Memo UG Indoor Maps

Lijst Calimero, July 5th 2017

Introduction

Looking up an address, planning a city trip, or searching a destination for your semester abroad. With only a few clicks you can be anywhere in the world. Digital maps make it possible to navigate with unprecedented ease. Closer to home, it's often much more difficult to find your way. The University of Groningen (UG) uses many different indicators to label its rooms and buildings, and as a result a University building can feel like a real labyrinth. So, finding the right room or building at the UG can be quite a challenge. But we can change that. In this memo, Lijst Calimero proposes to make existing maps digitally available through UG online services, so that students and staff can find their way around the buildings of the UG more easily.

Better accessibility of UG buildings is highly desirable. The main users of University buildings are students and staff. Although you could expect that students and staff would know their way around their faculty building by heart after a while, this would be more difficult for students and staff who occasionally visit a different faculty building. Easily findable information about rooms provided through a UG maps tool is therefore desirable. Moreover, a lot of people not directly related to the UG visit the University for the first time every day. For example, when they have an appointment with UG staff or attend a graduation ceremony of a relative. Online maps of UG buildings would enable these visitors to figure out where they have to go, but also whether and how specific rooms can be accessed by disabled people. A tool like this contributes to the hospitality of the UG.

Solution

Currently, the Geoservice of the Center for Information Technology (CIT) is developing an Indoor Maps tool for UG online services. It will run in every browser also on mobile devices, without the need to install an extra app. Users can see the floorplans of the buildings and the buildings' surroundings (e.g. bicycle parkings, bus stops) in one overview. By searching for a room number or name the map shows the location and route to the building entrance or nearest bus stop for example.

Their Indoor Maps tool will provide great flexibility. For example, the application could differentiate between users. Students and staff would be able to see all staff offices, whereas external users would only see lecture rooms, canteens and University services such as SSC and the I-shop.

Moreover, the tool could be used in conjunction with the online schedules so that students will automatically get their lecture rooms and recommended directions added to their personal calendar. By providing the new tool via maps.rug.nl, the Indoor Maps would be highly recognizable and easily findable.

Your diploma. Your future. **Our priority**.

A first pilot with the UG Indoor Maps tool at the Medical Faculty is planned for the autumn. At the faculty, the first incentive to make directions to lecture rooms more accessible was the demand of UMCG staff who are unfamiliar with the FMS faculty building. A first look at how such an Indoor Map would look like can be found at server1.geodienst.xyz/umcg/.

Apart from being useful as a tool for finding the way, the tool and data could also be used by staff members that work for Facility Services or the CIT. One example could be combining malfunction or maintenance tasks with the map to see all tasks in a building in one overview.

Conclusion

Making maps of UG buildings available through an Indoor Maps tool will make it easier for students, staff and other visitors to find their way in University buildings. They will not have to struggle with unclear indications anymore and can find a room in one go.

Lijst Calimero considers an Indoor Maps tool a valuable improvement of the information provision of the UG as it solves a problem that the UG departments are confronted with frequently. By doing so, we make the University a place where students, staff and visitors can study, work and move with great pleasure. Therefore, we ask the Board of the University to ensure that the Indoor Maps tool will be made available for all University buildings and that the appropriate financial means can be allocated.