

# News Libraries 2.0: Google Maps & Mashups

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# Overview

- Why use interactive maps in your news content? uses inside and outside the newsroom
- Use of interactive maps at the Kalamazoo Gazette
- Step-by-step: how to create a basic Google map
- Next steps: Google maps API; Map plugin for Caspio databases; using reviews as a tool to promote content
- Point-and-click creativity: Looking at interactive maps from other news sources
- How can it work for you? Discussion/Questions

# Why use Google Maps to create your own custom maps?

- A variety of **housekeeping uses** within the newsroom: directions and orientation for new employees, photo assignment assistance, possible addition to Wikis/knowledge base
- **Ease of use:** Training time and work time are faster than with other types of technologies
- **For readers part 1:** Simple and functional addition to stories
- **For readers part 2:** Public-service journalism; state or nationwide data; larger maps and searchable databases
- **Social-networking aspects:** the map may attract new users to the newspaper's content through Google Local, reviews, etc.

# Google maps at the Gazette

- I created [our first map](#) to help out a reporter who was working on a story about methamphetamine-lab cleanup, to help visualize statistics for the story.
- Since the first map in Aug. 2007, we have created 12 public maps that have collectively received about 45,000 views.
- 2 basic kinds of maps: simple locator-type maps such as the [Holiday Shopping Guide](#), [Martini Map](#) and [Super Saturday Map](#). When we started our [KalamaBrew](#) beer blog we also planned a Google map to go along with it.
- Public-service maps using state or national data; now that we have Caspio, we can also use that tool to create these types of maps more efficiently. Most popular: [Contaminated Sites](#), with over 10,000 views. Our first Caspio database: [Michigan CAFOs](#).

# Step by Step: Create a Google Map

1. Create a Google account for your staff
2. Visit [maps.google.com](https://maps.google.com), click on the "my maps" tab on the left hand side and click "create new map."
3. Give your map a title, description and privacy setting
4. To add points to the map, simply search for an address.
5. Edit the information for each location. Add photos, links, etc. Experiment. When you're done, click the Done button on the left hand side to see the user's view.

# Next steps: moving beyond the basic map

- [Google Maps API](#): Use Javascript to create new Google Maps applications customized to your Web site. (i.e. you have to know javascript or have a staff member who knows it to use this). There is a useful [tutorial on implementing the API here](#).
- New [Google Maps API for Flash](#) as well.
- Caspio and Google Maps plugin: there's a [good tutorial here](#).
- Social-networking aspects: Lead Google users to your content by posting brief reviews and links in the Reviews section for search results. Example: [Dining capsule reviews](#).

# Creative maps from other news sources and other Google Map resources

- [Los Angeles Times homicide map](#)
- ["Driving Detroit" Map and coverage from the Detroit Free Press](#)
- [gsalr.com](#) - no data for mid-size or smaller cities yet
- [Aardvark Map](#)

# How can it work for you and your staff?

These maps can be anywhere from a simple logistical problem solver to one part of a major, multifaceted news package. What you want to use them for will depend on your staff size, technological abilities and Internet resources.

**Discussion:** Who has used Google maps? What sort of projects has your organization done with them? Any suggestions, alternatives, or thoughts for possible projects?

Thank You!