

NSS SURVEY AND CARTOGRAPHY SECTION

Cartographic salon

Call for Web Maps

The Cartographic Salon welcomes web maps, and this year I hope we get some actual entrees. With a real example to study, we might begin learning what a web map really is. Please let me know of any cave map that might qualify, your own or something you've seen on a web page somewhere.

The digital revolution didn't rock both components of our Survey and Cartography Section equally. Cave *survey* has been digitized to a great extent, as we see presented every year at our sessions. We measure with Distos, sketch on tablets, file data on servers, and build 3D digital models. Cave *cartography*, on the other hand, is quite overdue for the same sort of revolution. It is quite exciting to think of what might be created. I expect some day to use my phone or tablet to find cave maps online. I expect to interact with maps that link cave locations to pictures and metadata. I expect to rotate, pan, and zoom through a 3D cave model. I expect to download a digital map, take it to my armchair for some mental navigation, then take it underground and have it help me navigate the routes for real.

Cave models can be inspected in special computer programs, but I have not yet seen a cave map app. There are plenty of movies of cave models, which show you a fly-through of digital shapes, but you can't navigate it yourself. I can go online and find pictures of digital maps, but I have yet to find even a simple digital cave map online that I can use.

What makes it a map? First and foremost, it must allow a user to navigate. A movie is not a map. Beyond that, I suggest the salon should not be picky, especially for those first entrees. Labels would be good. Some indication of compass and vertical directions. Other than that, I wouldn't worry about rules too much. Let those cartographic pathfinders make the rules.

To my mind, a useful cave map is both portable and easily disseminated. To that end, the salon presents one real hurdle for the digital cartographer. We want a web address - a URL. We'll post that URL in the salon and visitors will browse (scan a barcode, perhaps) and view the map on their device of choice.

Finally, I hope you are wiggling in your seat with impatience, almost apoplectic with incredulity, simply amazed I never heard of this map at that web place, that famous map there which only an idiot could have missed. I have no doubt I deserve the scorn, but do please let me know the page, send me a URL. I really want a web map this year.

Thanks.

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Please note: Entries for the "traditional" Cartographic Salon are still very welcome. The details are on the Web at <https://caves.org/committee/salons/Cartographic.shtml>.