

The British Cartographic Society Annual Symposium 2010

Talking with Maps

Presentation Summaries 3: Maps in the Media

Media cartography: Television news map in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Traditionally maps are drawn manually on paper, however, advances in technology have provided alternative ways of mapmaking and other medium for map presentation. The emergence of TV map, as a resultant of the invention of television as well as development of computer cartography, is one of the best examples.

Among different types of map shown in TV, TV news maps are unique in the sense that they are conveying information to a large volume of audience daily on screen over seconds. Moreover, the production time of TV news maps are usually shorter than making other maps due to the timeliness nature of news event. Possessing such uniqueness in target audience and production time, the presentation of TV news maps will be different from any other types of map.

Hong Kong was chosen as a case study. Maps shown in evening news report by three local broadcasting companies over a one-month period were captured. Maps, supplemented with information collected from interviews to representatives of broadcasting companies, were used for analysis. Using a qualitative approach, maps were examined in different aspects including map design, map function and the cartographic techniques applied. The results would be useful in enhancing our understanding and facilitating better application of TV news maps.

Biography

Phoebe gained her first degree in Geography and Resource Management at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, specializing in technical geography, and completed an

undergraduate thesis on media cartography. Phoebe is currently a research assistant in the Centre for Emerging Infectious Disease at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and also undertaking a master of philosophy in Public Health. Her research interest includes geographic information system in health practice and computer cartography, with particular focus on media maps and disease maps.

The World of the News: Cartography in the UK ‘quality’ press – 1999 and 2009

Peter Vujaković, Professor of Geography, Department of Geographical and Life Sciences, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

Abstract

In 1989 the US geographer Mark Monmonier claimed that “*the news media are society’s most significant cartographic gatekeeper and its most influential geographic educator*”. A decade later Peter Vujaković undertook the first of two major surveys of cartography in the UK ‘quality’ press (formerly known as ‘the Broadsheets’), repeating the exercise in 2009. The first survey covered map use from January to July (extended by a month to cover aspects of the ‘Kosovo crisis’ of that year), and the second, the first six months of 2009. This is the most extensive repeat study undertaken of news media mapping in the UK press. Both surveys collected a wide range of data related to news themes, and map use and design issues, and provide the basis for detailed analysis of specific news stories where maps played an important role.

Both surveys show clearly the importance of maps in news stories dealing with geopolitical issues, and especially those related to conflict or potential threats to security. During 1999, the major issue was NATO intervention in the Kosovo crisis and its bombing of Yugoslavia, with maps of this issue exceeding fifty-percent of all news maps during the height of NATO’s bombardment. During both 1999 and 2009 the issue of global security related to offensive missile systems was another important issue in which maps played a significant role in news coverage. News maps often support a particular editorial view, but may also undermine that message where there is a lack of understanding of basic geographical and cartographic principles, resulting in poorly constructed or even erroneous maps. The issue of missile defence is one such example.

Biography

Peter has been studying maps in various media, including the 'news', academic texts, national atlases, and development literature since the 1980s. His current research is based on analysis of map use and design in the UK 'quality press'. Peter has undertaken two of the most comprehensive studies of maps in the press in the UK, the first covering seven months in 1999 and including the Kosovo crisis and NATO intervention, and the second covering the first six months of 2009. His main area of interest is the use of maps in coverage of geopolitics and international relations.

Peter has also worked in the area of participatory mapping for disability access, and maintains a general interest in all aspects of the politics of maps.

Peter is currently Head of Geographical and Life Sciences at Canterbury Christ Church University. He is a past Editor of the *Cartographic Journal* (BCS) and chair of the BCS publications committee, and is a regular contributor of articles and cartoons to *Maplines*.

Cartoblography: mapping the spatial context of micro-blogging

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Abstract

The growth in social networking has given rise to an increasingly interconnected world; one where place is arguably less relevant but, curiously, re-awakened to the importance of location. There exists a growing desire for maps defining our place, locating us in unfamiliar surroundings, navigating us and providing spatial context for our activities. Instead of remaining spatially anonymous in online environments, people reveal locations for their identity and activities. This spatial expression illustrates the importance of geography and how maps can add value to a virtual profile, yet the cartography is often lacking. Maps tend to be cartographically simplistic and little work has been done to explore cartographically rich representation approaches.

We explore this spatial expression using the social networking tool Twitter which permits micro-blog postings (*tweets*). Examples of 'Twitter maps' are reviewed which utilize the Twitter API in concert with map services to spatially represent elements of the tweet.

Conventionally this has been to map the location defined in the individual's profile. More innovative approaches use GPS derived spatial coordinates, coordinates embedded in a tweet , by geocoding locations mentioned in the tweet or leveraging geolocation controls in the Twitter API.

We develop and propose three main Twitter map classes: simple Twitter feed map mashups; maps for spatially referencing asynchronous and spatially distant collaboration; and those for exploring the spatial context of conference participation. Exploring the spatial dimension and effectively organising the information visually reveals a contextual richness to promote spatially organised micro-blogging environments.

Through analysis of the original examples developed, we define a taxonomy of online social network mapping and offer a set of design principles to support effective information visualization architecture. We demonstrate the value of *cartoblography* – a visualization of the spatial context of micro-blogging and a response to an emerging area of cartographic practice.

This work is part-funded by JISC and forms part of the wider Mobilising Remote Student Engagement (MoRSE) project.

Biography

Dr Kenneth Field is Principal Lecturer at Kingston University London and Course Director for undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the Centre for GIS. A graduate of Oxford Polytechnic's cartography degree programme, he has spent the 20 years since graduating enthusing successive groups of students at Northampton and Kingston Universities on cartographic design and production, increasingly through the use of GIS technologies. He has presented at over 50 conferences worldwide, published a similar number of papers and book chapters and is the current Editor of The Cartographic Journal. He continues to practice cartography and has authored a number of large format special purpose maps, some of which have received international awards. He is Nottingham born and bred and has promised to deliver his presentation in his Nottingham Forest football shirt (and stick to time).