able to:
 - (a) Sign up with a unique email, first name, last name, and password
 - (b) View and search for users
 - (c) View all of the maps that I have created
 - (d) View all of the maps shared with me
 - (e) Search for maps using any combination of the map’s name, created date, edited date, the owner’s email, the owner’s first name, and the owner’s last name
 - (f) Make maps public, private, or viewable by only a select list of users
 - (g) Download viewable maps in PNG or SVG format
 - (h) Create a map with a name
 - (i) Delete a map
 - (j) Edit a map
 - (k) Annotate a map

- i. Tag buildings with details related to the building
- ii. Include virtual-people as owners, residents, or others
- iii. Include relationship between virtual-peoples (family, business, sentiments)

Figure 6 is the Use Case Diagram that describes the functionalities to be implemented by this web application.

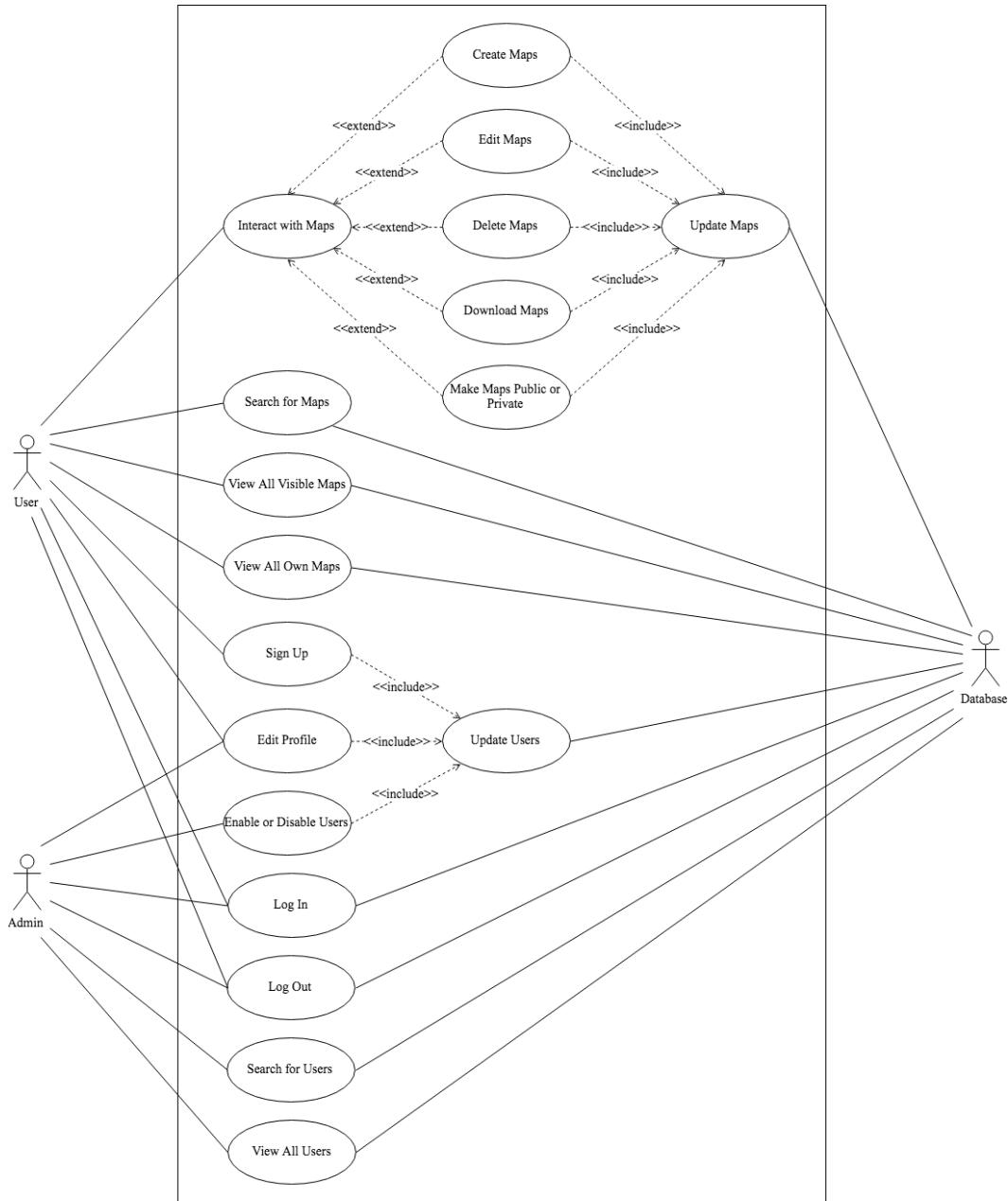


Figure 6. Use Case Diagram

2.3. Non-Functional Requirements

There are numerous non-functional requirements for this system: response time, availability, usability, security (authentication, authorization, integrity, privacy, etc.), and so on [6]. For this application, we focused on the following requirements:

1. Security:
 - (a) Input Validation: All user-supplied data is validated at both client and server
 - (b) Password Encryption:
 - i. Password must be encrypted
 - ii. Not even the system administrators shall see clear text passwords
 - (c) Prohibiting Cross Site Scripting (XSS):
 - i. Never insert data anywhere in a “script” element
 - ii. Never insert data in an HTML comment
 - iii. Never insert data anywhere in CSS
 - iv. Never insert data in an attribute name
 - v. Never insert data in an attribute value
 - vi. Never insert data in a tag name
 - (d) Secure Session Cookie:
 - i. Only use secure cookies
 - ii. Only use “HttpOnly” cookies
 - iii. Always change the session id after login
2. Performance:
 - (a) High performance of rendering map: The map rendering engine must be fast enough to support a viable user experience

2.4. Selection of Software Development Life Cycle Model

We identified the following possible risks:

1. Lack of experience developing semi-automatic map generation algorithms
2. Uncertainty regarding third-party libraries that would provide assistance
3. Potential misunderstanding between the advisor and the developer with respect to the requirements

To reduce or avoid these risks, two life cycle models were considered: Waterfall and Agile. If we use the Waterfall model for software development, then we have to be clear with all the development requirements beforehand as there is no scope of changing the requirements once the project development starts. But for Agile methodology, on the other hand, it provides excellent visibility for key stakeholders, both of the project's progress and of the product itself, which in turn helps to ensure that expectations are effectively managed. So finally, the Agile model was chosen, which is shown in Figure 7.

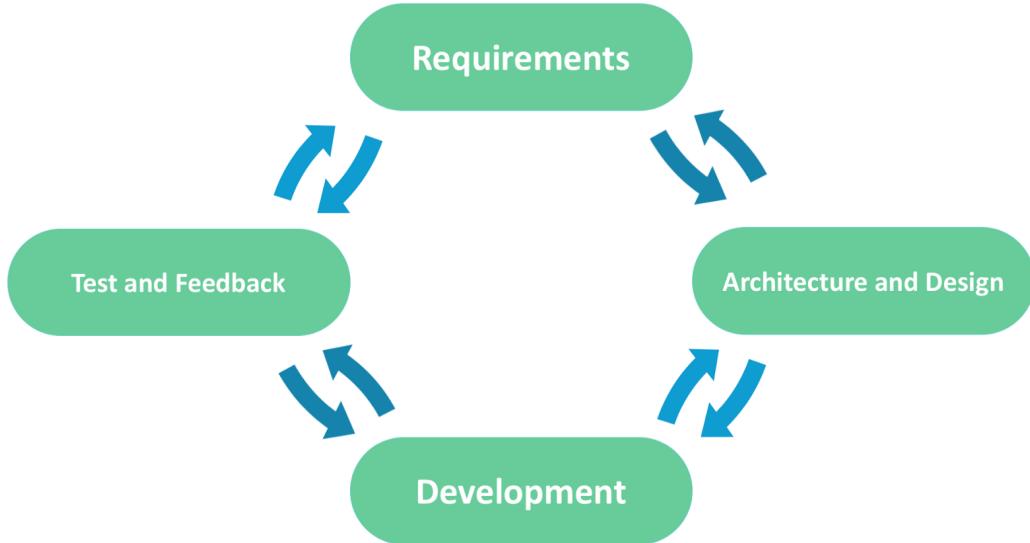


Figure 7. Agile Development Life Cycle Model [7]

An Agile methodology is a practice that helps continuous iterations of development and testing in the software development process. In this model, development and testing activities are concurrent. Furthermore, the Agile model is a combination of iterative and incremental process models, which breaks the product into small incremental builds. These builds are provided in iterations. Each iteration typically lasts from about one to three weeks.

At the end of each iteration, a working product demo is displayed to stakeholders. There are several known advantages and disadvantages of using the Agile model in this project:

1. Advantages:
 - (a) Easy to manage
 - (b) Little or no planning required
 - (c) Gives flexibility to developers
 - (d) Resource requirements are minimum
 - (e) Suitable for fixed or changing requirements

2. Disadvantages:

- (a) More risks of sustainability, maintainability, and extensibility
- (b) An overall plan, an Agile leader (the advisor) is a must without which it does not work
- (c) There is a very high individual dependency since there is minimum documentation generated

3. Design

3.1. Architecture Design

Metropolist is a web application that naturally decomposes into a client-server architecture. The architecture is a distributed application structure that partitions tasks or workloads between the providers of a resource or service, called servers, and service requests called clients. In theory, any device connected to the Internet can try to access and obtain the resources or services of the server while the server is running normally. Based on the client-server structure, we have detailed its component structures below [9]:

3.1.1. Web Browser or Client

The web browser or client is the interface rendition of a web app functionality, with which the user interacts. This content delivered to the client is developed using HTML, JavaScript, and CSS and does not require operating system related adaptations. In essence, the web browser or client manages how end users interact with the application.

There are three, well-known Web Application Architecture types available in the modern landscape: Single Page Applications (SPA), Microservices, and Serverless Architectures. Because SPA provides more responsive user experience and clean separation between data and views. Furthermore, our frontend and backend are developed separately. We chose the SPA structure.

The SPA model interacts with the user by providing updated content within the current page rather than loading entirely new pages from the server with each action from the user. It helps prevent interruptions in the user experience, transforming the behavior of the application such that it resembles a traditional desktop application.

3.1.2. Web Application Server

The web application server manages business logic and data persistence and can be built using PHP, Python, Java, Ruby, .NET, Node.js, among other languages. It is comprised of at least a centralized hub or control center to support multi-layer applications. The essential purpose of a web server architecture is to complete requests made by clients for a website. The clients are typically browsers and mobile apps that make requests using secure HTTPs protocol, either for page resources or a REST API.

Since the focus of this project is on the client side (frontend), which is the map generator (written in JavaScript), we chose Node.js. Moreover, Node.js is written using JavaScript and is the same technology as the frontend components. This makes it easier for the developer to program backend services and frontend user interfaces simultaneously. It also provides consistency, code sharing and reusability, simple knowledge-transfer, and a large number of free tools. These benefits bring flexibility and efficiency when building this project.

3.1.3. Database Server

The database server provides and stores relevant data for the application. Additionally, it may also supply the business logic and other information that is managed by the web application server. There are multiple popular database systems available: Oracle, MySQL, Microsoft SQL Server, PostgreSQL, MongoDB, MariaDB, DB2, and SAP HANA.

Because the project involves a small number of entities, the relationships among entities are not complicated, and the choice of the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) model, we chose MongoDB, which is dynamic, flexible and easy to get started. It also provides high performance, high availability, and high scalability. More importantly, our main purpose is to save maps and implement basic CRUD (create, retrieve, update, delete) operations of the database. As MongoDB is a schema-less database (written in C++), we can serialize the map data to JSON, send it to MongoDB and then save it.

3.2. Database Design

NoSQL stands for “Not only SQL,” which is an approach to database design that can accommodate a wide variety of data models, including key-value, document, columnar and graph formats. MongoDB is a type of NoSQL database. A record in MongoDB is a document, which is a data structure composed of field and value pairs. MongoDB documents are similar to JSON objects, because the values of fields may include other documents, arrays, and arrays of documents.

The system supports only two document types: the user and the map. A user can have many maps, but a map can only belong to one user. Thus, the relationship between the user and the map should be one-to-many.

MongoDB provides two ways of data modeling: Embedded Data Modeling and Normalized Data Modeling. Using Embedded Data Modeling, we may embed related data in a single structure or document, which means we should store maps in the user schema. However, the data of the map is relatively large, in general, it may exceed the maximum BSON document size set by MongoDB, and the map cannot exist as a separate entity. Though embedding provides better performance for reading operations, as well as the ability to request and retrieve related data in a single database operation, it is still beyond our consideration.

Normalized Data Modeling provides One-to-One and One-to-Many Relationships. We chose the Normalized One-to-Many Structure, which uses references between documents, and provides more flexibility than embedding. Figure 8 is the Entity Relationship Diagram that describes the relationship between the user and the map.

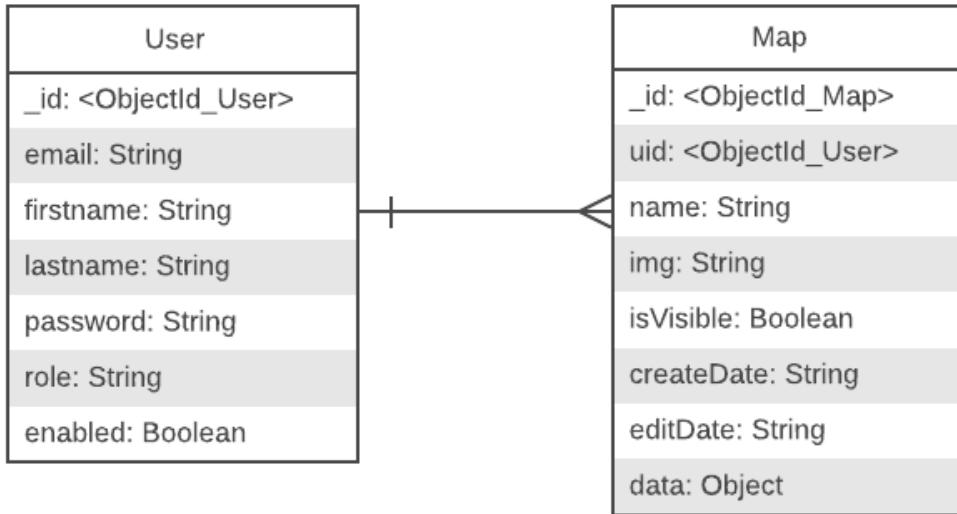


Figure 8. Entity Relationship Diagram

3.3. REST API Design

An API is an application programming interface. It is a set of rules that allow programs to talk to each other. The developer creates the API on the server and allows the client to talk to it.

REST determines how the API looks like, which is the acronym for “Representational State Transfer.” It is an architectural style for distributed hypermedia systems and was first presented by Roy Fielding in 2000 in his famous dissertation [2]. Like any other architectural styles, REST has its own 6 guiding constraints, which should be satisfied if an interface conforms to the RESTful. These principles are listed below:

1. Client-server. By separating the user interface concerns from the data storage concerns, it improves the portability of the user interface across multiple platforms and improve scalability by simplifying the server components.
2. Stateless. Each request from a client to server must contain all of the information necessary to understand the request, and cannot take advantage of any stored context on the server. Session state is therefore kept entirely on the client.
3. Cacheable. Cache constraints require that the data within a response to a request be implicitly or explicitly labeled as cacheable or non-cacheable. If a response is cacheable, then a client cache is given the right to reuse that response data for later, equivalent requests.
4. Uniform interface. By applying the software engineering principle of

generality to the component interface, the overall system architecture is simplified, and the visibility of interactions is improved.

5. Layered system. The layered system style allows an architecture to be composed of hierarchical layers by constraining component behavior such that each component cannot “see” beyond the immediate layer with which they are interacting.
6. Code on demand (optional). REST allows client functionality to be extended by downloading and executing code in the form of applets or scripts. e.g., clients may call the API to get a UI widget rendering code, which is allowed.

Although We found ourselves implementing all of these criteria, such as the Uniform interface, Client–server and Stateless. We still desired a RESTful API, although not “truly RESTful [8].” Our APIs as shown in Table 1, also implemented the following principles:

1. All endpoints follow a canonical form using a sequent of nested collection/item types. This practice conforms with the provision of a Uniform interface.
2. GET requests do not alter the state, which also conforms with the provision of a Uniform interface.
3. The client application and server application are able to evolve separately without any dependency on each other. And the client only knows resource URIs, which conforms with the provision of a Client–server.
4. The server will not store anything about the latest HTTP request client made. It will treat each and every request as new. No session, no history. This practice conforms with the provision of a Stateless.

3.4. Map Generator Design

3.4.1. Canvas and SVG

Since the project is a web application, the map generator must be able to run in the web page. We need to choose a 2D HTML graphics tool to render the map. Two technologies are available: SVG and Canvas.

SVG is a language for describing 2D graphics in XML, which means every element is available within the SVG DOM, you can attach JavaScript event handlers for an element. In SVG, each drawn shape is remembered as an object. If attributes of an SVG object are changed, the browser can automatically redraw the shape. Canvas draws 2D graphics, on the fly (with JavaScript) by rendering pixel by pixel. In Canvas, once the graphics are drawn, it is forgotten by the browser. If its position should be changed, the entire scene needs

HTTP Verb	URI	Description
GET	/metro/api/v1/users	Get a list of all users
GET	/metro/api/v1/users/{uid}	Get the user with {uid}
GET	/metro/api/v1/users/{uid}/maps	Get a list of all maps of the user with {uid}
PATCH	/metro/api/v1/users/{uid}/password	Verify the password of the user with {uid}
PUT	/metro/api/v1/users/{uid}/password	Update the password of the user with {uid}
PUT	/metro/api/v1/users/{uid}/email	Update the email of the user with {uid}
PUT	/metro/api/v1/users/{uid}/name	Update the name of the user with {uid}
PUT	/metro/api/v1/users/{uid}/enabled	Update the enabled of the user with {uid}
GET	/metro/api/v1/maps/{mid}	Get the map with {mid}
GET	/metro/api/v1/maps/?page={page}&limit={limit}	Get a list of {limit} maps on page {page}
POST	/metro/api/v1/maps	Add a new map to the database
PUT	/metro/api/v1/maps/{mid}	Update the map with {mid}
DELETE	/metro/api/v1/maps/{mid}	Delete the map with {mid}

Table 1. REST API Design Table

to be redrawn, including any objects that might have been covered by the graphics.

Because the map generator allows the user to dynamically annotate and edit the map, every time the user edits the map, the map will be redrawn, which contains thousands of objects, so we chose Canvas. Because SVG renders more slowly than Canvas of complex objects.

3.4.2. Graphics Libraries

There are many open source third-party graphics libraries on the web, such as D3.js, Paper.js, Fabric.js, Three.js, and so on, which provide convenient access to the local-level graphics primitives. D3.js was chosen as a rendering engine because of the following reasons:

1. It is open source, so we can freely use the library and code to build our own maps.
2. It has accurate documentation of available functions and methods.
3. There is a gallery with unique charts that can be referred to while developing our project.

3.4.3. Map

Before we started to develop the map generator, we needed to define the nature of a map and then decide what data structures and methods that would adequately represent the map.

A map is a two-dimensional, abstract representation of the surface of the world. There are three main ways to generate a map: noise functions, random partitioning, or a hybrid of the two. Most procedural map generators use noise functions (midpoint displacement, fractal, diamond-square, Perlin noise, etc.) to generate a randomized map, but the results often look artificial.

So we decided to use random partitioning to model the mapping constraints. And we defined the following layers of the map:

1. Elevation. The elevation layer represents the altitude of the area. The elevation of all locations in a polygon is considered the same.
2. Affluence. The affluence layer represents the wealth of the district (polygon). The lower the value, the poorer the area, vice versa. It is usually used to classify residential areas.
3. Desirability. The desirability layer represents the attraction of the region to people, from 0 to infinity, which determined by elevation and affluence. People generally prefer to live in places with higher desirability.
4. District. The district layer allows the user to assign types to districts. Correspondingly, different types of districts have different background colors. As a fantasy map of a medieval city, the city wall is often an essential element. Our map generator allows the user to create walls manually so the user can use the warp tool to render the city wall under this layer.
5. Building. The building layer displays buildings of various districts. These buildings are procedurally generated, and the user can change them by changing the type of the district.

A city is composed of different districts, so we introduced the following district types:

1. Castle. Represents a castle. A city map has only one castle, and the castle is always surrounded by large militaries.
2. Empty. Represents empty areas.
3. Farm. Represents farms and usually, there is a farmer's house on a large farm.
4. Harbor. Represents harbors, and there is usually a deck near the sea.
5. Medium. Represents the middle-class area, the value of desirability is generally medium
6. Military. Represents the military. The military always surrounds the castle
7. Park. Represents parks and generally appearing at the junction of rich areas, slums, and middle-class areas.
8. Plaza. Represents plazas and generally appearing at the junction of rich areas, slums, and middle-class areas.
9. Poor. Represents slums, the value of desirability is generally low.
10. Religious. Represents the area with churches or temples.
11. Rich. Represents the rich area, the value of desirability is generally high
12. University. Represents universities and always appearing in the middle-class areas and the rich areas.
13. Water. Represents rivers, lakes, sea, or ocean.

After introducing these district types, we realized the project should have the following features, which were added in addition to the initial requirements:

1. Once opening the map editor page, it will show an empty map with random district placements and shapes, then the user can start editing the map.
2. Create a map by entering the resolution of the map in the menu.
3. View the different layers of the map, these layers can be superimposed on each other.
4. Edit the different layers of the map.

5. Toggle the display of street names.
6. Set the waterline or elevation level
7. Display contour lines or not.
8. After selecting one or more than one layer under “edit” mode, the user can change the size of the ”warp tool” by using the mouse wheel, which determines the area where the map will be edited.
9. The districts and buildings are procedurally generated.
10. Allow to change the type of the current district by right-clicking and selecting a new type from the context menu.
11. Zoom in and zoom out the map by pressing on the alt key and using the mouse wheel.
12. Use a specialized button to resize the map on the menu.

4. Implementation

4.1. Frontend

There are many mature SPA frameworks today, such as Vue.js, ReactJS, AngularJS, and numerous others. Since the developer is familiar with Angular, the frontend part of the project is implemented using Angular, which comes with almost everything we need, from powerful templates to fast rendering, data management, HTTP services, form handling, and so much more. Moreover, Angular provides a UI component library called Angular Material, which is inspired by Google Material Design. Angular Material components help in constructing attractive, consistent, and functional web pages and web applications while adhering to modern web design principles like browser portability, device independence, and graceful degradation. It helps in creating faster, beautiful, and responsive websites.

4.1.1. Overview of Frontend Folder Structure

The Angular uses the concept of Angular Modules to group the related features. This gives us a helpful starting point to organize the folder structure. Each Module should get its folder named after the Module name. The Angular does not make any distinction between the Modules. However, based on how we made use of modules, we classified our modules into such categories: guard, model, pipe, service, and component. Figure 9 shows the final structure of our frontend application.

4.1.2. GUI Implementation

In our design, the user must register to log in before he can use the application, so the home page is the login page. Luckily, Angular provides multiple routing guards, and the CanActivate interface is a good way for us to implement our own authentication routing. In addition, as we mentioned in Section 2.3. Non-Functional Requirements, every form must be validated by the client side before being submitted to the server side. The Implementation of GUI is listed below:

1. The “Sign Up” form requires the user to enter a unique and valid email, first name, last name, password, and confirmed password. The user can click the icon on the right of the password input to make his password visible or invisible. Also, the “clear” button on the left bottom corner is used to clear all inputs of the “Sign Up” form. The user can also click the “Log in instead” button to be redirected to the “Log In” page if he already has an account. Figure 10b is the interface of the “Sign Up” page.

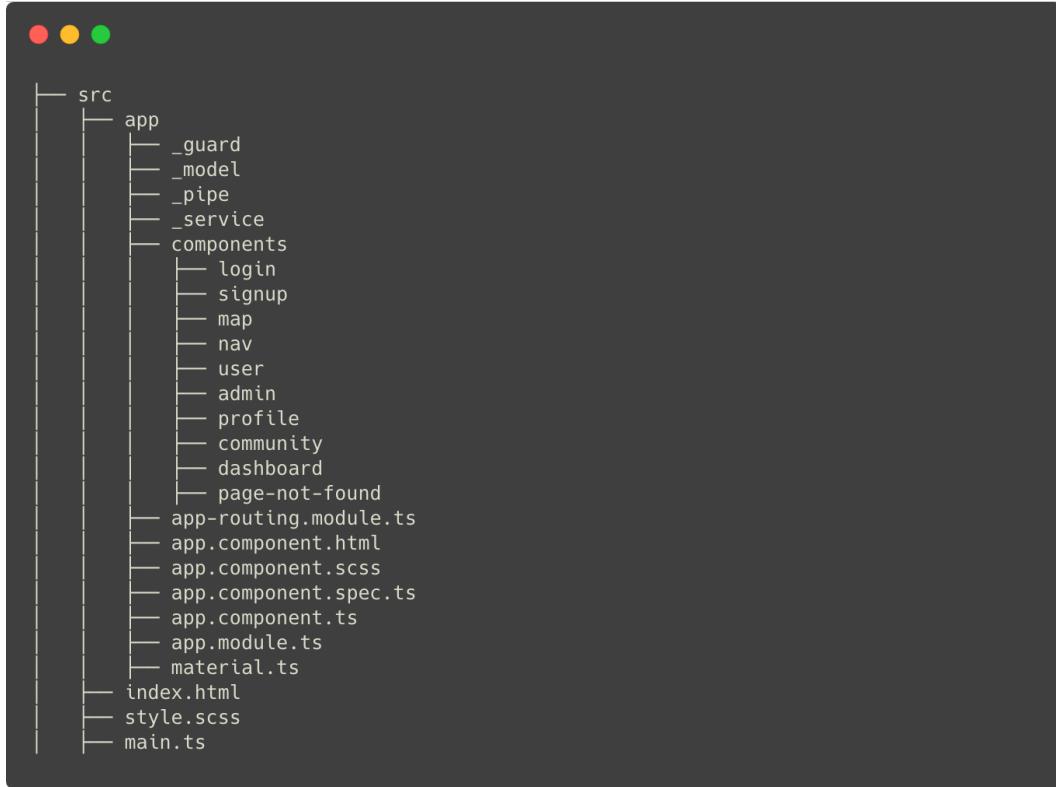


Figure 9. Frontend Folder Structure

2. The “Log In” form requires the user to enter the email and the password. Also, the user can access the “Sign Up” page via the “Create account” button on the bottom. Figure 10a is the interface of the “Log In” page.
3. The “Community” page shows all the maps that can be viewed, which are marked by their own owners as “isVisible.” Besides, the user can filter maps using map name, owner’s email, owner’s first name, or owner’s last name via the “Filter” on the left top corner. Figure 11 is the interface of the “Community” page.
4. The “User Dashboard” page displays all the maps belonging to the current user. The user can filter them using any information of maps via the “Filter” on the left top corner. The user can click on the header to perform the sorting of the corresponding map properties. Also, the user is allowed to make the map be visible or invisible by manipulating the slide of “isVisible”, and edit, delete or download it via the three buttons in the “Operation” column. In addition, The button for creating a new map is in the lower right corner of the page. The user can enter a map name in the pop-up window after clicking it. Figure 12 is the interface of the User dashboard page.
5. The “Profile” page allows the user to change his email, password, first

The image shows two side-by-side login forms for the Metropolist platform.

(a) Login page:

- Header:** METROPOLIST
- Title:** Log in to continue to Metropolist
- Fields:**
 - Email *
 - Password *
- Buttons:**
 - Create account
 - Log in
 - Log in instead
 - Clear
 - Sign up

(b) Signup page:

- Header:** METROPOLIST
- Title:** Create your Account to start with Metropolist
- Fields:**
 - Email *
 - Firstname *
 - Lastname *
 - Password *
 - Confirm *
- Buttons:**
 - Log in instead
 - Clear
 - Sign up

Figure 10. Login and Signup pages

The image shows the community page of the Metropolist platform, displaying a grid of user-generated maps.

Header: METROPOLIST

Filter: _____

Items per page: 6 | < < > >|

User	Map Name	Thumbnail	Actions
Shizheng Yang a@a	city-wall		VIEW DOWNLOAD
a a a@a	the		VIEW DOWNLOAD
Shizheng Yang a@a	a-randomly-generated-map		VIEW DOWNLOAD
q q q@q	city-map		VIEW DOWNLOAD
q q q@q	my-first-map		VIEW DOWNLOAD
Shizheng Yang a@a	newnewnew-map		VIEW DOWNLOAD

Footer: © 2019 - Shizheng Yang

Figure 11. Community page

The screenshot shows a user dashboard titled 'METROPOLIST'. At the top right are icons for home, refresh, and user profile. Below the title is a 'Filter' input field. A table lists five entries, each with a small thumbnail image, name, creation date, edit date, visibility status (a grey circle), and three operation buttons (pencil, trash, download). The names of the maps are: 'a-randomly-generated-map', 'newnewnew-map', 'tttttest-map', 'the-mappppp', and 'a-real-map'. The creation dates range from April 8, 2019, to April 29, 2019. The edit dates range from April 8, 2019, to April 29, 2019. The visibility status for all maps is currently off (grey circle). The operation buttons consist of a pencil icon, a trash bin icon, and a download icon.

Name	Image	Create Date	Edit Date	isVisible	Operation
a-randomly-generated-map		2019-04-29 14:09:49	2019-04-29 18:04:10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
newnewnew-map		2019-04-16 23:56:45	2019-04-22 23:21:16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
tttttest-map		2019-04-16 23:42:16	2019-04-16 23:47:44	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
the-mappppp		2019-04-10 03:47:02	2019-04-11 19:09:13	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
a-real-map		2019-04-08 13:48:17	2019-04-08 14:08:28	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Items per page: 5 | < < > >|

Figure 12. User dashboard page

name, or last name. By the way, before changing the password, the user must first enter the old password. After the verification is passed, the new password can be entered. Figure 13 is the interface of the Profile page.

4.2. Backend

The backend consists of the server, database, and APIs. The server running on the developer's computer, the database is powered by MongoDB, and the APIs are RESTful. On this basis, we chose Express.js because it is a lightweight Node.js framework, which allows us to define routes of our application so that we can easily apply the REST API design paradigm. Also, it includes thousands of mature middleware modules that we can use to perform additional tasks on the request and response.

To connect MongoDB to our Express application, we had to use an ORM to convert information from the database to a JavaScript application without SQL statements. ORM is short for Object Related Mapping, a technique that can be used to convert data among incompatible types. More specifically, ORMs mimic the actual database so we can operate within a programming language (e.g. JavaScript) without using a database query language (e.g. SQL) to interact with the database. For this application, we used Mongoose as the ORM, which is an object document modeling (ODM) layer that sits on top of the Node.js's MongoDB driver.

Figure 14 shows the final structure of the backend application powered by Node.js. Figure 15 shows a part of the implemented endpoints, which are located in `src/routes/index.js`.

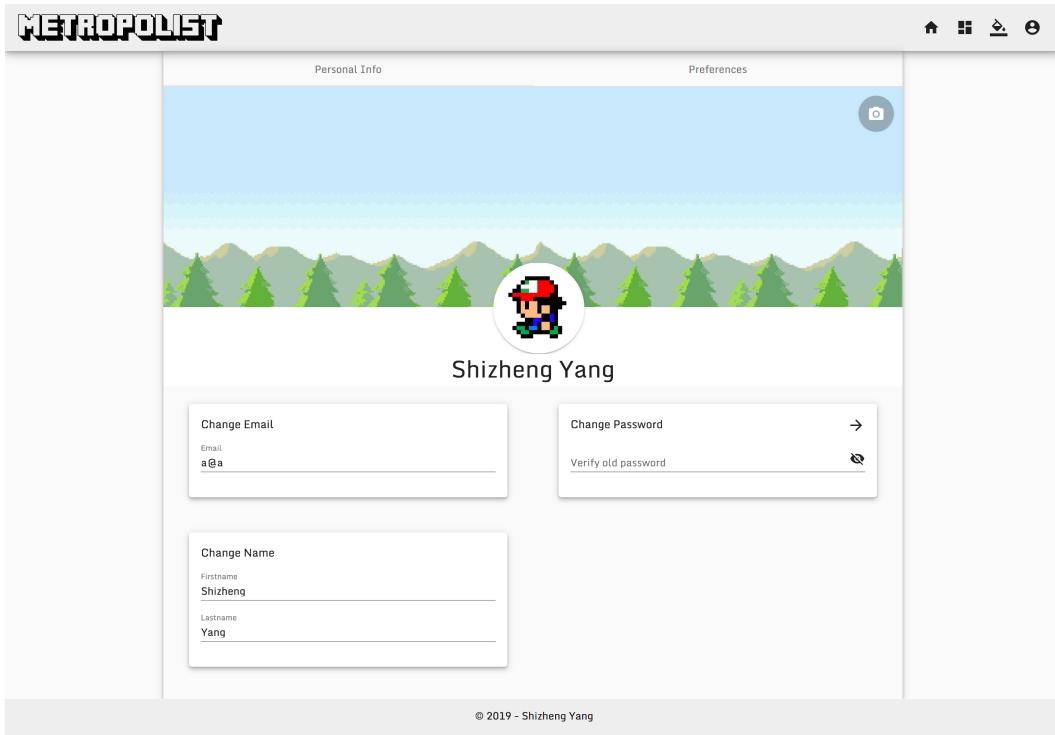


Figure 13. Profile page

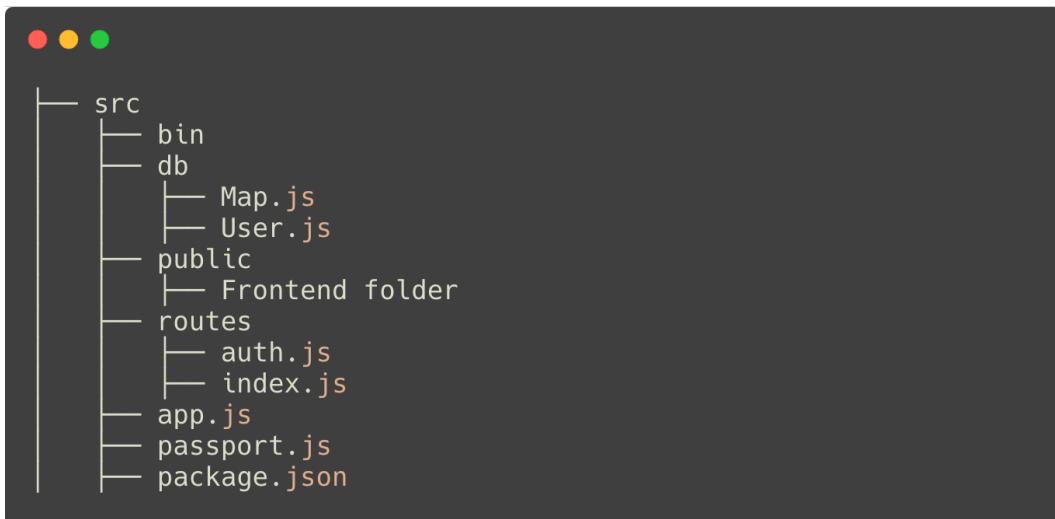


Figure 14. Backend Folder Structure

```

● ● ●

=====
          User API
=====

router.get('/metro/api/v1/users/:uid', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.get('/metro/api/v1/users', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.patch('/metro/api/v1/users/:uid/password', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.put('/metro/api/v1/users/:uid/email', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.put('/metro/api/v1/users/:uid/name', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.put('/metro/api/v1/users/:uid/password', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.put('/metro/api/v1/users/:uid/enable', (req, res, next) => {...});

=====
          Map API
=====

router.get('/metro/api/v1/maps', async (req, res, next) => {...});
router.get('/metro/api/v1/maps/:mid', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.get('/metro/api/v1/users/:uid/maps/', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.post('/metro/api/v1/maps', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.put('/metro/api/v1/maps/:mid', (req, res, next) => {...});
router.delete('/metro/api/v1/maps/:mid', (req, res, next) => {...});

```

Figure 15. Endpoints

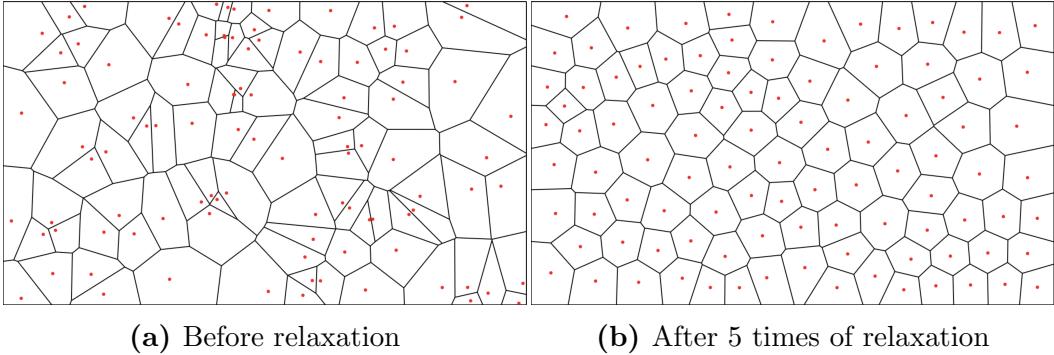


Figure 16. Voronoi polygons before relaxation and after relaxation

4.3. Map Generator

4.3.1. Polygons

The first step is to render some polygons (cells). As we mentioned before in the design phase, we used the `d3.voronoi` library to implement Steven J. Fortune's algorithm for computing the Voronoi diagram or Delaunay triangulation of a set of two-dimensional points. Figure 16a is an example of the Voronoi diagram containing 100 sites and the corresponding 100 polygons:

As we can see the tessellation of these random points is irregular: the ratio between the largest and smallest region is overly large. To reduce this variance and obtain a more regular partition, we used a variant of Lloyd relaxation, also known as Voronoi iteration or relaxation, which has the effect of making the polygons evenly distributed. Lloyd relaxation removes each point to the centroid of its containing polygon. The more iterations, the more regular the polygons get. Figure 16b is the result of performing Lloyd relaxation 5 times.

4.3.2. Elevation

As we mentioned in the map generator design phase, the map should include a height layer, so we introduced the concept of “elevation.” We referred to the locations that generate polygons as sites, and each site corresponds to a single polygon. Then we derived the sites object from the `d3.voronoi` object, and assigned the “elevation” property to it, a value that is normalized to the range [0..1]. Before making the height map, we defined the waterline, whose value is also normalized to the range [0..1]. If the value of elevation is greater than the waterline elevation, the polygon represented by the site is a land element. Otherwise, it is water. Also, for viewing the map, darker colors denote higher elevations. As the waterline rises, the land with lower altitudes are flooded and become water. So in the beginning, we set all the polygons to be land and have an initial elevation that is 0.35. If the user wants to create water, then he should manually edit them. Figure 17 is an example that divides the world into the land and water polygons:

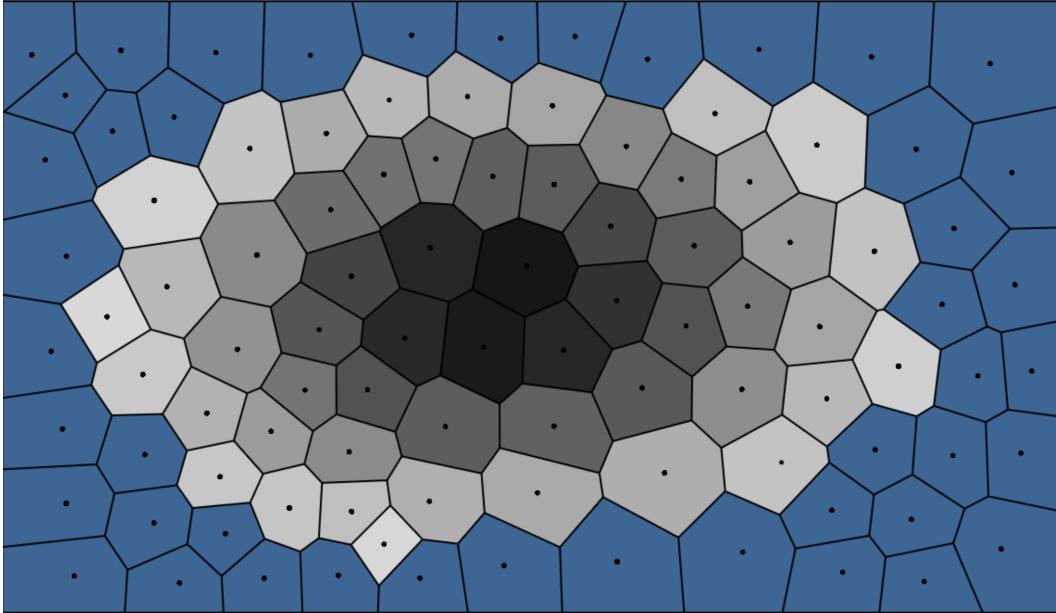


Figure 17. The land surrounded by water

4.3.3. Contour Lines

We calculated the contour lines of the map, which are determined by the site elevations. The calculation of the contour lines is based on the Delaunay triangulation, which is related to the Voronoi diagram. Every triangle in the Delaunay triangulation corresponds to a polygon corner in the Voronoi diagram. Every polygon in the Voronoi diagram corresponds to a corner of a Delaunay triangle. Every edge in the Delaunay graph corresponds to an edge in the Voronoi graph. We computed these triangles directly from

`d3.voronoi.triangles()`. Figure 18 is the Delaunay triangulation graph based on the Voronoi diagram after relaxation.

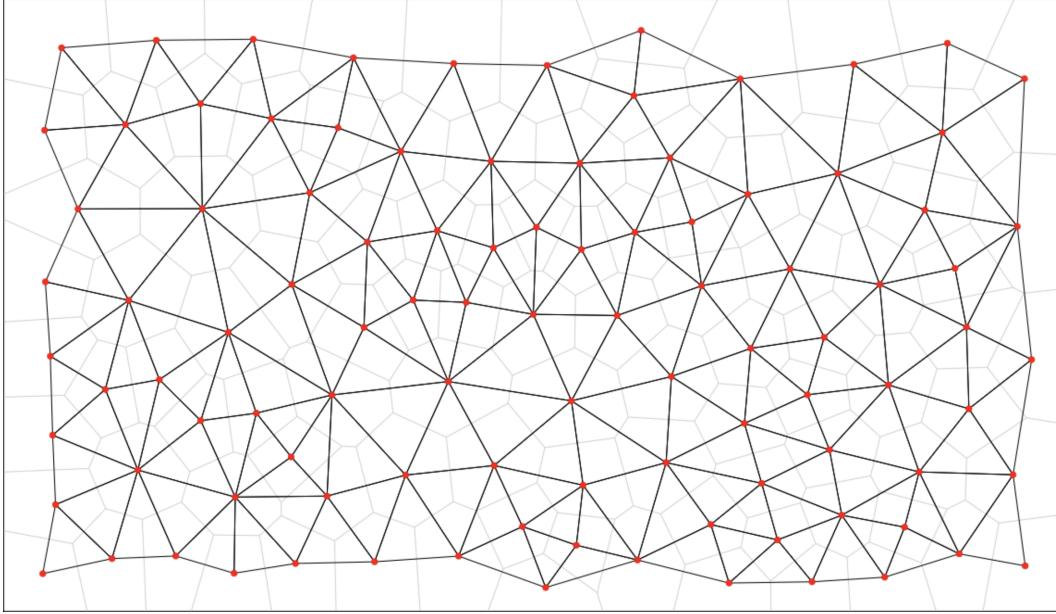


Figure 18. Delaunay triangulation

These triangles link to every site, and each site has an “elevation” attribute. We set an elevation value between 0 and 1, and then looped over every edge of every Delaunay triangle. If this value is between the elevation values of the two sites to which it is connected, we marked the point represented by this value and then connected all such points. This process is given in pseudocode form in Algorithm 1.

Algorithm 1 Draw contour lines for elevation X

Require: $X \geq 0 \wedge X \leq 1$

```

for every triangle  $T$  do
    for every edge  $E_1, E_2$  in  $T$  do
        if  $X \geq \text{elevation}(E_1) \wedge X \leq \text{elevation}(E_2)$  then
            Draw a line from  $E_1$  to  $E_2$ 
        end if
    end for
end for

```

We expected the user to edit the terrain contour lines by using the tools we provided. Figure 19 gives an example that draws four contour lines based on the value of waterline (blue) and several elevation values: 0.25 (red), 0.5 (green), and 0.75 (yellow).

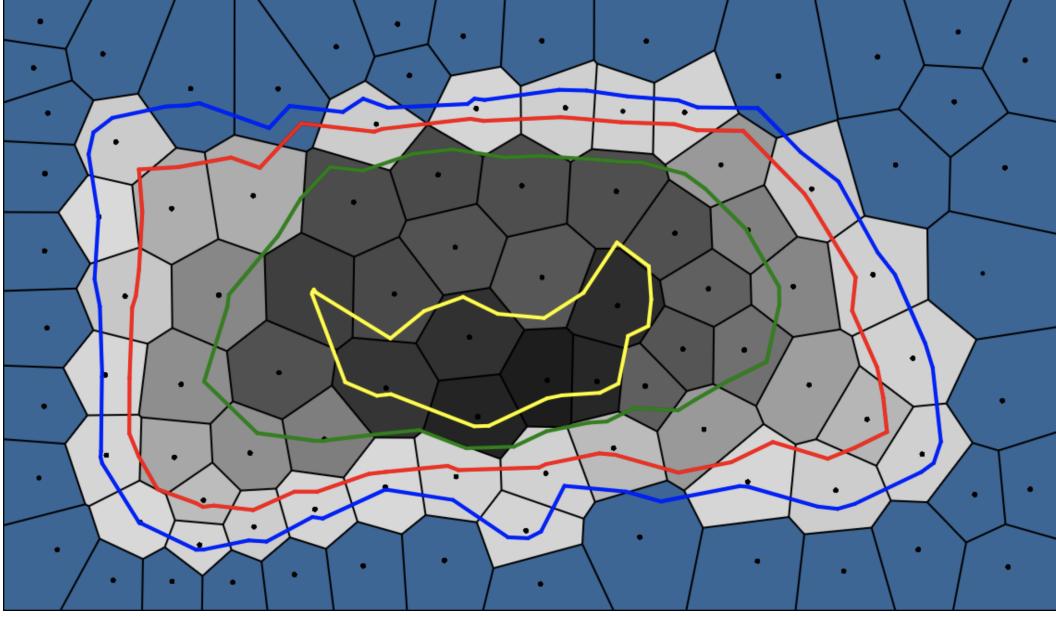


Figure 19. A map with contour lines

4.3.4. Warp Tool

As mentioned in the previous section, the user needs to edit the map manually. So we provided several interactive methods, the most important of which is the warp tool. The warp tool is rendered as a circle that follows the mouse movement, and its role is to change the specific attribute values of all sites in the range.

In terms of elevation, we assigned a property called “delta” for each site object, which is the factor that determines the elevation. The user can click and drag the warp tool to change the elevation of the selected sites accordingly. In general, the longer the distance is dragged, The more values are changed. The value of elevation is the product of the delta and the increment value manually set by the user. Within the radius of the warp tool, the elevation value of sites in the center position changes more than the edge position.

The user first selects one of the two modes of “increase” or “decrease.” Correspondingly, the attribute value of the site is increased or decreased under the operation of the warp tool. Also, the size of the warp tool can be enlarged or reduced by the mouse wheel.

4.3.5. Layers

In our design, 5 different layers were applied to the map. Each layer comes with two modes, “view” and “edit.” Once the user has checked the edit option of a layer, its view option would also be checked; once the view option of a layer is unchecked, its edit option would also be unchecked. We always keep at least one layer viewable to ensure the normal display of the map if the user

uncheckeds all of them. The user can view them by checking different layers, and layers can be superimposed on each other. For each polygon, we took the average of the sum of the currently selected layers of color values as its background color.

Just like introducing the concept of elevation and assigning it to sites, we then assigned “affluence”, “desirability”, “district”, “building” as attributes to each site.

4.3.6. City Wall

The basic idea is to assign the “wall” attribute to each site and then give it an initial value with 0, which means there are no walls in this district. Another value is 1, representing there is the city wall in this district. The user increases or decreases the value of the wall by using the warp tool to render or erase the city wall. We used the d3.topojson library to merge all the districts with walls, which returned multiple merged polygons. Interior borders shared by adjacent polygons in merged polygons are removed, as we can see in Figure 20.

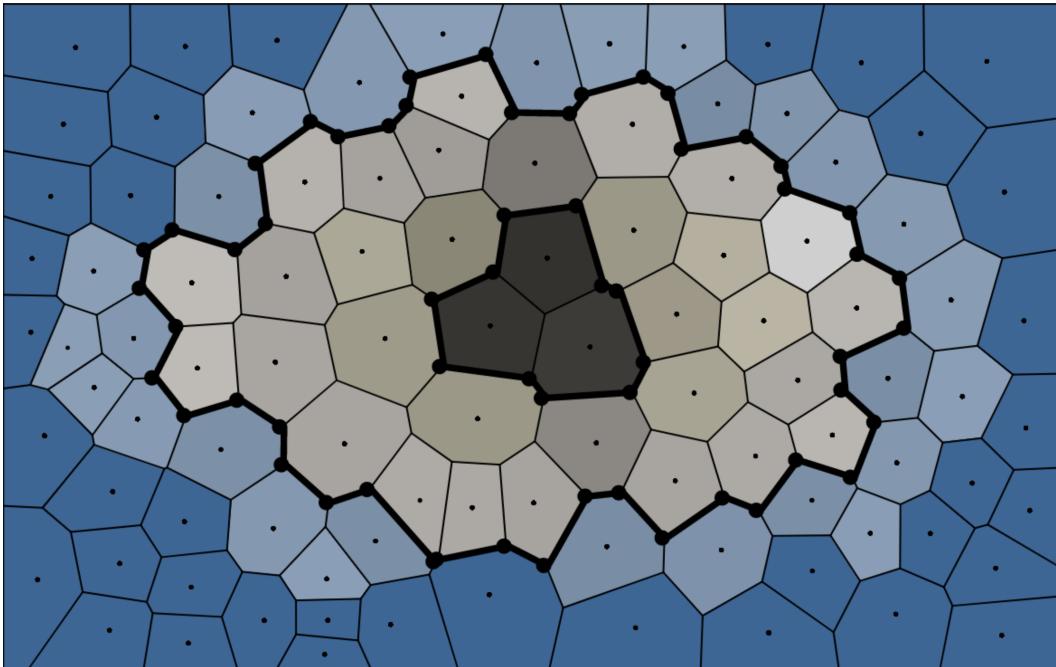


Figure 20. A map with walls and classification

4.3.7. Types

As we mentioned in the design phase, each district of the city map was subdivided into 13 types, and we assumed that the value of “desirability” determines how each polygon is classified. The equation and the assignment conditions are listed below:

$$desirability = (elevation + affluence)/2$$

1. castle: **max** $desirability$
2. empty: $desirability = 0 \wedge (waterline < desirability \leq 0.45)$
3. farm: $waterline < desirability \wedge elevation \leq 0.45$
4. harbor: $\{poor, water\} \subset \{neighbours\}$
5. medium: $0.6 < desirability < 0.8$
6. military: The military always surrounds the castle
7. park: $\{poor, medium, rich\} \subset \{neighbours\}$
8. plaza: $\{poor, medium, rich\} \subset \{neighbours\}$
9. poor: $waterline < desirability \geq 0.6$
10. religious: $Math.random() > 0.99 \wedge \text{count}\{religious\} < 2.5/100 * \text{count}\{polygons\}$
11. rich: $0.8 \leq desirability \leq 1$
12. university: $\{rich, rich, rich, rich\} \subset \{neighbours\} \wedge \text{count}\{university\} < 2.5/100 * \text{count}\{polygons\}$
13. water: $elevation \leq waterline$

In our design, sites closest to the boundary can only be assigned as empty, farm, or water. Different types of districts are represented by different background colors.

4.3.8. Blocks

One of the most important parts is the generation of buildings, which is procedural. Before generating the buildings, we first introduced the concept of a block. A district may have many blocks, and a block may contain many buildings.

The main idea of creating buildings is polygon splitting. We used a third-party library called poly-split-js.js written by Kladess [5], that implemented a polygon-splitting algorithm written by Sumit Khetarpal [4]. The algorithm splits polygons into any number of equal areas while ensuring the minimum length of line based cuts. It also works for both convex and concave polygons, as long as they do not have non-manifold vertices, and can be traversed with a single loop. In a nutshell, this algorithm is designed to divide a polygon into two by their area ratio. It receives two parameters: the vertex set of the

polygon to be split and the area ratio of the polygons to be input. It returns the vertices sets Polygon1 and Polygon2 of the two split polygons, and a secant line called Cutline.

We split all polygons (except water, park, and castle) into blocks, to obtain the preliminary version of the city map. Figure 21 is an example of this technique.

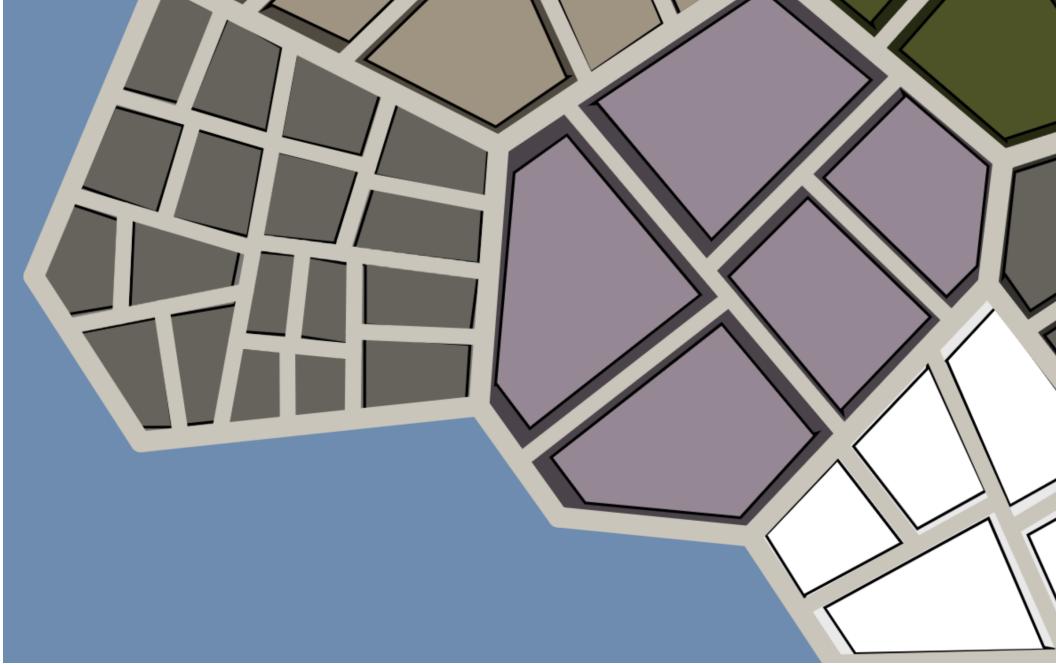


Figure 21. A city map with each district divided into sub-blocks

4.3.9. Streets

A feature of this map is that of randomly generated street names. As we mentioned before, the polygon-splitting algorithm returns two polygons and a cut line. This cut line is the key to our implementation of the streets. Because there are no streets between the buildings, we only considered the streets in the blocks and the streets between districts.

First, each edge of each district is a street, and each edge of each block is also a street. Each cut line participating in the split block is also a street.

Considering that each polygon and each of its neighbors share a common edge, we avoided repeating these edges by hashing each rendered edge. Because one edge consists of two vertices, so each edge needs to be hashed twice. Then we put these hashes into a global variable. When an edge is ready to render, we took the two hash values of this edge and compared them with all the hashed edges in the global variable. If the edge has already been rendered, skip rendering it, otherwise, render and add these two hashes to the global hash collection. After rendering each edge, we cleared the hash collection in the global variable for the next rendering.

Each street has its own street name. First, we obtained a collection of random street names, and then randomly placed these street names at the midpoint of each street. Because each street is only traversed once, there would be no situation where two street names appear on one street. Then we adjusted the angle between the street name and the x-axis so that it can always be displayed well on the street. Figure 22 shows the streets with street names.

As the number of polygons increases, the street would increase, and street names would inevitably repeat. We hope to solve this problem in future work.

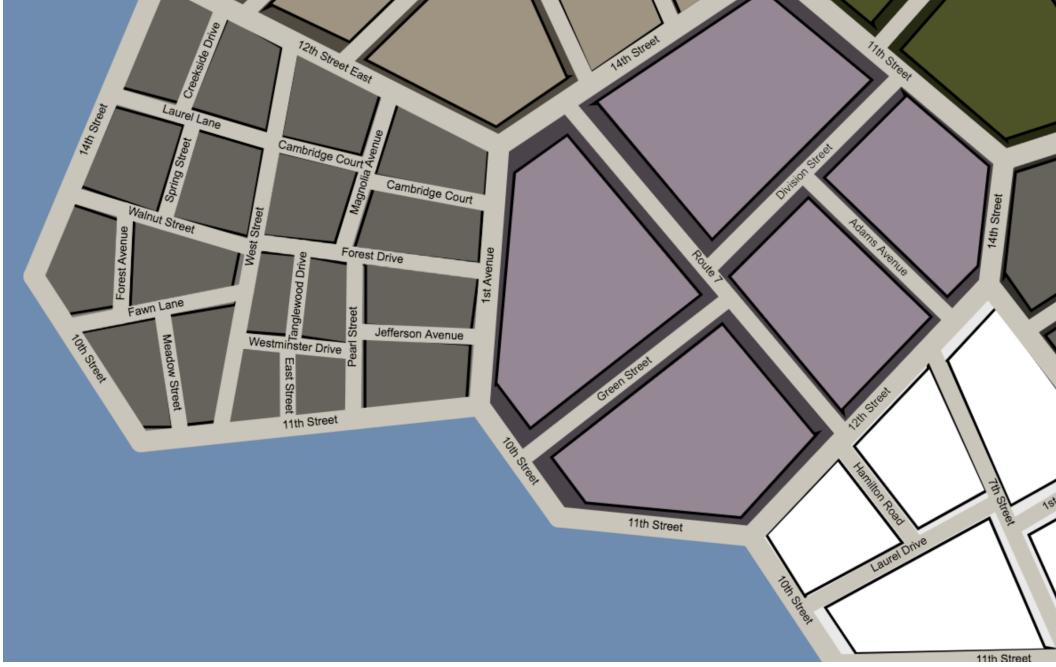


Figure 22. A city map with streets

4.3.10. Buildings and Details

After getting blocks, we split them again as before. The small polygons returned this time are treated as buildings, which are located in blocks. We have previously defined several types of districts, some of which do not need to be split, for example water, castle, and park. Some of them require unique segmentation methods, such as the farm.

For farms, it only needs to be split 2 or 3 times, unlike other ones that have been split a dozen times. These split larger polygons are pieces of the farm, we randomly made some diagonal lines to be treated as fields, and then changed the background color to the wheat color that echoes the farm. With the field, of course, the farmer's house is indispensable. When we divide the buildings, we only need to keep a small polygon as a house. And not every farm needs a house, so we reduce the probability of splitting farms, let it occasionally do a building-level segmentation.

Besides, for the type harbor, we got the inspiration from the Medieval Fantasy City Generator and introduced the concept of deck, which is randomly generated and of moderate length. Figure 23 is the implementation of buildings and details.

Since the map would be filled with polygons in an instant, we designed such a mechanism, and the precondition is the map can be zoomed in or out normally: when the map is zoomed in to a certain extent, these buildings would be displayed. For example, when the map is enlarged to 2 times, the street names will be automatically displayed, when it is enlarged to 3 times, all the buildings will be rendered. On the one hand, the map looks much better, and on the other hand, the rendering work of the browser has been lightened, and the performance of the generator is improved.

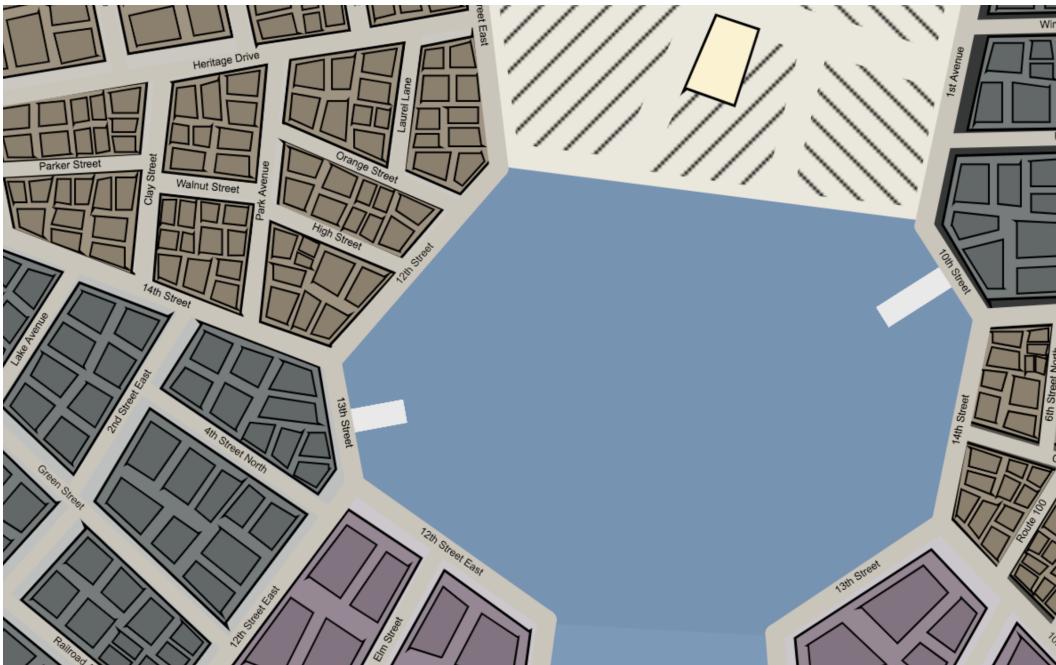
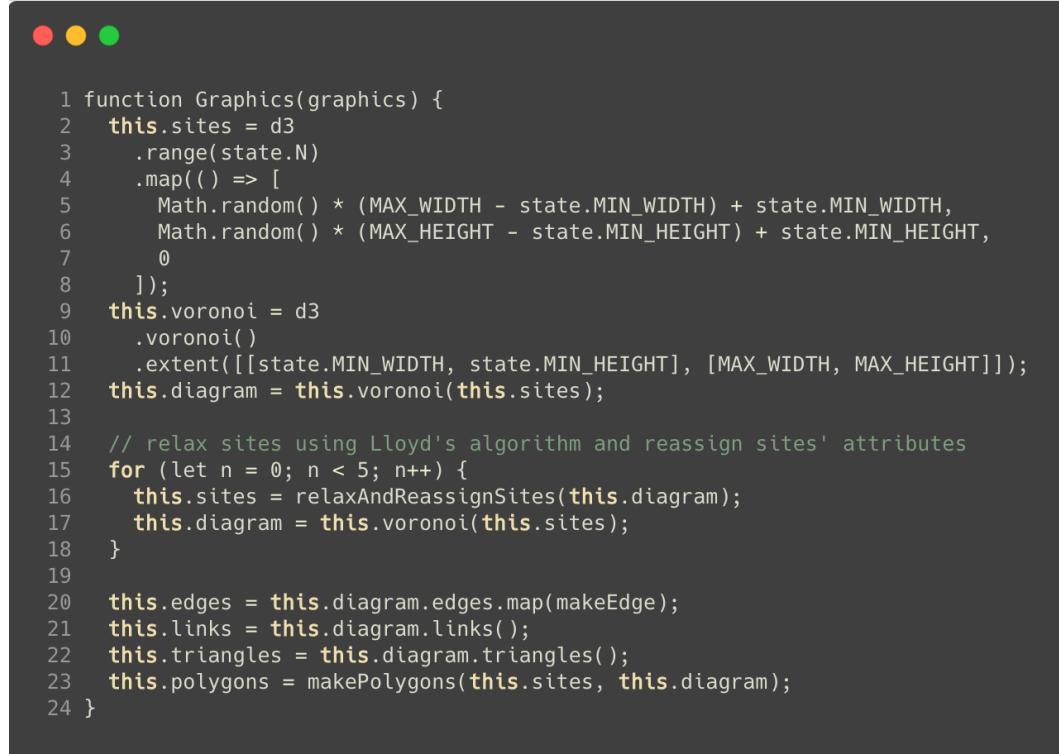


Figure 23. A city map with buildings and details

4.3.11. Graph Data Structure

Figure 24 is the core code that generates the graph and shows the graph data structure. “this.sites” creates random sites (points) within the scope of the Voronoi diagram (canvas). In case of sites being too close to the boundaries, we set a padding value for boundaries. “this.voronoi” creates a new Voronoi layout with default x and y accessors and a null extent. “this.diagram” returned by Voronoi diagram object has the following properties: edges, links, cells and triangles, which respectively represent the set of edges of polygons, the set of links based on sites, the set of vertices of polygons, and Delaunay triangulation of the specified data array as an array of triangles.

The “relaxAndReassignSites()” method relaxes sites using Lloyd’s algorithm and assigns the attributes we need to each site. The “makeEdge()” method accepts one parameter: the diagram object, and then simply converts the properties of the Edge object to the format we need. The “makePolygons()” accepts two parameters: the sites object and the diagram object, it converts the cells object from the diagram object into the format we need, assigns the properties we need to each cell, and returns new polygon objects.



```

1 function Graphics(graphics) {
2   this.sites = d3
3     .range(state.N)
4     .map(() => [
5       Math.random() * (MAX_WIDTH - state.MIN_WIDTH) + state.MIN_WIDTH,
6       Math.random() * (MAX_HEIGHT - state.MIN_HEIGHT) + state.MIN_HEIGHT,
7       0
8     ]);
9   this.voronoi = d3
10    .voronoi()
11    .extent([[state.MIN_WIDTH, state.MIN_HEIGHT], [MAX_WIDTH, MAX_HEIGHT]]);
12   this.diagram = this.voronoi(this.sites);
13
14 // relax sites using Lloyd's algorithm and reassign sites' attributes
15 for (let n = 0; n < 5; n++) {
16   this.sites = relaxAndReassignSites(this.diagram);
17   this.diagram = this.voronoi(this.sites);
18 }
19
20 this.edges = this.diagram.edges.map(makeEdge);
21 this.links = this.diagram.links();
22 this.triangles = this.diagram.triangles();
23 this.polygons = makePolygons(this.sites, this.diagram);
24 }

```

Figure 24. Core code that generates the graph and shows the graph data structure

5. Testing

Agile testing focuses on repairing faults immediately, rather than waiting for the end of the project. So in Agile development, testing is conducted during each iteration after its implementation phase. In each testing, we followed the sequences [10] listed below to test:

5.1. Functional Testing

The first step of web application testing ensures that the functions of a system are tested. During functional testing, actual system usage is simulated. The idea is to come as close as possible to real system usage and create test conditions that are related to user requirements.

Based on the black-box testing, we analyzed the boundaries of each system unit and created corresponding test cases. The specific implementation is to make legal or illegal input for each form and analyzed the actual output with the expected output.

5.2. Usability Testing

Usability goes beyond functionality testing and combines testing for functionality as well as overall user experience. Because the developer knows how the code is written, he may not think to test a specific scenario. So we recruit test participants to use the application, based on their users' perspectives, we have received a lot of feedback from all aspects. For example, they don't know how to use the map editor correctly at the very first time, etc.

5.3. Interface Testing

Interface testing ensures that all interactions between the client and web server interfaces are running smoothly. We tested each of the APIs, including checking the communication process and ensuring that error messages are correctly displayed and that client and server interrupt are handled correctly. There are also a lot of problems, such as executing database operations without further verification of the parameters in the server side, etc.

5.4. Compatibility Testing

Compatibility testing is broadly divided into browser compatibility, operating system compatibility, and mobile compatibility.

Since the application is based on the Browser/Server architecture, we focus on the browser test. And the author's computer is macOS, we then tested it based on the browsers on macOS: Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and Opera. The

main purpose of the browser compatibility testing is to detect if the application can run equally well on different browsers, which includes checking that JavaScript, AJAX, APIs, and authentication requests are working as designed.

5.5. Performance Testing

For a web application, performance testing is always inseparable from load test and stress testing. But since the application has not been deployed to the web, we transferred the performance testing to the map generator. The key of the testing is the rendering performance of the map, the value of fps (the frequency at which consecutive images called frames appear on a display) as an indicator.

5.6. Security Testing

The final step of web application testing makes sure that the application is protected against unauthorized access and harmful actions from all kinds of attacks. However, since our servers, including the client server, the backend server, and the database server are all running locally. And we are not going to deploy them online, this phase was simplified. We only tested if cookies and tokens are safely saved.

6. Conclusion

With this current project, we can log in as an administrator or register as a system user and log in. Both administrators and users can edit their profile and log out. In particular, administrators can view all users, disable or enable normal users, and search for a user. While users can create their own maps and edit or delete them. Users can also view their all maps, search for maps, make maps public or private, and download maps.

There are still some requirements that have not been implemented, such as view and search for users, make maps viewable by only a select list of users, make maps viewable only by a select list of users, and annotate a map including its sub-requirements. We hope to complete them in future work.

We inevitably encountered some difficulties in the process of development, mainly in the development part of the city map generator. At the beginning of the choice of third-party libraries, we tried a few, which are not very ideal. Next, on the choice of semi-automatic map generation algorithm, we tried the force-directed graph layout [1]. The purpose is to allow buildings to locate according to the polygons' boundaries automatically, and we made several good demos. However, in the end, we found that the requirements could not be completed, and even slightly deviated from the original ones. We finally found the correct algorithm that is the polygon partitioning algorithm.

We would consider using SVG as the rendering engine because we decided on using Canvas in the beginning, and it is increasingly difficult to replace it as the number of code increased and the project grew. Also, it is undeniable that the rendering capability of Canvas began to decline as the number of polygons in the local map has increased to a certain amount or zoomed in the map to a certain scale. So we want to try to develop it with SVG and hope that its rendering capability can support this project.

From the software engineering perspective, we tried following agile principles as much as possible. However, in fact, in the entire development process, we have lost the role of the customer, basically replaced by the advisor, that is, the sponsor. In a sense, we pretended to be agile, although the result of the final project is acceptable, there are still many differences with the actual development process. But if we start over the project and choose the Software Development Life Cycle Model again, we will still choose Agile, because even if we choose other development models, we still lack the role of the customer. More importantly, due to the uncertainty of the various selections, we need to keep trying. So the development process must be flexible, and Agile can support this very well.

7. References

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