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Most of us have been using one online mapping program or another for years. They are a godsend for those of us who get lost within 3 miles of our homes, and they're just fun for people who like to wonder where things are. With that in mind, imagine how amazing Google Earth must be to arouse admiration from the online community and cause South Korea to demand changes to the program. A Google Earth ad is not just a mapping app. Type Denver, CO in the Google Earth search box, and yes, you can find out where Denver, Colo. is in relation to Grand Junction, Colo. and how to get from address to 1600 Curtis St in downtown Denver. In the same search, however, you can also find out that 1600 Curtis St. is in the 80202 zip code and that there are 12 Starbucks Cafes within half a mile of that address; you can zoom out of 1600 Curtis St and watch it disappear into earth's satellite view and then zoom back in as if you were falling at 1600 Curtis St from space; and if you click on the Forbidden City in the Sightseeing column, you can see what superman-style flying would look like from 1600 Curtis St. in Denver to the Forbidden Palace in Beijing, China. And you thought the world was small before. The app is quite easy to use, but there are many features to try. See how Google Earth downloads images and data, and learn how to get started with Google Earth to learn about some of the features and customization options. Google Earth content is currently available for download as a desktop app, although you must be connected to the Internet to use it. Every time you open Google Earth, it automatically connects to Google's servers, giving you access to terabytes of geographic, political, and social data. For example, you can view a city with layers enabled, including topographic information, population data, and crime statistics for that area. Layers and all map navigation buttons, including zoom, tilt, and rotate, are in the Google Earth frame. The big deal at the moment is the basic version of Google Earth is completely free. Of course, this may change in the future. Let's start by downloading the free version of the Earth.Google.com when it's still free. If your computer is running Windows, Linux, or Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later and is less than five years old, there should be no problem meeting your system requirements. If your PC can't start the app, continue reading to see what you can do after you update your hardware. Advertising When you open Google Earth and start navigating, you will immediately notice one of the biggest aspects of the whoa program: some of the information is 3-D, and which are not 3-D, are still a photograph - there are no illustrated maps here. maps. basic visual data comes from satellite imagery and aerial imagery taken by aircraft. While Google Earth consists of a number of features that would probably take months to make the most of, the basic features fit loosely into the following categories: Mapping/TipsLocal SearchSightseeing The basic version of Google Earth is free and it's an amazing piece of software. But if you want more or plan to use the program for commercial applications, there are subscription-based versions of Google Earth programs that offer additional features. Read on to take a closer look at the basics. The best way to get to know Google Earth is to start from your location and see what Google Earth tells you about it. So let's start with HowStuffWorks headquarters in Atlanta, Ga. If you type 675 Ponce De Leon Ave. Suite 4500, Atlanta, GA 30308, in the Google Earth search box and click Search, you will zoom from place to howstuffworks headquarters. Now you're looking at the location photo. For more information and to turn a photo into a real map, the next step is to turn on some layers. Available layers include dining area, accommodation, banks, roads, terrain, shopping malls, grocery stores, gas stations, parks, transit, schools and geographical facilities. Ad To create a nice, functional map, you can simply turn on the road layer. If you zoom out a little, you have a good driving map in the wider area surrounding 3350 Peachtree Rd. in Atlanta. Let's say your little atlanta tour includes a stop at HowStuffWorks headquarters and then a trip to the Georgia Dome to check out the Falcons game. Clicking the Google Earth commute reveals two slots: one for the starting address (3350 Peachtree Rd. Atlanta, GA) and one for the end address (1 Georgia Dome Dr. NW, Atlanta, 30313). Clicking Search displays both written directions and a highlighted route on the map, which has automatically zoomed out to accommodate the entire route from HowStuffWorks to the stadium. You can save, print, or email all the maps and information you've generated so far. There are buttons on the Google Earth toolbar to adapt to each of these actions. At this point, let's say the Falcons game is over and you're ready to grab a bite to eat. Find businesses appears here. Advertising The first thing we want to do is re-center the map to focus on the Georgia Dome. To do this, click left anywhere on the map and drag it up until the Georgia Dome is centered (alternately, we could place 1 Georgia Dome Dr. in the original search box and fly there - it would also put the Dome in the center). You can now zoom in and get a pretty nice view Dome. To find out which restaurants are near Georgia Dome, click the Find businesses tab and type, say, restaurants in the What and Leave Default Current View box in the Where box. When you click on Begin Search, here's what appears: The map zoomed out a bit and re-centered to fit in most restaurant results while keeping the Georgia Dome in sight. But that's not the only way to find a restaurant. You can also turn on the Dining Layer, which doesn't depend on keywords, but instead searches the entire Google Dining category for restaurants in the area. Here's what happens when you do it: Now you have even more options. In this section, we've covered most of the basic features of Google Earth. But most of what we've gone through here is also featured in other mapping apps, although it may not be as pretty as the view in Google Earth. What distinguishes this program is the features that make it entertainment, not just a tool. One of the most amazing aspects of Google Earth is the viaduct. When you look at Atlanta, Ga., and you do a Nepal search, you don't just blink and end up in Nepal. The program flies there so you can see the terrain and all the countries under you as you make your way to your destination. This video viaduct feature is great when it comes to getting directions. At the bottom of the screen with turn-by-step directions there is a play button. If you click, Google Earth will fly you over the route by turning right and left and veering as needed so you can see exactly what it will look like when you drive it. 3-D Views Google Earth has created 3-D buildings for many major cities in the US. For the most part, these are not detailed replicas - they are simple, gray 3-W drawings - but when you turn on this layer you feel very good for the city. Google Earth now supports textured (true-looking) 3-D drawings. Some are built into the app, but mostly Google is now allowing users to create and import 3-D drawings up using the free Google SketchUp program. As with any other view, you can use the tilt and rotate buttons in the navigator panel to get a full 3-In view. You can zoom in on global sights by clicking on the location in the Sightseeing box, which contains a list of the most popular destinations, including the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Grand Canyon of Arizona and the Vatican city of Rome. OK - video viaducts, 3-D views and worldwide sightseeing are pretty cool, but wait until you see what Google Sky can do. Google Earth impresses users with its ability to fly to and from anywhere on Earth. In August 2007, Google introduced Google Sky, giving users the opportunity to actually abandon the stars. One-click user of the Program Earth can switch to Sky mode and reverse perspective. With high-res images from NASA, digital survey survey and The Sloan Digital Sky Survey, Google Earth has put together an accurate and fascinating look at space. Users can fly, just like in Earth mode, to search far corners of space. Advertising As in parts of The Earth, Google Sky has many layers that you can view. Constellations can be found by name or seen drawn on the screen. The Backyard Astronomy layer refers to three astrological directories to give more details about some of the more famous space objects. You can highlight galaxies, nebulae, star clusters, and famous visible stars for information on location, history, classification, and even links to NASA's information database. There is also the Hubble Showcase, which contains images from the Hubble Space telescope, along with detailed data on the objects. Two very cool features of Google Sky are the Moon in motion and the planets in layers of Motion. They show the paths of the moon and planet in the sky from a given location on Earth. NASA took pictures once an hour for three months to make sure the paths were accurate. The slider allows you to select the time interval to be viewed. Then just click to see the moon or planet move. If you click on the moon itself, the program will indicate its location on that day, the phase of how far away it is from Earth and how bright it may look in the sky. Click on the planets and you will find out their size, distance and size. Google Sky also offers two very interesting tours of space. The Galaxy User's Guide takes you on a journey through many known galaxies. The Life of a Star tour shows the viability of a typical star, from birth to death. The list of facts shows what happens to each star and how it fits into the cosmic soup. In both tours, you can click on one at a time or download it for one long journey through the universe. Now that you know all the cool things you can do with Google Earth, let's find out where it gets all the data to make it work. Google Earth was once a premium program called Keyhole, which cost about \$90. When Google bought the keyhole, it inherited terabytes of digital map data and began to develop a basic version of the software that would be available for free download. Now you are all oversaying. The photo maps available on Google Earth come mainly from two sources: satellites and aircraft. Google downloads these photos and other digital mapping information from sources such as TeleAtlas and EarthSat, both of which compile photos and maps in digital form for commercial applications. Because the data comes from different sources, it is delivered in different resolutions, so some areas of the world seem sharp even at street level, while others are watered down from a long distance. Google strives to have as high a cover the world as much as possible. When When Google Earth, you don't see photos in real time: According to Google, the information is no more than three years old and is constantly updated as new data is shared. Google Earth advertising has several countries such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom covered to street level so you can zoom in and display the names of roads and local businesses and get tips from here. The database has a large amount of information about other regions such as Western Europe, India and Japan, but the rest of the world is hit or miss. Although you can zoom in and get a pretty good look at the Egyptian pyramids, you can't see the street names or find a grocery store in the area. Google is constantly adding more information to its databases, and maps are getting better with every update. This leads us to another Google Earth data source: Google Search. Part of what makes Google Earth so addictive is its collaboration with Google Search. As you now know from how to find fun things when you're watching a city, you can search for cafes, restaurants, grocery stores, bars and lots of other businesses nearby, and click on them for details from Google Search. Users can also add a business location to the map by clicking Add/Edit Business Listing on the Google Earth toolbar. Now that we know where the data comes from, we'll find out what it takes to get that data on your computer screen. When using Google Earth, users can take for granted the ability to zoom, rotate, pan, and tilt an image as specific as their own backyard. But the trick of Google Earth is not to compile and store all these images. It's getting them to your computer quickly and efficiently. With a 56k telephone modem, it would take 12,400 years to download a one-metre-resolution Earth image [source: Butler]. But Google Earth makes it seem that the high-resolution image of the whole world is right in front of you. Figuring out how to move so much information was one of the program's biggest obstacles. One way to reduce the transfer time is to use the computer's disk cache. For details on disk caches, see How caching works. For now, let's simplify things and define the disk cache as a temporary storage location for files that your computer has already accessed. If your computer can temporarily store displayed Images of the Earth, it won't have to re-upload images from the source if you want to view them again. Google Earth is counting on this technology to speed up the transfer time. Advertising Another key to getting all this information on the screen has to do with how the computer processes and displays maps. Google has several software patents that google earth. One patent that really makes the whole possible includes called Universal Texture. Universal Texture (UT) uses two methods of obtaining large amounts of information to the computer - mip mapping and clip stacking [source: Tanner, Migdal, Jones]. Mipmaps are collections of bitmap images that work within a texture to create the illusion of depth. They work in the inverted structure of the pyramid, stacked on top of each level, having twice the resolution than under it. These stacks eventually create a three-dimensional representation of a two-dimensional image. Clip stacks are parts of giant mipmaps that are cropped to a specified maximum size. The benefits of clipping these huge files are simple – Google Earth is based on the fact that users will only have to see one piece of mipmap at a time. When a user tells a program where they want to fly, the program uses an algorithm to find out which sections of a larger virtual texture are needed and uses only those sections to create the final images [source: Tanner, Migdal, Jones]. Simply put, Google Earth has created a gigantic, multi-terabyte, hi-res image of the entire Earth and serves it one small piece at a time as computer bites can easily digest. Zoom into your backyard, and the program cuts off everything except the yard and its surroundings. Now let's get back to playing Google Earth. In the next section, you'll learn how to customize Google Earth. One of the factors that makes Google Earth stand out from other mapping programs is the level of customization it offers. You can easily insert location markings to which you want to return, or overlay your own images on map tracks. Everything is fine on the toolbar. And if you want to get really fancy, you can import your own files into Google Earth to view routes, points of interest, boundary data, et cetera. Much in the way a web browser reads HTML, Google Earth reads a language called KML. You can open your own KML file in the Google Earth app and see your data displayed in Google Earth photos. To learn more about importing your own data, check out these links: Google Earth occasionally offers third-party overlays and apps, including overlays sponsored by discovery channel, National Geographic, European Space Agency and many other organizations. Layers can highlight natural wonders, impressive achievements, environmental efforts, and political issues. Here are some examples. Darfur Advertising Crisis - an overlay developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which maps the genocide in Darfur. When the overlay is activated, the Darfur region of Sudan is outlined worldwide. There are markers in which Sudanese soldiers and the Janjaweed militia destroyed the villages. Markers also say how many people have been displaced as a result of the destruction wioskii. Tthe Tthe includes images, videos and articles about the ongoing crisis. Geographic web layer - layer with three sub-layers: Best of Google Earth Community layer, Panoramio layer and WikiPedia layer. The Best of Google Earth contains a selection of the most popular place tags created by Google users. Switching to this layer reveals tags (marked with gold, smaller letters and) that, when clicked, can give you more information about your location, photo galleries, and even a link to a neighborhood video. With The Panoramio app, you can geotag photos and upload them to Google Earth. Geotagging a photo means anchoring to a specific location in Google Earth. For example, you want a geotag photo of the Manna Chinese Theatre to Hollywood, California. Panoramio checks all photos to make sure they are suitable for inclusion with Google Earth. Photos should be clear, accurate and have a location as a focal point - the service will not upload photos that hug you to a cat in front of the Eiffel Tower. Once approved, photo locations are tagged with Panoramio. Click the tag and your photo will appear. The WikiPedia layer displays tags that link to WikiPedia articles about the region. You can find articles about countries, countries, cities and even individual buildings. Read on to learn more about how to customize Google Earth. Wild Sanctuary - an overlay that allows you to listen to the sound landscapes collected by Bernie Kraus. He collected sounds from places around the world in climates, from tropical rainforests to Antarctic. When you click a tag, a pop-up window appears, and the collected sounds begin to play. You can turn off sounds by closing a pop-up window. NASA - a space organization has created some interesting applications for Google Earth. One allows you to view satellite images of Mars, effectively transforming Google Earth into a Martian globe. Another is the Blue Marble Next Generation app, which creates a beautiful image of Earth from space. It activates when zoomed out to see earth as a globe and switches back to the usual satellite view when zoomed in on in the atmosphere. It also includes the option to enable the Global Clouds overlay in real time, which is updated every few hours. Note that only the cloud layer is updated; land images under the clouds will continue to be up to three years old. ChartGeek and EarthNC advertising - ChartGeek is an overlay of cross-sectional maps and TAC charts used by pilots. In a similar vein, EarthNC Plus is an application DestinSharks.com with a layer of more than 600 marine charts. These charts are probably not a good replacement for physical documentation, but they can be very useful for planning flights or flights. Other layers allow you to compare images before and after regions extensive changes. For example, you can view satellite images Can., before it was aligned by a string of tornadoes and compare it with photos taken after the devastation. Users also created animations using Google Earth to show how the region changes over time or how massive flooding caused by climate change can affect the city. Google Earth is probably the biggest free download available at the moment, and most people are thrilled with what it offers – most, but not all. Google Earth makes aerial photos of every square inch of the globe easily accessible to anyone who has a computer. People have raised concerns about this fact on several different fronts. Google Earth provokes powerful reactions from people who use it for the first time. One of the common answers is the great admiration and joy of dramatically increased access to the world. Another that usually directly follows the first and has to do with the human desire to look at your own address is: Oh, it's a little creepy. While most people love the idea of watching the world on their computer, they don't love the idea of the world watching it. Can anyone use Google Earth to track a target more effectively? Can burglars use Google Earth for area affairs? There are a few things to look out for when considering privacy concerns. First, the information in Google Earth is already available elsewhere; and secondly, the photos are up to three years old. No one is viewing satellite data in real time using this app. Data from three years is probably not very useful for a stalker. Other concerns about the programme focus on national security. Officials in many countries have expressed concern about the level of detail available in the Google Earth app, including Australia, the UK and the United States. After all, terrorists could probably use an application that provides

detailed satellite images of the world. But by far the loudest opponent of Google Earth is South Korea. South Korea is technically still at war with North Korea and is very upset that any North Korean Tom, Dick or Harry can see South Korean military installations with a click of a button and a little zoom. Realistically, if Google can get its hands on this data, Then North Korea probably already has it. In any case, it is worth noting that anyone in South Korea can enlarge North Korean nuclear research facilities. Google Earth makes child spying simple. Photos offered by Google Earth are nothing new - Google receives its data from other sources. But the packaging is revolutionary. You no longer need intensive research to track down the satellite image of the Egyptian pyramids or the White House. This does not require research in general. All you have to do is download Google Earth and you have a bird's eye view of the world. For more information about Google Earth and related topics, see the links on the next page. Google Earth Earth questions about Google Earth. Google Earth. impressions: Google's amazing land. PCWorld.com. acquires Keyhole Corp. Google Earth Tour. to Earth press release. InternetNews.com. Google Earth really works. Avi-Bar Zeev, Realityprime.com. How does Google Earth work? Declan Butler. Nature.com A Virtual Mipmap. Christopher C. Tanner, Christopher J. Migdal and Michael T. Jones. Jones.

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