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March 25, 2011

This is going to be an on-going series where I explain and provide perspective to the numerous ways that I use, excel in, struggle with and all together learn how to adapt technologies to the work I do. Today will be the introduction of an exciting project I'm working on.

- [Monday Morning River Stimulus](#)

June 6, 2011

Have you been on the Spokane River lately? If you have, hopefully you were safe. Because the Spokane River is running high and fast right now. But if you're like the majority of river recreation enthusiasts in this area you're waiting for flows to decrease. Google Earth screenshot So what to do in the meantime... Normally around here tributaries

- [Take the \(Virtual\) River Tour](#)

November 3, 2008

To experience Ron Hall's Spokane River Google Earth demonstration project you'll need to do one or two things. If you don't already have Google Earth on your computer, go here to obtain the FREE download. Then just click here for the SRGE demo and you're on your way. Our plan is to update and to expand

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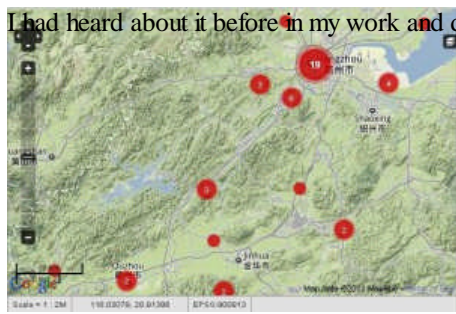
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Citizen Mapping at Waterkeeper Alliance Conference

Published on July 1, 2011

A very skilled and creative group of water quality advocates / citizen mappers / technological experts provided a wonderful workshop and presentation titled "Becoming a Citizen Mapper" last week at the annual Waterkeeper Alliance conference in Chicago.

I'll never forget three months ago or so when I was [involved in a group Skype conference](#) with Ron Hall and representatives of the Kansas Riverkeeper program when I was introduced to the study that Dr. Cynthia Annett did involving Waterkeeper websites. She had stayed up all night one night visiting every Waterkeeper website out there to see how hard it was to find a map of that Keeper's watershed. To her surprise, and definitely to my surprise as I heard this, very few had maps of their watershed either on their homepage or within a click or two. How could that be I thought. Here we are stewards of watersheds around the world, always wiling and able to speak for hours on our particular watershed, yet not very good at the basics of showing the world where we are. It was at that moment that my interest in the Citizen Mapper Project peaked.



Qiantang River Water Map - when citizens report pollution dots are created on the map. The bigger the dot, the more reports in that area

I had heard about it before in my work and discussions with Ron Hall, but at that moment of clarity I better understood the need and purpose of such an endeavor. [“The Citizen Mapper Project”](#) is a pilot program to help train students and volunteers to use readily available technology and web resources to collect, map, and share data on various issues of public concern. Ron was working with [Friends of the Kaw/Kansas Riverkeeper](#) and he looped me in. The goal was to bring this idea to the annual Waterkeeper Alliance Conference in Chicago in the form of a workshop / panel discussion. A series of Skype conference, individual Skype conversations, emails and shared Google Docs ensued and before long it was set. Though originally we had thought our idea wasn’t accepted as a topic, we later learned it was.

Brought in to the group for this presentation was [Hao Xin](#), the [Qiantang River Waterkeeper](#) – a valuable addition due to his experience and knowledge of mapping and mapping technology.

This is what the team looked like:



Ron Hall

[Ron Hall](#) MS, MBA is currently an online GIS instructor at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, WA and is also a free lance web technologist and a “Certified Partner” with Google’s Nonprofit group (certified by Google for his ability with a wide variety of their offerings, including Google Earth, Google Maps, Google Apps, Google Sites and SketchUp). Ron is a member of Google SketchUp’s international “Super Modeler” group – a designation conferred for producing high quality real world building models for display in Google Earth. In addition to his online course work, Ron is helping educators/organizations produce internet content for public awareness and classroom use. <http://cforjustice.org/river/spokane-river-google-earth-ron-hall/>

DR. CYNTHIA ANNETT, SCIENCE ADVISOR, KANSAS RIVERKEEPER

Dr. Annett holds a PhD from UC Berkeley and specializes in the ecology of prairie rivers. As the Science Advisor to the Kansas Riverkeeper, she has helped to conduct the Kansas River Inventory and has developed an extensive online warehouse of data on the geomorphology, hydrology, water quality, and ecology of the Kansas River. Using freeware such as Google Sites, Maps, Earth and other integrated programs, she is creating complex online landscapes exploring all aspects of our relationships to the river (<http://kansasriver.org> , <http://kansasriverinventory.org> , <http://kansasriverscience.org>). These materials have been used in K-12 education, university courses, and for public outreach. With Ron Hall she is one of the founders of the Citizen Mapper initiative.



Dr. Cynthia Annett and Laura Calwell

LAURA CALWELL, KANSAS RIVERKEEPER

Laura Calwell has worked as the Kansas Riverkeeper for 9 years and her strengths are communication and organizational skills. While not technologically advanced Laura is trainable and with some coaching has learned to use citizen mapping programs being shown in this seminar in her enforcement and education work.

XIN HAO, QIANTANG RIVER WATERKEEPER



Hao Xin, Qiantang River Waterkeeper and the Vice President of Green Zhejiang, the largest environmental non-governmental organization in Zhejiang Province, China. He received his bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science from Zhejiang University in 23, and completed Masters degrees in both Environmental Science and Geographic Information Science for Development and Environment at Clark University in the Worcester, MA in 29 and 211.

Hao Xin

I sat on the panel, but only to provide moral support and nod my head when Cynthia made a point or showed something that I could personally attest too. I like to think of myself and Laura as lab rats in this grand experiment. Ron and Cynthia have the skills and experience that make Laura and I look really good, and we’re very open to experimenting with new technology that will help showcase our work and advance a greater goal of having

information better available.

“Becoming a Citizen Mapper” 2011 Waterkeeper Alliance Annual Conference Workshop”

The workshop itself turned out to be a great success. Ron joined the conference via Skype from Missoula, Montana where he was working on some Google mapping projects and consulting. Having him join via Skype really added a level of heightened possibility for future conference presentations. Laura introduced the purpose of the presentation and the presenters, then turned it over to Ron, Cynthia and Hao who introduced several interesting topics and ways to get started in creating watershed maps for Waterkeepers from the very basic to the very advanced. Below you can find links to the slideshow presentations that each gave and I encourage you to flip through them and play around with the many links and ideas that are presented. The overall theme, in my opinion, is that mapping technology is getting easier to use, more advanced, and best of all remaining free. Google Maps and Google Earth represent infinite possibilities in terms of showing and sharing where you are and what you're doing, and newer products like [Ushahidi's Crowdfmap](#) are opening up a whole new realm of possibilities for very intuitive data input and sharing that is designed to be very compatible with mobile technology and social networks.



Google Earth

Image via
Wikipedia

I feel very fortunate [to have such an advanced Google Earth presence for the Spokane Riverkeeper program](#), and I look forward to not only improving and building on that, but also to experimenting with newer technologies and products. Sitting in on this panel, and having access to this kind of brain power and creativity can only mean bigger and better things for the Spokane Riverkeeper program and the 200 other Waterkeeper programs around the world. Again, I encourage you to play around with the slideshows from our presentation and try some of these mapping techniques.

If you're interested in learning more or plugging in to the discussions around citizen mapping, you can always [contact me](#), or better yet [join the Citizen Mapper Project](#) where you can have access to forums, discussions and much more.

Ron Hall's Presentation – <https://sites.google.com/site/citizenmapper/hall-wka-presentation>

Hao Xin's Presentation – <https://sites.google.com/site/citizenmapper/hao-xin-wka-presentation>

Dr. Cynthia Annett's Presentation – <https://sites.google.com/site/citizenmapper/annett-presentation>

3 Comments »

1. I just wanted to note that my bio for the panel had a typo. I have been the Kansas Riverkeeper for 9 years (not 1) and while technology is not particularly my strong suit – organization, communications and my dedication to clean water for Kansas are my passions.

Comment by [Laura Calwell](#) — July 1, 2011 @ [10:09 am](#)

2. I fixed it.. Sorry Laura

Comment by [Bart Mihailovich](#) — July 1, 2011 @ [10:21 am](#)

3. Nice work, Bart.

Telling the story is an important part of this effort.

Thanks for joining in.

Comment by [Ron Hall](#) — July 1, 2011 @ [11:53 am](#)

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