

Boise Weekly Best of Boise 2009 Restaurant Google Map

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Introduction

People have been using maps for centuries to visually depict representations of the Earth's components and they can be very powerful. Wood (1992) said, "Power is the ability to do work. Which is what maps do: *they work*." How does a map *work*? They work by serving interests and these interests are served by the effectiveness of a map to selectively represent something of interest to the user (Wood 1992). Maps are powerful because they can oftentimes visually depict information much more quickly than could be described with words. Just think about all the maps seen in our daily lives, maps that show you: which bus route to take, where your room is located in a hotel, directions for driving from A to B, how the exhibits are laid out at the zoo, or your local news channels high and low temperatures for the day. Most importantly maps instill power in people because knowledge is power.

Obviously cartography has come a long way over the years due to technological advances. Not many would argue that maps that are hundreds of years old represented little more than the maker's personal perception. Early cartographers did not have the tools we have today such as satellite and aerial imagery, highly accurate GPS systems, or sophisticated ground truthing methods. In today's world, there are not only static (unchangeable) maps but many forms of interactive maps and they have become increasingly popular mostly through the discipline of cybercartography – creating maps specifically for internet use. In 1999, the International Cartographic Association created a Map and Internet Commission and this event signaled the event of this emerging form of cartography (Tulloch 2007). Monmonier (2005) forecasted that "richer modes of interactivity promise unprecedented levels of exploratory map analysis as well

as ready access to timely or informatively customized spatial data” and I believe this is quite true today. Peterson (1997) agrees that the interactive map sites receive more usage than those that just offer static maps. Maps are a powerful media for portraying information and many agencies and businesses are using the power of interactive maps to quickly get their message across to the masses and help their users and clients gather information.

Those who have no formal spatial or cartographic training can easily create interactive web maps at a number of sites for free: ammap.com; zeemap.com; arcgisonline.com/home/; maps.google.com; mapsalive.com; and flashimap.com, just to name a few. In an NPR Future Tense interview, Mike Pegg of Google Maps Mania (<http://googlemapsmania.blogspot.com/>) was asked, “How difficult is it to create applications using Google Maps? Could an average computer user do it?” and he answered, “Absolutely, there have been a view sites that have popped up [that require] no coding ability at all... [such as] wayfaring .com and communitywalk.com (National Public Radio 2006). Tulloch (2007) noted that because it has become so easy for just about anyone to create an interactive web map, the risks and benefits are much more pronounced than with other Internet-enabled enterprises. Some cartography professionals are concerned because those untrained are unaware of the professional ethical standard (http://www.gisci.org/code_of_ethics.aspx) and may intentionally create maps that inaccurately portray information. Some would argue that every map distorts reality – a complex 3-D world is laid flat, symbols used are usually much larger proportionally than the features they represent, and the creator must be selective in the information he or she wants to portray or the map would be too overwhelming; every map tells little white lies (Monmonier 1996). In a perfect world, everyone, professional or novice, would share honest and truly useful information on the web but this is not always the case. Fortunately, many Internet users have learned to use

their own best judgment when perusing the Web and understand that the information presented must be scrutinized before accepting it as truth.

Professional created or not, there is no arguing the power of interactive maps and the numbers confirm this. It is difficult to find the most accurate information about map usage at different sites. The information I found is not the most up to date but is interesting none the less. In 2006 Google Maps API received 2.6 billion hits per day

(http://digg.com/programming/Google_Maps_API_team_says_Stop_it). In 2002 MapQuest received over 13 million map requests per day and ESRI ArcGIS Online shower peak hourly traffic at close to 100,000 (Tang and Selwood 2010). In 1999 Tiger Mapping received 75,000 map requests per day and EarthView received 63,000 map requests per day (Peterson 1999).

Obviously many people are utilizing the power of interactive maps.

Objective

Society's partiality for interactive maps is quite clear thus an interactive map with a local interest twist would be invaluable tool for a community such as Boise, Idaho. There is an array of sections including: public eye, arts and entertainment, goods and services, sports and recreation, bars and nightlife, and dining (with many categories in each section;

<http://www.boiseweekly.com/boise/BestOf>). For this project I created an interactive Google Map that focuses on the "Best of Boise" Food & Dining locations (2009). The "Best of Boise" locations are published by the Boise Weekly once a year. This year, two editions were published – readers' choice (done by online polling) and editors' choice.

Methodology

Many of the Best of Boise categories cannot technically be represented by a point on a map, such as Best High Five, so I focused on a category that could, Food & Dining. Prior to collecting data, I created a shapefile with all of the attributes necessary to link to the appropriate entries on an ArcPad form I used to gather information about each establishment (Figure 1). The ArcPad data entries included: the establishment's name, phone number, address, city, food type, pick (editor or reader), and any notes. I made a copy of the shapefile, so there was one shapefile for each day of data collection. This is necessary because the .ssf file created for differential correction is only applicable to one day (not multiple dates). I used a Trimble GeoXH to collect the ArcPad form data and waypoints on two different days. I also took a picture of each establishment.

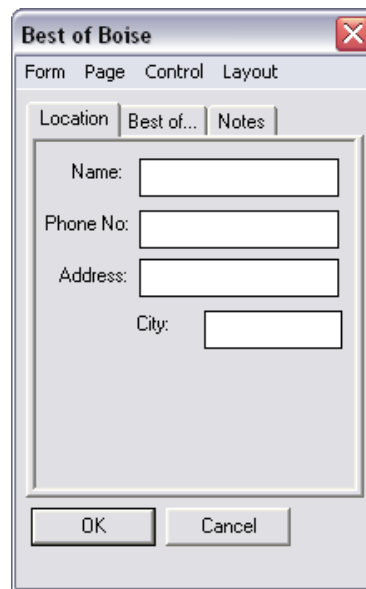


Figure 1. Best of Boise data collection ArcPad form.

Once all of my Best of Boise Food & Dining information was gathered, I was ready to process and organize it all for creation of an interactive Google map. Firstly, I differentially and shape-corrected the shapefiles created during field data collection (Figure 2).



Figure 2. A map showing the Best of Boise restaurant locations pre- (green) and post- (purple) differential correction.

Next I used DNR Garmin, a free ArcMap Extension created by the Minnesota Department of Resources to provide users the ability to directly transfer data between Garmin GPS handheld receivers and various GIS software packages

(<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mis/gis/tools/arview/extensions/DNRGarmin/DNRGarmin.html>),

to convert my shapefile coordinates from UTM's to decimal degree latitude/longitude and created a new shapefile with the coordinates as new attribute fields. This was necessary because decimal degree latitude/longitude is the only acceptable coordinate system when creating a Google Map. I then opened the shapefile .dbf file in Microsoft Excel 2007 so that the data and coordinates could easily be copied and pasted into a Google spreadsheet I used to create my Google Map.

I used the Google Spreadsheet Mapper 2.0 tutorial to create my interactive web map of the Best of Boise 2009 restaurants (http://earth.google.com/outreach/tutorial_spreadsheet.html, note: you must have a Google account to create a Google Map). Using the Google Spreadsheet Mapper is

a one-stop spot for loading your data to be mapped using ‘PlacemarkData’, and designing the “balloons” that will show up on your Google Map using or modifying the ‘Templates’ provided (Figure 3).

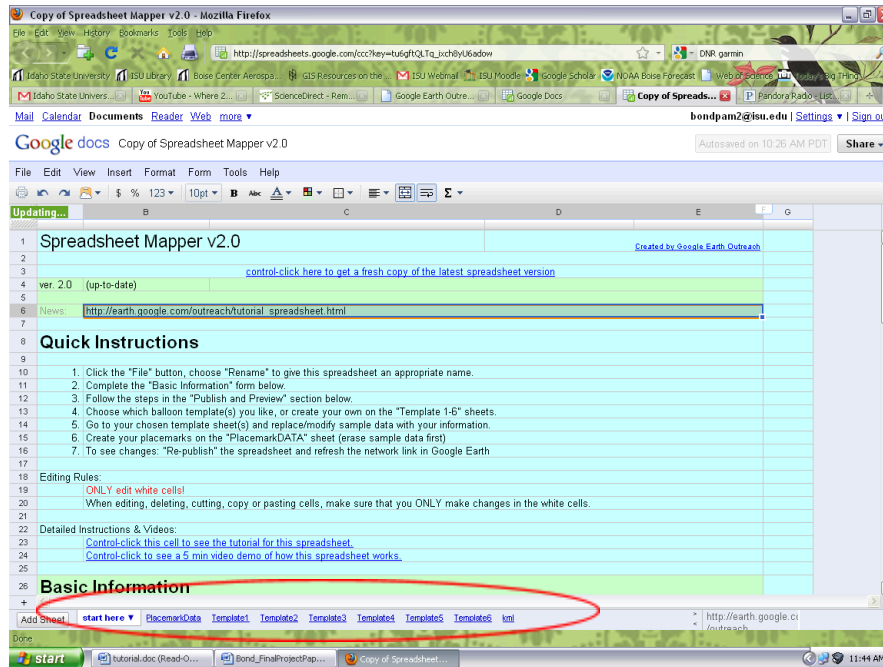


Figure 3. The main page of the Google Spreadsheet Mapper.

This seems to be the most up-to-date version of Spreadsheet Mapper but I did find one discrepancies in the directions that I will share for those not only interested in creating a Google Map but also in being able to view their placemarks in Google Earth. In the ‘Publish and View’ section of the Spreadsheet Mapper ‘start here’ spreadsheet (Figure 4), the instructions given to ‘View Placemarks in Google Earth’ are incorrect. You cannot copy the Network Link KML and paste it in ‘My Places’ in Google Earth; paste is not an option.

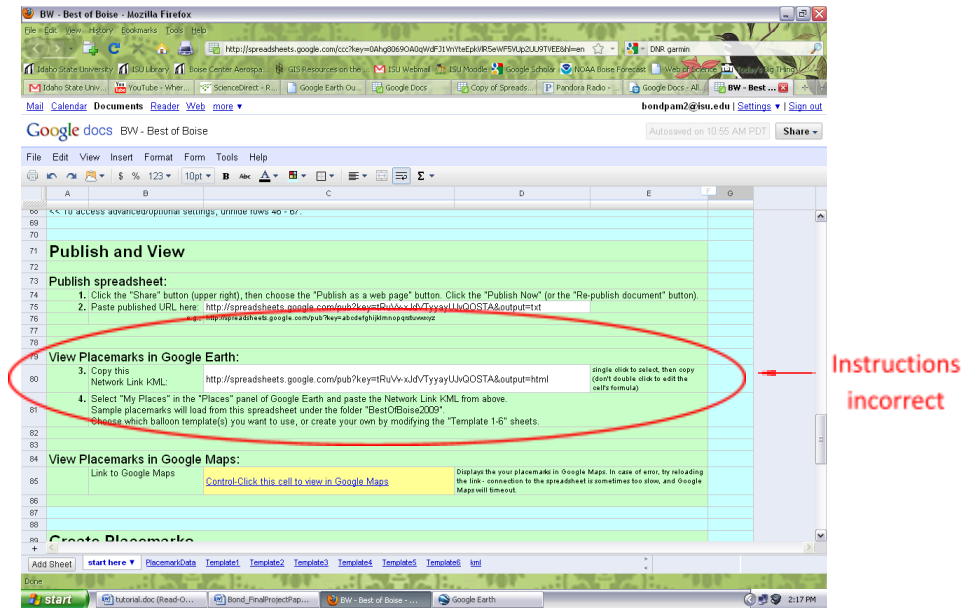


Figure 4. The ‘Publish and View’ section of the Spreadsheet Mapper ‘start here’ spreadsheet.

To remedy this, I control-clicked the cell that said ‘Control click this cell to view KML’ in the ‘Debugging your KML’ section at the bottom of the ‘start here’ spreadsheet (Figure 5). I opened the file with Notepad, saved it as a KML file and then was able to add it to my Google Earth ‘My Places’ but simply selecting ‘Open’ from the ‘File’ dropdown menu in Google Earth.

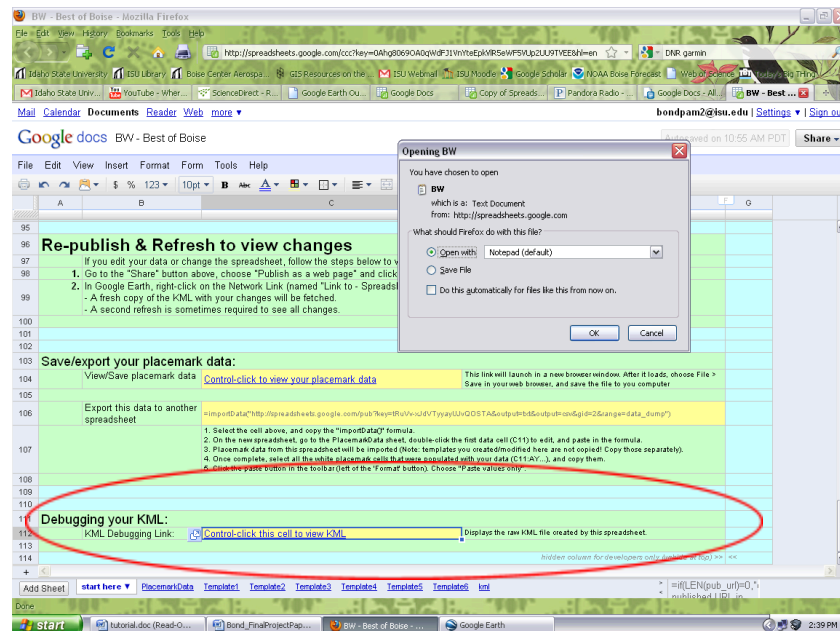


Figure 5. The “Debugging your KML” section of the Spreadsheet Mapper ‘start here’ spreadsheet and window that opens to open the KML file in Notepad.

Although this was one of the last steps I took during my map creation process, I thought I should mention it early because it is on the ‘start here’ page and may cause undue frustration to others before they even really get started.

I was now ready to start designing my interactive Best of Boise 2009 restaurant map. I viewed the example placemark balloon templates in Google Maps (instead of Google Earth because of the discrepancy mention before) by control-clicking the designated cell in the ‘View Placemarks in Google Maps’ section of the ‘start here’ spreadsheet (Figure 6).

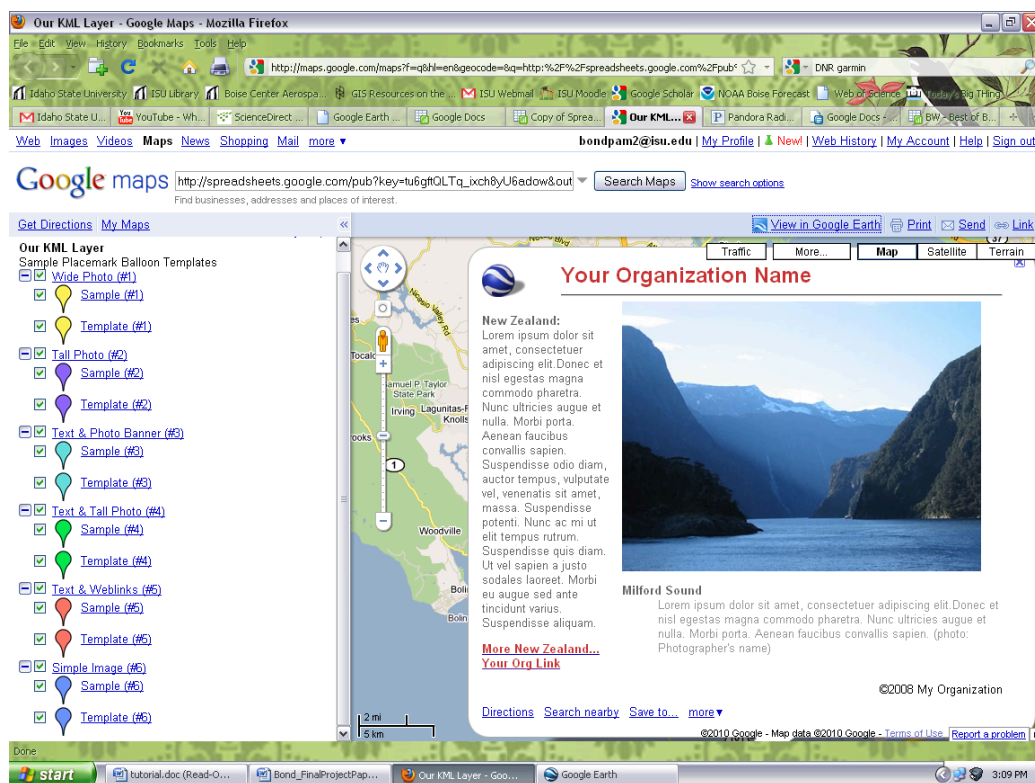


Figure 6. Example placemark balloon templates viewed in Google Maps.

I decided to use Template5 and Template6 to create placemark balloons for my Google Map (Figure 7). Firstly, I just copied Template5 into Template6 so that they were structurally similar; both were now ‘Tall Photo’.

BW - Best of Boise - Mozilla Firefox

http://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=0Ah80690A0qWdF31YnYteEpkVRSeWFSVUp2U9TYEE8hl=en

Mail Calendar Documents Reader Web more

bondpam2@isu.edu | Settings | Sign out

Google docs BW - Best of Boise

Autosaved on 1:49 PM PDT

File Edit View Insert Format Form Tools Help

123 18pt

Template - 'Tall Photo'

Only edit WHITE cells!

Category	Name	Value	Error Check
Template Name	Template Name	Tall Photo	
KML Style Variables	Balloon Background Color	#FFFFFF	
- For setting icons, labels, etc.	Icon Color	#FF0000	
- Use HTML color hex codes: (e.g. #00FF00)	Icon Color Highlight	#000000	
- Scroll right for a simple color palette	Icon Scale	1.1	
Control-click here for info on HTML colors	Icon Scale Highlight	1.2	
	Icon URL	http://maps.google.com/mapfiles/kml/paddles/blank.png	
	Icon Hotspot X axis percent	0.5	
	Icon Hotspot Y axis percent	0	
	Label Color	#330066	
	Label Color Highlight	#000000	
	Label Scale	1.1	
	Label Scale Highlight	1.2	
Static Variables	Balloon Width	300	
- For info used in the HTML of every balloon	Banner Image URL	http://cache.spreadshirt.com/users/341000/340742/126882/m	
(e.g., org name, URL of image banner)	Banner Image Width	100	
- Create a variable name and assign a value	Copyright Text	2009 Boise Weekly	
	Photo Width	280	
	Title Text Color	#990000	
	Subtitle Text Color	#C00000	
	Text Color	#000000	
	Footer Text Color	#707070	
Unique Variables	Title	Don't enter values here. Use 'PlacemarkDATA' sheet	
- For info that is unique to each balloon	Subtitle		
(e.g., titles, description text, site photo)	Address/Phone		
- Just set variable name. Values specified on the 'PlacemarkDATA' sheet	Photo URL		
	Paragraph1 Text		
	Paragraph2 Text		
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I then modified these templates by changing the icons and subtitle text so that placemarks that represented Editor picks were red and those that represented Reader picks were purple. I did this because the Boise Weekly Best of Boise issue covers were almost identical except one was red and one was purple. Now the balloons that pop-up when a user selects a placemark will be identical in almost every way except the color of the subtitle which displays whose pick the establishment was, readers' or editors'. I added one 'Unique Variable', 'Paragraph Text3'. In order for this variable to actually show up in the 'PlacemarkData' spreadsheet, I had to actually add a new line of code in the 'Balloon HTML layout' section of the Template spreadsheets (Figure 7).

Next, I added my Best of Boise data to the 'PlacemarkData' spreadsheet (Figure 8). Most of the data was added by simple copying and pasting it from shapefile .dbf file I opened in Microsoft Excel 2007. I added the URLs for each restaurant and the URL for Boise Weekly to each entry. In order to add pictures to my Google Map placemark balloons, I had to first upload them onto the web. I did this by creating a Photobucket web album (<http://photobucket.com/>; there are many other websites that you can upload photos to the web). I then pasted each photo's URL into the appropriate column of the 'Placemark Data' spreadsheet.

I added my placemark data to Google Earth (discussed previously) and edited each group's (editor and reader) properties. I did this by right-clicking on the appropriate folder and selecting 'Properties'. I customized the descriptions and the style and color of the placemark labels and icons to be more appealing at first glance. I resaved my Best of Boise 2009 placemarks as a .kmz file to retain my properties changes. Finally, I created a webpage using Google Sites to host my interactive Boise Weekly Best of Boise 2009 Restaurant Google Map. This process was

pretty straightforward so I won't go into too much detail. To create the site I started at <https://sites.google.com/a/isu.edu/sites/system/app/pages/meta/dashboard/create-new-site>, once again, you must have a Google account to create a Google Site. The website consists of three pages: the home page that has my Best of Boise Google Map embedded into it; an About Me page that just gives a brief description of why I created the project; and a Google Map page that allows people to download my .kmz file so they can load it into Google Earth. I shared my Google Map with the Boise Weekly publisher and she is considering embedding into one of their webpages as well.

The image shows a Google Docs spreadsheet titled "BW - Best of Boise" with two sheets visible: "PlacemarkData" and "Template".

PlacemarkData Sheet:

Folder Name (optional) (use sort to keep like folders together)	Placemark Name (for label & Places list)	Coordinates and/or Address	Latitude	Longitude	Address	Template #	Enter template # in cell	Notes
Reader's Choice	Best Local Pizza	43.64547845 -116.24279085	4320 W. State St.	6	Flying Pie Pizzeria			
Reader's Choice	Best Local Seafood	43.60941936 -116.28577974	507 N. Milwaukee St.	6	Fresh of the Hook			
Reader's Choice	Best Local Breakfast	43.61492547 -116.20230052	108 S. Capitol Blvd.	6	Goldy's Breakfast Bistro			
Reader's Choice	Best Local Barbeque	43.58734272 -116.27952134	7849 W. Spectrum	6	Goodwood Barbeque Comp			
Reader's Choice	Best Local Dessert	43.6161597 -116.20109367	204 N. Capitol Blvd	6	Le Cafe de Paris			

Template Sheet:

Template Sheet Name	Template Name	Template #	Unique Variables:
Template1	Wide Photo	1	Left Column Header
Template2	Tall Photo	2	Title
Template3	Tall Photo	3	Title
Template4	Text Tall Photo	4	Title
Template5	Tall Photo	5	Title
Template6	Tall Photo	6	> Title

Figure 8. The 'PlacemarkData' spreadsheet used to create a Best of Boise 2009 Google Map.

Results

BestOfBoise2009
This map features all of the eating establishments in Boise from the Boise Weekly's 2009 editions of the Best of Boise.

Editor's Choice

- Best Safari
- Tongue on Tongue Action
- Best Free-For-All
- Best Boise Potatoes
- Best Seared Sea Scallop With Spicy Cilantro Pesto Lounging on a Bed of Sweet Potato Puree
- Best Place to Marinate
- Best Tom Kha Gai
- Best Taco Legislation
- Best Ba-Da-Bing
- Best Musical Chairs: The Restaurant Version
- Best Sloppy Bowl of Smoked Polenta
- Le Meilleur Endroit Pour Obtenir un Plat D'Escargots

Reader's Choice

- Best Local Patio
- Best Local Burger
- Best Local Restaurant
- Best Local Fine Dining
- Best Local Steak
- Best Local South of the Border Restaurant
- Best Local Sandwich Shop
- Best Local Frozen Treat
- Best Local Coffeehouse
- Best Local Pizza
- Best Local Seafood
- Best Local Breakfast
- Best Local Barbeque
- Best Local Dessert
- Best Local Indian Food
- Best Local Thai Food

BOISE weekly
Fresh of the Hook
Reader's Choice

For a land-locked state, the Best Local Seafood category this year was pretty damned competitive. But a couple extra votes cast for Fresh Off the Hook allowed them to swim ahead and school the competition: while the main-area joint does make some killer salads and sammies, (like the hot seafood salad with tiger shrimp and bay scallops or the salmon BLT on focaccia), it's really all about the fish and chips. With 10 different combo options--you can choose between halibut, cod, salmon, clam strips or jumbo shrimp and either fries or sauteed vegetables--Fresh Off the Hook puts British pubs to shame. And that's no load of codswallop.

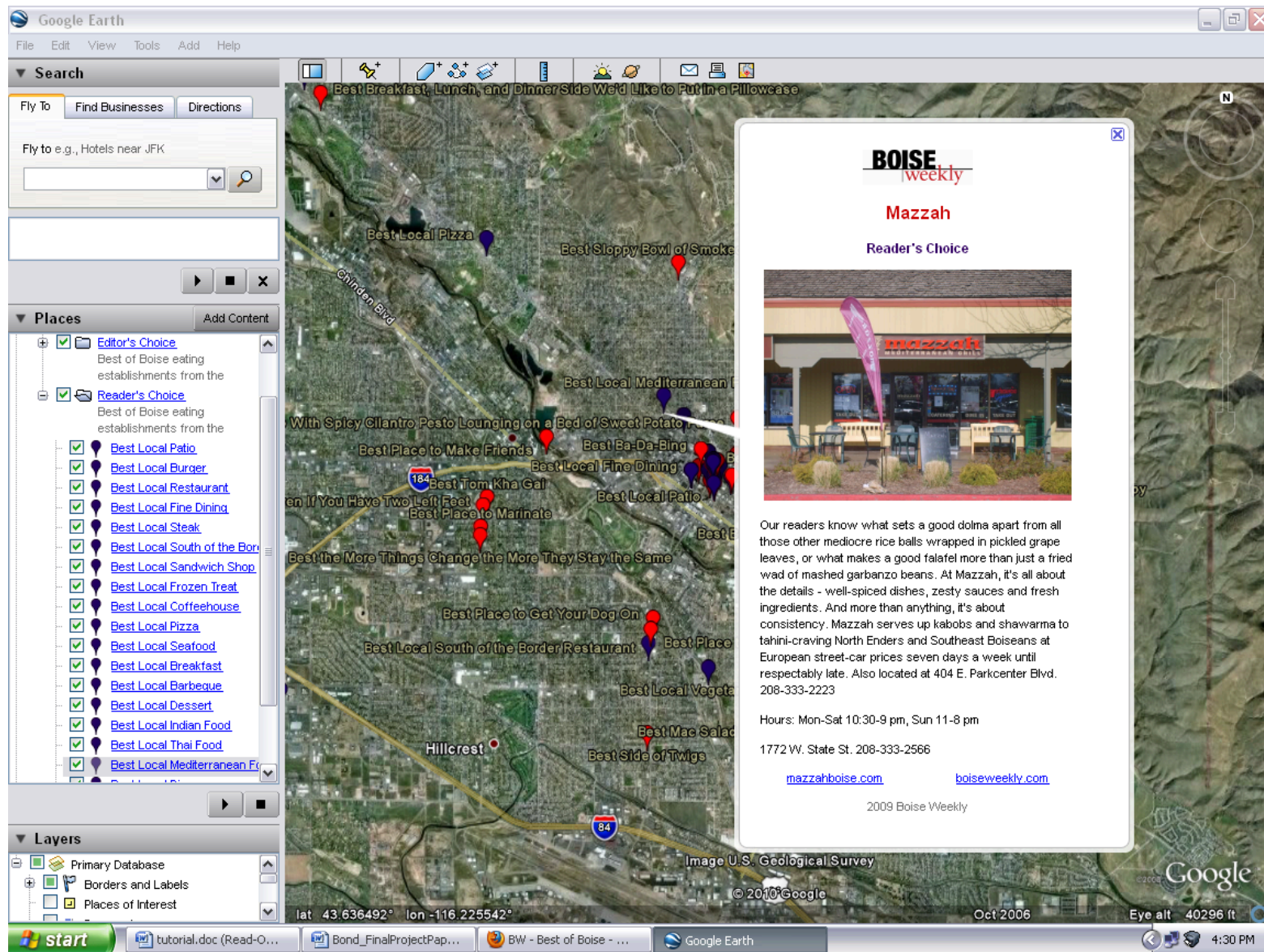
Hours: Mon-Sat 11-9 pm, Sun 11-8 pm
507 N. Milwaukee St. 208-322-9224
freshoffthehookseafood.com boiseweekly.com
2009 Boise Weekly
[Directions](#) [Search nearby](#) [Save to...](#) [more](#)

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http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=http:%2F%2Fspreadsheets.google.com%2Fpub%3Fkey%3DtrVv-xJdVTyyayUJvQOSTA%26output%3Dtxt%26output%3Dtxt%26gid%3D0%26range%3Dkml_output%26time1%3D4027763&ie=UTF8&ll=43.752249,-116.237755&spn=0.139125,0.26470

2&z=12

~ 13 ~



Boise Weekly Best of Boise 2009 Restaurant Interactive Google Earth Map

home (Best of Boise Restaurants 2009) - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://sites.google.com/a/isu.edu/best-of-boise-restaurants-2009/

best of boise restaurants 2009

Idaho State University ISU Library Boise Center Aerospace GIS Resources on the ISU Webmail ISU Moodle Google Scholar NOAA Boise Forecast Web of Science Today's Big Thing

Idaho State University YouTube - Where 2.0 ScienceDirect - Remote Google Earth Outreach home (Best of Boise ... Pandora Radio - Listen to

Mail Calendar Documents Sites Groups more

bondpam2@isu.edu | User settings | My sites | Help | Sign out

Google sites home Updated 8 minutes ago

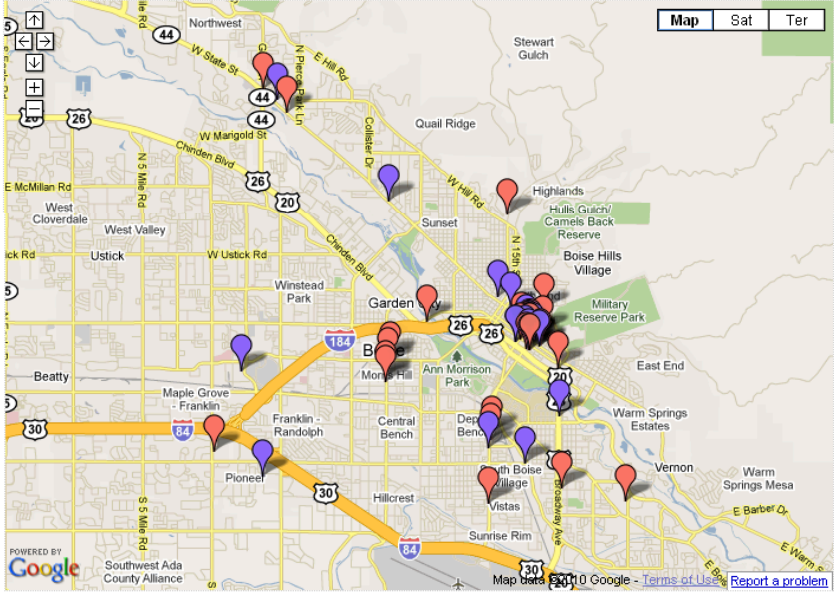
Create page Edit page More actions

Best of Boise Restaurants 2009

home

home

About me...
Google Earth
Sitemap
Edit sidebar



All purple placemarks represent Boise Weekly Best of Boise restaurants from the reader's choice edition and red placemarks represent restaurants from the editor's choice edition. ENJOY!

Google Earth KMZ

Disclaimer:

This interactive Google Map was created as a final class project for one of my graduate classes. All textual information on the interactive map was taken directly from the 2 Boise Weekly Best of Boise editions. I am not an employee or am I affiliated with Boise Weekly in any way other than being a faithful reader. Any issues to with the map should be brought to my attention (see About Me...) not to the Boise Weekly staff. I am open to any feedback.

Subpages (2): [About me...](#) [Google Earth](#)

Recent Site Activity Revision History Terms Report Abuse Print page Remove Access | Powered by Google Sites

Waiting for maps.google.com...

start tutorial.doc (Read-O... Bond_FinalProjectPap... home (Best of Boise ...

6:33 PM

Boise Weekly Best of Boise 2009 Restaurant Interactive Google Earth Map Website

<https://sites.google.com/a/isu.edu/best-of-boise-restaurants-2009/>

Discussion

Although this project was a lot of fun and a great learning experience, it definitely took some extra patience and creative thinking to make it all come together. The Google Spreadsheet Mapper 2.0 tutorial was very helpful but only got me so far. I had to figure out myself that if I wanted to add a 'Unique Variable' to my balloon template that I also had to write code in the 'Balloon HTML Layout' box. It took a lot of trial and error to get my placemark balloons to look just how I wanted. Also, when I tried to save my placemark data as an Excel file an error occurred every time but I did successfully save it as a text file. Unfortunately, when you embed a Google Map into a webpage the sidebar with the list of locations does not go with it. I did not find any options when creating my Google Site that would allow me to have this feature. For the most part, I think just about anyone could create an interactive Google Map even if they don't have any previous map making experience. It could be a bit of a challenge but is definitely possible.

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