

Week 1 Cookbook:

Getting Started with Online Learning and GIS

Week 1 Overview

1. Getting Started with Online Learning / Course Website
2. Course Resources
3. Getting to Know Each Other
4. What is GIS?
5. Week 1 Assignment

Welcome! This is a funky week due to the Labor Day Holiday weekend, but it gives us time to get organized and to get to know each other.



(I could not find a funny GIS cartoon – so here is a good one about GPS)

Consider printing this cookbook for your convenience

1) Getting Started with Online Learning / Course Website

This is an *online course* within the PLATO online learning environment. Online learning is different from the traditional face-to-face learning that you may be used to. Please consider the following 'big-picture' aspects of online learning:

1. You have to be highly self-motivated and self-disciplined to learn online. If you have difficulties motivating yourself, then online learning may not be the best choice for you.
2. You have to be able to deal with technical challenges. I don't expect you to know everything, but to use the available resources to solve problems on your own.
3. You can learn on your own schedule, but please realize there are firm deadlines for the weekly assignments and projects. Good time management and organization skills are therefore crucial for success.
4. You have to be proactive in your learning – I cannot 'see' you struggling with the content or the assignments – you need to ask the questions.
5. You need to collaborate with your fellow students in class, using the online discussion forums, chat rooms, Who Online?, etc.

1.1) Explore the *Course Homepage*

The course homepage contains several folders and content links that we will use this semester. Start your exploration by watching the *Welcome to GIS* Jings. Jings are short (5-minute) narrated screen-capture videos that I create on my home computer. They all have sound, so make sure that your computer speakers are on.

1.2) Explore the *Getting Started* folder

The Getting Started folder contains all the logistic information you need to know and understand to be successful in this course. Start by watching the *Getting Started* Jing and continue to read the various documents and watch the other Jings. Pay special attention to:

The Kitchen Sink
The Course Syllabus
Are You Ready for Online Learning
The Self-Assessment Checklist
The Discussion Forum Grading Rubric
The Do's and Do Not's of Online Communication

You will also find a short bio about me, including pictures from my various travels in the recent past.

1.3) Explore the *Campus Computer Labs*

The GIS software (ArcGIS 9.3.1) and necessary tutorial/exercise data are installed in all computer labs in Bates, Wilson, and 333. The best lab for GIS is Bates 022 - our brand-new GIST Center. Please note that all labs are also used for regular teaching, so plan your work accordingly.

- Go to Start - Programs - ArcGIS and start the two main software programs you will use this semester: ArcCatalog and ArcMap.

1.4) Install ArcGIS on your own computer (optional)

This is optional, but most of us prefer the flexibility to work on the assignments and project at home. However, please be aware that you need a fairly new and powerful computer as the GIS software is very resource-intensive. Sorry Mac users: ArcGIS will not run on a Mac (unless you know all the tricks...I'm a PC guy, so I cannot help you with that).

- Your textbook includes a 180-day trial version of ArcGIS 9.3.1 and a CD that contains the tutorial and exercise data. Please install both the software and the data.
- I have extra free copies of ArcGIS 9.3.1 in case you want to install the software on more than one computer.
- Be sure to follow the installation instructions!

1.5) Watch the YouTube Clip

This is a good 6 minute YouTube video by Karl Jenner that gives you a basic overview of GIS and its capabilities. Here are two more good ones:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6TMIqWO5KI&feature=related>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi0m_lwCYkA&feature=related

2) Course Resources

The required course resources are detailed in the course syllabus. Note: we will not be using the textbook until Week 3, so you have ample time to get it. However, starting Week 3, you will absolutely need the textbook.

- As noted in the syllabus: Please do NOT buy a previous edition or used copy of the GIS Tutorial...you will run into problems at some point.
- Get yourself a USB flash drive dedicated for this course. You will be creating and downloading a lot of GIS data and GIS data take up a lot of space – so get at least 2 GB, better 4 GB.
- You need access to a modern and reliable PC and a high-speed Internet connection.

3) Getting to Know Each Other

There are two discussion forums in the Week 1 folder so we can get to know each other. This is important as we will be working together this semester. In a face-to-face class we rapidly get to know each other and our personalities in the classroom. A similar thing happens online – we get to know each other's virtual personalities and sharing our bios here 'kick-starts' that process.

3.1) *Can You Hear Me Now?* Discussion Forum

Please post your short bio in the *Can You Hear Me Now?* discussion forum. Have a look at my bio to get an idea what information you can include. In addition:

- 1) What are your Top-5 most favorite things to do?
- 2) What are your Top-5 least favorite things to do?
- 3) Where do you see yourself in five years?

- 4) What are the five things that you would bring along if you had to live for one year on a deserted island?
- 5) Imagine you just won \$300 million in the lottery...what would you do with all that money and the rest of your life?

3.2) What Are Your Goals? Discussion Forum

Think about the following questions:

- 1) Why are you taking this class?
- 2) Have you ever taken an online class before?
How did you like the online learning experience?
- 3) Why are you interested in GIS?
- 4) What do you want to learn in this class?

There are no wrong answers here, but your responses will help me to choose examples and learning activities that match your interests.

4) What is GIS?

Well – you all should have a fairly good idea what GIS is – otherwise you would not have registered for this class. Please take a few minutes and write-down a few things:

- What is GIS? (a definition and explanation)
- A couple of examples how GIS is used today.
- A couple of examples and ideas of how you plan to use GIS.

Don't go online to find the answers – that's boring and we will do that next week anyways. Here I am interested in your own ideas and opinions. Then, at the end of the course, we will repeat this little exercise and see how our views have evolved and changed.

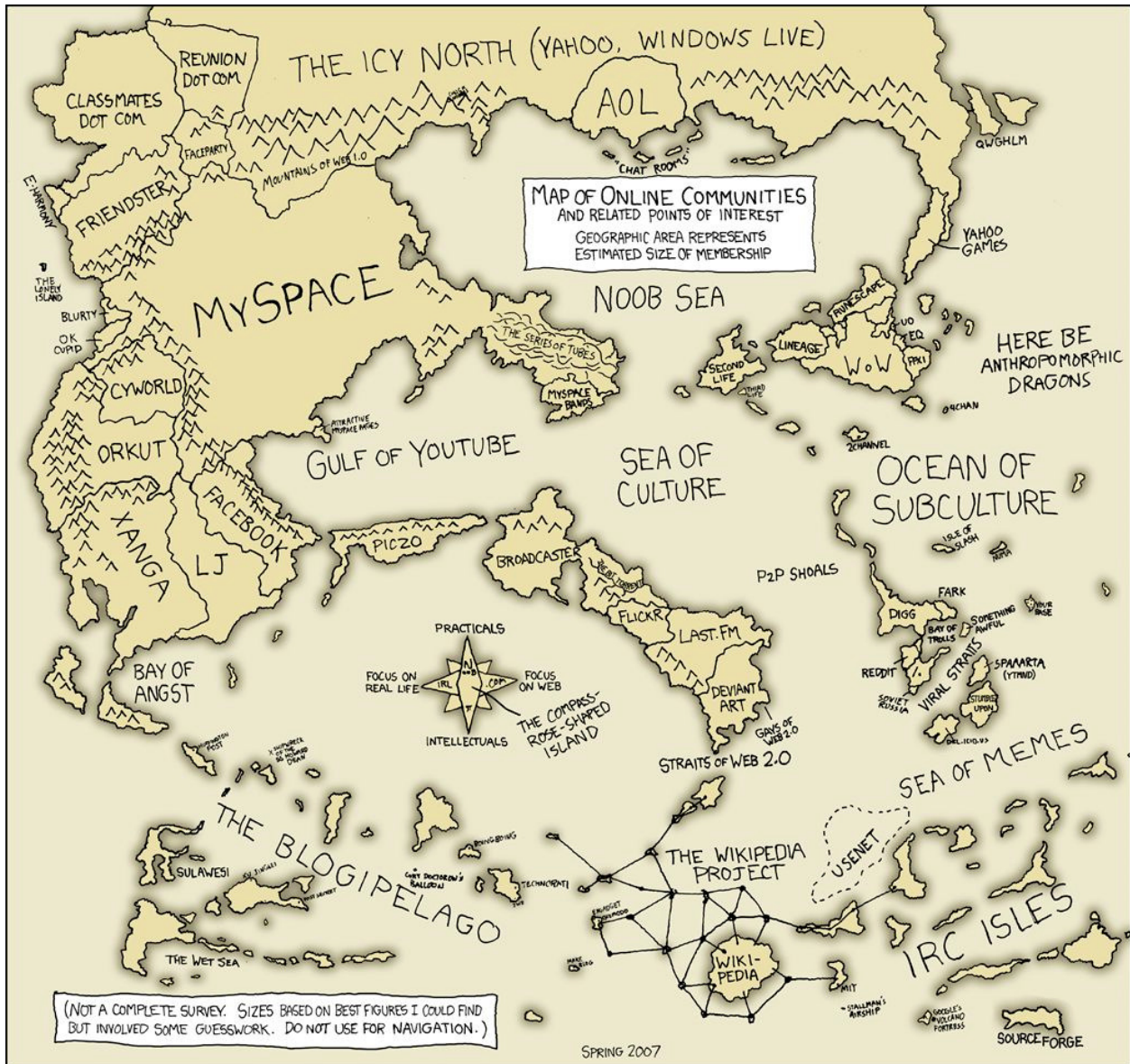
5) Week 1 Assignment

Due Date/Time: Wednesday 08 September at 23:59

The Week 1 Assignment is pretty straight-forward.

- 1) Work through the tasks and activities in this cookbook.
- 2) Get yourself the required course resources (Section 2)
- 3) Post your bio and answers in the *Can You Hear Me Now?* discussion forum (Section 3)
- 4) Post your goals and reasons for this class in the *What Are Your Goals?* discussion forum (Section 3).
- 5) Send me a PLATO Mail with the answers to *What is GIS?* (Section 4).
- 6) Send me an Email to my WSC Email address to check-in.
- 7) Contact me via the *Ask Carsten* discussion forum.
- 8) Say hello to each other in the *GIS Lounge* discussion forum.

That's it. The Week 1 Assignment is not graded numerically, do everything well and you'll get a 100; do only some things sloppy and you'll get a 50; do nothing and get a zero. Refer to the course syllabus for my policies regarding late assignments.



Source: http://imgs.xkcd.com/comics/online_communities.png