

Helpful Hints for the Paperless Map Librarian

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Every librarian with a connection to the Internet now has access to several hundred thousand maps in digital form--more maps than can be found in all but the largest paper-based map collections.

The chief limitation on providing map reference service is no longer lack of maps, but lack of knowledge. The Web sites listed below provide entry to the rich collection of cartographic resources on the Internet.

FINDING MAPS

Driving Directions and Street Maps

Probably the most common map reference questions are for driving directions or city street maps. Several sites do an excellent job of providing this kind of information. Try: Mapquest (<http://www.mapquest.com/>), EarthaMaps (<http://www.earthamaps.com/>), or Mapblast (<http://www.mapblast.com/myblastd/>)

General Reference Maps and Atlases

-- The Perry-Castenada Library (<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html>) has a large collection of small-scale maps, which are good for including in school reports.

-- The CIA World Factbook (<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>) is for those who want to get their maps directly from the government.

-- The National Geographic Society (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/maps/>) offers numerous resources, including an online atlas.

-- The United States Geological Survey (<http://mapping.usgs.gov/>) offers many resources, including the National Atlas of the United States.

Topographic Maps

-- TerraServer-USA (<http://terraserver-usa.com/>) has topographic maps, along with aerial photos and community information.

-- TopoZone (<http://www.topozone.com/>): "We've got **every** USGS 1:100,000, 1:63,360, 1:25,000, and 1:24,000 scale topographic map for the entire United States." Free.

Aerial Photographs and Satellite Images

In addition to the popular Microsoft TerraServer (above), try TerraFly (<http://www.terrafly.com/>) for aerial photos and satellite images of the United States.

NASA's Visible Earth (<http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/>) is a fascinating worldwide collection of satellite images. Investigate local and regional sources for aerial photographs of your area. Look for USGS digital orthophotoquads (DOQs), which can be downloaded for a small fee from the GIS Data Depot (<http://data.geocomm.com/>), and are available online for selected regions from many state agencies and academic institutions.

Historical Maps

The best starting place is the History of Cartography Gateway (<http://ihr.sas.ac.uk/maps/>). For maps of specific places, investigate the links at Odden's Bookmarks (<http://oddens.geog.uu.nl/index.html>). Two outstanding sites for historical maps are hosted by the Library of Congress (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html>), and by David Rumsey (<http://www.davidrumsey.com>).

There are many excellent regional collections of historical maps, for example: the Hargrett Library (<http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/maps.html>) at the University of Georgia, the Osher Map Library (<http://www.usm.maine.edu/~maps/>) and the New York Public Library (<http://www.nypl.org/research/midatlantic/>).

All Other Maps

Odden's Bookmarks (<http://oddens.geog.uu.nl/index.html>) is the most comprehensive collection of links for all aspects of cartography, and is particularly useful for areas outside of the U.S. Infomine (<http://infomine.ucr.edu/>) (<http://infomine.ucr.edu/>) has a more selective collection of map and GIS links, focusing on the U.S. For regional and state sources, consult the Web pages of research libraries in your area.

LOCATING PLACES: ONLINE GAZETTEERS

- GNIS (<http://geonames.usgs.gov/index.html>). Geographic Names for the U.S.
- GEOnet Names Server (<http://164.214.2.59/gns/html/index.html>). Foreign place names.
- Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names (<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/tgn/>). Both U.S. and foreign names, some historical names.

GIS RESOURCES

Librarians who want to acquaint themselves with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) can experiment with several Web sites that use GIS-type interfaces. These include the Census Bureau's American Factfinder

(<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>), the EPA's EnviroMapper (<http://maps.epa.gov/enviro/html/mod/enviromapper/index.html>), and David Rumsey's digital atlases of the San Francisco and Boston Metropolitan Areas (<http://www.davidrumsey.com>).

Supporting a full-fledged GIS service may be beyond the resources of many libraries, but a small investment in time and money will make it possible to download, view, and print numerous maps from the Internet. Investigate the free ArcExplorer from ESRI (<http://www.esri.com/>), and the sources of free data listed at the MAGERT electronic publications page (<http://magert.who.edu:8000/elecpubs.html>).

LEARNING MORE ABOUT MAP LIBRARIANSHIP

The Map and Geography Round Table (MAGERT (</template?section=magert>)) of the American Library Association Web site has numerous links to professional resources. Deserving of special mention are the listserv Maps-L and The Map Librarian's Toolbox (<http://www.waml.org/maptools.html>) from the Western Association of Map Librarians.

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