

MAPS-GIS - Web-Based GIS Viewer

What is it

A Web-GIS viewer is a program to view maps on the Internet that were generated by a Geographic Information System (GIS). Like a paper map, these maps will have varieties of information about locations or features (for example: roads, rivers, cities) as well as thematic information (like population, dominant languages, literacy rate, rainfall).

However, unlike paper maps, maps in the data viewer are dynamic. You can choose which information (data layer) you wish to view. You can zoom in and out to view different scales of information. You can also select information by asking spatial questions, using logical arguments to form queries.

For example: Find all the cities in Oregon with a population greater than 20,000. (City > 20000). In this case, all the cities with a population greater than 20,000 will be “selected” or highlighted on the map and the list of cities will appear below the map. You use a query every time you use a search engine to search the Internet for a Website about a particular subject.

What do you need?

To use these Web-based maps you need a computer with a Web-browser and a fast Internet connection. You can use a dial-up connection, but these files are large and take a long time to load. The current version of Firefox (Mozilla) works very well with these sites.

Is it difficult?

Learning to use this technology, like any new tool, program, or concept can be frustrating (##@@!!) at first. You may need to repeat a step or even start over if you get off track. However, if you follow the directions as you would when trying a new recipe or replacing the water pump on your car, you get through it.