Using the Story Maps
Publishing Platform

Story maps are simple web applications that let you combine web maps with text, photos, and other content to tell geography-based stories. Esri has developed a series of apps that accommodate various forms of storytelling, including point-to-point tours, point-of-interest collections, and thematic map series. These pages present an overview of Esri’s storytelling apps. All the apps are open source and can be downloaded from the story maps website or GitHub. Incrementally, configurable apps are directly accessible on ArcGIS Online. Use the share function to choose an app and configure it to suit your needs. These apps are changing rapidly, visit the story maps website for the latest.

storymaps.esri.com

How to make a story map

1. Consider your audience

Before building your story map, it’s important to think about exactly what story you’re trying to tell and the audience you want to reach. Text should be brief, maps simple, and messages as clear as possible.

2. Build your web map

Web maps combine base maps with overlays, map feature services, and additional data derived from spreadsheets and shapefiles. Before you build your map, determine which map layers to include in the story map. You can consume either a single web map, two or more layers of a single map, or several web maps.

3. Assemble multimedia content

Text should be kiwi. Make your story map data and descriptive. If you use some apps or web map descriptions, read our how-to documents for details. Images must be accessible via web addresses, unless they are stored in the ArcGIS Online service (Map Tour app). Remember: large images take longer to load, so optimize them to fit the story map.

4. Configure your story map

Story maps can be configured directly through an ArcGIS Online web interface. Fill the rest, a BEAM and each every story map step through configuration and hosting options.

5. Refine your story map

Our apps enable users to quickly and easily use story maps. As with all creative efforts, however, the quality of your story will increase as you refine it. Details, such as map colors and symbols, pop-up design, workflow of map layers, photos, and multimedia content, are all vital. Don’t be afraid to go back and make changes many times—to make adjustments.

6. Publish your story map

Place your story map on a server that’s accessible to your audience—whether it’s the general public or a specialized group behind an organizational firewall. Esri offers access to a story map for sharing your data, collaborating with colleagues, and releasing the best and latest compelling apps.

Featuring four story map apps . . .

Map Tour

A sequential, place-based narrative

A growing community of storytellers has found many uses for the Map Tour app. The app presents a place-based narrative of photos and capture, each with a map location. A recent enhancement provides “responsive” design, adjusting the format to suit a variety of screen sizes. A builder mode facilitates easy compilation and editing.

Features

• A series of tagged photos with map and thumbnail information available.
• Previous/Next pointers enable users to click sequentially through the photos.
• Users can use the map controls to centre and move around an area.
• Responsive design accommodates smartphone screens, as well as tablets and PCs.
• Builder mode enables easy editing.

Shortlist

A curated list of points of interest can be organized into two to four categories, presented in the Shortlist app as tabs. Clicking a map icon causes an overlay panel to appear, with photos, text, and web links. Neighborhoods can be featured in a drop-down list.

Features

• Points of interest (POIs) appear in a thumbnail grid in a side panel.
• POIs can be organized into categories, which appear in the Shortlist.
• As users zoom in and out, the thumbnail list updates to show only the POIs in the current map extent.
• Clicking a map icon calls up an overlay panel with more detailed description, photo, and web links.
• A drop-down menu enables users to zoom to neighborhoods or other locations.

Tabbed Viewer

A single map or series of related maps

The versatile Tabbed Viewer app is useful for featuring a single map or presenting a series of related thematic maps. If the author adds two or more maps to the tab, a tab for each map appears along the bottom of the title panel. If the maps have a temporal component, a timeline will appear as well.

Features

• The app accommodates a single web map or between two and five related maps.
• The side panel text is generated from the web map descriptions on ArcGIS Online.
• A timeline is included in enabled.
• Coming soon: responsive design to accommodate smartphones and tablets; builder app for easier editing.

Swipe

Comparing two maps using a swipe function

The Swipe app makes it easy for users to compare two thematic layers by moving a swipe bar for back and forth across the screen. The app contains a single web map with two layers. Although the Compare app (pop-up page, bottom) also enables comparison of two maps, the swipe function is generally more engaging. It’s effective for showing change over time with imagery, as well as comparing related polygonal map themes.

Features

• Two layers of a single web map are displayed.
• Users move a swipe bar for back and forth across the screen.
• In both map layers include pop-up windows, these will change as the swipe bar moves across a point.
• Dual map legend and text are displayed in a side panel.
• A series of swipe can be created by adding bookmarks to the web map.

Other story map apps . . .

Although the apps described above are the most popular with users, additional storytelling formats are available. Check the story maps website regularly, as apps are frequently being added and updated frequently.

Map Maker

This app is useful for featuring web maps that display an array of locations and associated images. It gives users the option of building a map on a group or personal “playlist” of prioritized images and titles.

Compare

Two or three maps are displayed side by side in the app. As the user pans and zooms on one map, the other maps also pan and zoom. Users can toggle descriptions and legends on and off.

Basic

Occasionally, a web map is more or less self-explanatory. This app provides a clean and simple context for displaying a map, adding only a title-barrier and drop-down map legend.

Responsive design

A high priority of the story maps app development is ensuring that all apps work flawlessly across all viewing platforms, no matter what devices or apps, opening new windows and then re- opening the apps. The team is working to re-touch templates with this capability.

Get started

This new app will integrate blog entries with web maps. The authoring process for each blog item will enable customizing the state of its accompanying web map, including scale extent, pop-up window, and theme.

A tablet app will enable users to quickly and easily use story maps. As with all creative efforts, however, the quality of your story will increase as you refine it. Details, such as map colors and symbols, pop-up design, workflow of map layers, photos, and multimedia content, are all vital. Don’t be afraid to go back and make changes many times—to make adjustments.

Get started

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