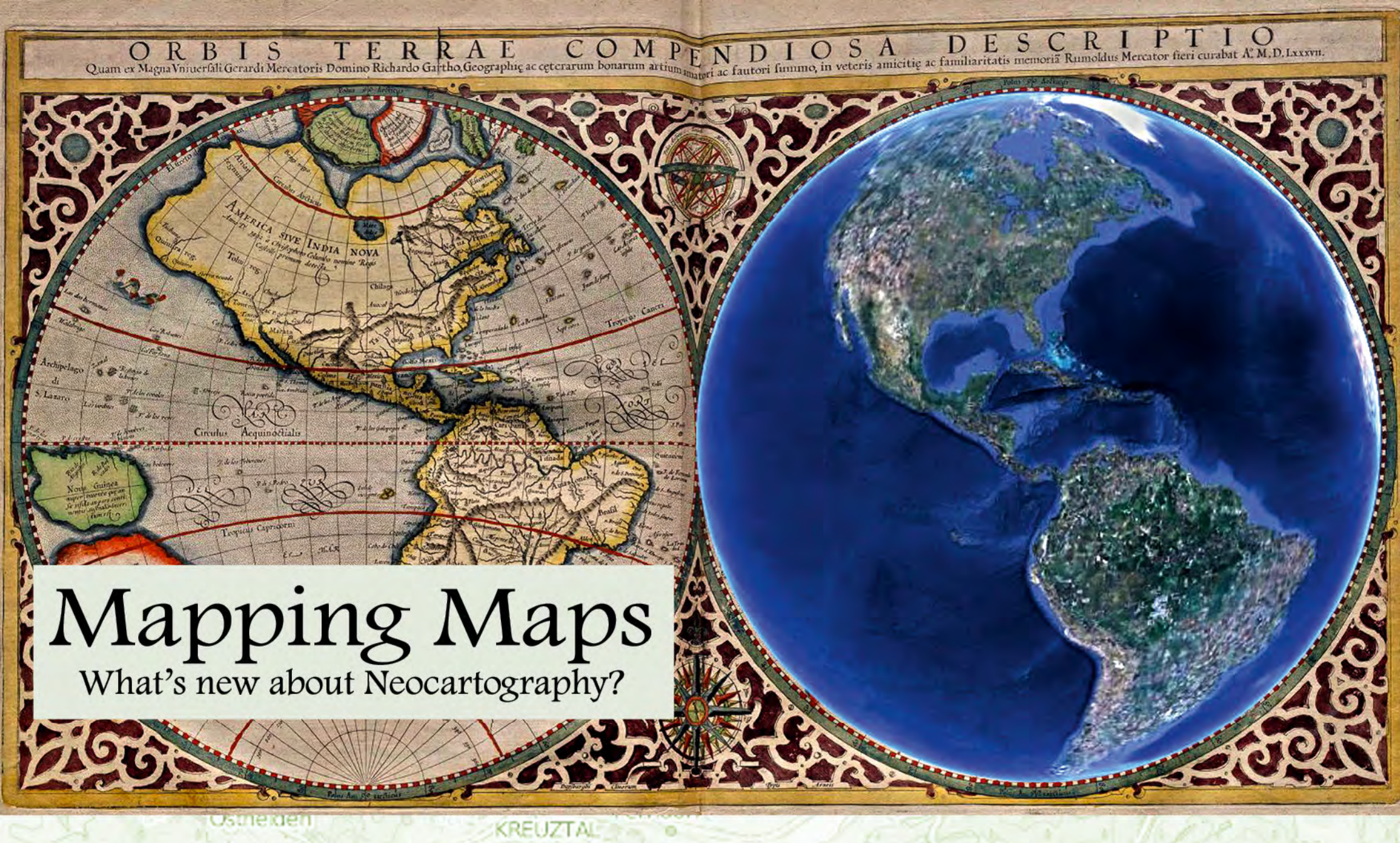

20-21 January 2011, University of Siegen, Artur-Woll-Haus

Mapping Maps: What's new about Neocartography?

Neocartography claims to be the cartography of the everyday person using Web 2.0 techniques to create and overlay information on media platforms such as Google Earth and Google Maps. Rather than making claims on scientific standards, methodologies of Neocartography tend towards the intuitive, expressive and personal, but may just be idiosyncratic applications of traditional mapping techniques. Can we say that the numerous distributed geotagging platforms and applications like Flickr and Google Latitude have given rise to a new genre of "Maps 2.0"? Will maps and satellite imagery become a dominant way of interacting with networks as claimed by apologists of the Geoweb?

Neocartography represents a new way of doing/practicing geography by the public from a technical perspective, but how does Neocartography represent progress or innovation conceptually? It was and is always the case that the graticule does not impart specific geographical information; instead, it acts as a sign system that organizes geographical knowledge into visual schemes which depend on culturally accepted misrepresentation of abstracted territory. Thus, how does the format of the map shape media and their contents? Have digital technologies reconfigured the experience of mapping into navigational platforms? What is Neocartography? What examples are there of dedicated next generation mapping interfaces, and how do these examples integrate geographic data with non-cartographic interfaces and dynamic data with a static grid? Representatives of all disciplines currently subject to questions of digital cartography will debate the advantages and disadvantages of the 'new' cartographic paradigm at this conference.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

THURSDAY

Introduction

1400 Jörg Döring & Tristan Thielmann (Siegen)

Imagining Maps

1430 Lisa Parks (Santa Barbara)
Mapping Orbit: Cartography, Geo-annotation, and Outer Space

1515 Manuel Schramm (Chemnitz)
The Rise of Aerial Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing in German and US-American Cartography

1630 Nathalie Roseau (Paris)
Mapping the Metropolis with Aerial Views

Evening Lecture

1715 Denis Wood (Raleigh/Siegen)
The Challenge to Neocartography
Presented by Guy Debord and Kevin Lynch

FRIDAY

Mashup Maps

0900 Ramón Reichert (Wien)
Dating Maps. Mapping Love in Online Dating Communities

0945 Marc Relieu (Paris)
»Any Info on Flooding.« Reference Practices to Persons and Places in a GoogleMap

1030 Chris Perkins (Manchester)
The Mutability of Mapping: Practices and Performance in OpenStreetMap

1115 Richard Rogers (Amsterdam)
Mapping for People

1200 Lunch

Mobilizing Maps

1400 Valérie November (Lausanne)
From Neocartography to Navigational Geography: Towards a New Theoretical Framework

1445 Nanna Verhoeff (Utrecht)
Performative Cartography: The Interface of Mobile Screens of Navigation

1515 Sybille Lammes (Utrecht)
Playful Cartography: Mobile Mapping Interfaces as Ludic Practices

1600 Eric Laurier (Edinburgh)
What it Means to Change Lanes: Actions, Emotions and Wayfinding in the Family Car

1645 Natalia Nobre & Marc Relieu (Paris)
GPS in Action: Making Sense of Vocal and Visual Instructions in Cars

1730 End

A Conference of the DFG-Project »Media Geography«
in Cooperation with the Graduate School »Locating Media«
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UNIVERSITÄT SIEGEN
DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

Imagining Maps

1400 Thursday
Lisa Parks (University of California Santa Barbara)
Mapping Orbit: Cartography, Geo-annotation, and Outer Space

Most maps are designed to represent sites on the surface of the earth. Yet as Buckminster Fuller, Denis Cosgrove, and others have shown, for centuries cosmographers have been mapping the features of the universe, charting the constellations, solar system, galaxies, and cosmic horizons. This paper focuses upon maps, visualizations, and models that represent and conceptualize a space situated in between the earth's surface and the expansive domain of outer space – that of orbital space. Rather than imagining this space as a vestige of the Cold War era, the paper approaches orbital space as a domain of enormous political, economic, and cultural significance, which is registered, for instance, in the growing use of GPS technology, satellite television, and remote sensing imagery in sites around the world. After describing and analyzing various representations of orbital space, the paper concludes with a discussion of the practice of mapping orbit in relation to what Giorgio Agamben calls "the signature of all things." The mapping of orbit suggests a particular approach to the question of method that is invested in the communicative potential of hidden things. To elaborate this point, the paper also turns to Miles Harvey's The Island of the Lost Map to explore the value and power of maps and objects that are hidden and unseen and that can inspire new critical imaginaries and potentials.

1515 Thursday
Manuel Schramm (TU Chemnitz):
The Rise of Aerial Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing
in German and US-American Cartography

Since the early modern period, cartography has been closely connected to fieldwork, especially to surveys conducted on the ground. This began to change only in the 20th century with the rise of aerial photogrammetry. Photogrammetrical methods were first developed in the early 1900s, but, at first, terrestrial methods were used that retained close contact to the ground, as in mountainous regions. This method was seen as an extension rather than a replacement of older surveying methods. Today, most topographic maps are produced from aerial photographs for reasons of both speed and economy, but the eventual success of photogrammetry should not make us forget the difficulties it had in gaining acceptance among both surveyors and cartographers. From the 1930s on, when improvements in aerial photogrammetry made its use for map production a real option for the first time, discussions about its advantages and shortcomings became frequent. The objections of surveyors centred on issues of quality and reliability, but there were also deep-seated fears of losing touch with the ground. The reason was the high priority that fieldwork was given in surveying and mapping at the time. Interestingly, the rise of aerial photogrammetry met with more resistance in Germany than in the USA. This paper explores the reasons for this difference, looking at different scientific cultures on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

1600 Coffee break

1630 Thursday
Nathalie Roseau (Laboratoire Techniques, Territoires et Sociétés Paris)
Mapping the Metropolis with Aerial Views

In "Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement," first published in French in 1943, Gaston Bachelard pointed out the "vectorial" aspect of the aerial imagination that appears in the desire for clarification and transcendence spurring the aerial dream. Seen from the air, the spectacle of totality rediscovered gives rise to the projection of a global fiction. The birth of the view from an airplane at the turn of last century answered a permanent quest from the urban milieu: the search for a means of representing its figurable whole. This is the perspective we want to raise in this paper, taking the example of the transformation of the Parisian metropolis, to understand how this virtual reality tool has been appropriated both to make apparent a reality that was no more understandable from below and to project its future. The paper will focus on the cartographic function of the aerial view, exploring the way it underlined and exacerbated the extension of the urban frontiers until their apparent dissolution. It will also focus on the projective function of the aerial view, exploring the way it has been captured through large territorial planning initiatives aimed at mastering the metropolitan process.

1715 Thursday Evening Lecture
Denis Wood (Fellow of the Graduate School "Locating Media", University of Siegen)
The Challenge to Neocartography Presented by Guy Debord and Kevin Lynch

At the moment, neogeography and neocartography are hard to disentangle from their consumer entertainment underpinnings, making it hard to take them seriously. The history of early psychogeography offers a profound counter-example, both the version that evolved with Guy Debord and the Situationists in Paris in the 1950s and the one that evolved with Kevin Lynch and David Stea in the Boston area in the 1950s and 1960s. Both practices were equally committed to the development of an objective description of the relationship between the urban environment and the psychic lives of individuals, both depended heavily on walking as a method, both produced maps that have become iconic, and both were explicitly concerned to with changing the world. Recent adaptations, derivations, and related efforts, including exciting ones like those of Jeremy Wood and Blast Theory, lack that seriousness of intent. Is it - can it - be more than entertainment for white, middle-class kids?

1815 End of the first day

Mashup Maps

0900 Friday
Ramón Reichert (University of Vienna)
Dating Maps. Mapping Love in Online Dating Communities

Some of the fastest growing online communities are dating communities. Growing interest in map-based interaction is a result of the development of online dating communities. The lecture will focus on the newest developments in social network analysis and its visualization of online dating communities. Considering the historical and epistemological background of digital mapping and social monitoring techniques, we witness a specific media culture of self-practices that often take the form of self-leadership ranging from accounting and meticulous benchmarking (i.e. ranking) to experimental self-relation and self-presentation as aesthetic practices (i.e. profiling).

0945 Friday
Marc Relieu (Telecom Paristech)
Any "Info on Flooding." Reference Practices to Persons and Places in a GoogleMap

The proliferation of online map websites offer the opportunity for everyone to add a comment linked to a specific place. There is a challenge to understand how the written utterances added in a map display some intelligible relationship to its location. Through a close examination of the annotations added to a GoogleMap by persons affected in the path of Hurricane Katrina, I propose an analysis of the mutual, reflexive relationship between the text, its inscription in the bubble, and its location on the map. The main objective is to understand the practice of writing in bubbles located on a virtual map for the practical purposes of delivering information about damage to neighbourhoods, specific houses, and landmarks, making announcements, and seeking missing persons.

1015 Coffee break

1030 Friday
Chris Perkins (University of Manchester)
The Mutability of Mapping: Practices and Performance in OpenStreetMap

Collaborative approaches based upon volunteered input into shared Internet-based resources seem to offer a radical alterative to more traditional mapping. They subvert 'closed' or proprietary systems by apparently changing the politics of mapping. This paper explores the potential of one of the most developed of these 'open' maps. It deploys a case study of the OpenStreetMap project and of the discourses and performances enacted by participants in its mapping practices. Using ethnographic and textual methods, it argues that we need to attend more to the mutability and reflexivity offered in 'crowdsourced' neogeography. Instead of assuming a profound political change occasioned by a technological shift, this paper suggests that contextual studies encompassing local practice need to be researched before assertions of change can be evaluated. We need to be aware of the diverse sites at which meaning is constructed in new mapping processes and also to recognise how new ways of mapping the world call new social engagements and meanings into being.

1115 Friday
Richard Rogers (University of Amsterdam)
Mapping for People

Why map? The talk takes up the new political geometries and other consequences that mapping introduces in a variety of concrete settings: the activist training camp, the NGO annual meeting, the intergovernmental summit, the U.N. Security Council, and the celebrity issue advocacy dinner.

1200 Lunch

Mobilizing Maps

1400 Friday
Valérie November (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne)
From Neocartography to Navigational Geography: Towards a New Theoretical Framework

Thanks to the fecund interface of three fields, science studies, risk geography and knowledge management, this paper first notes that the lack of understanding of the relationship between map, territory and risks is an unfortunate consequence of the way the mapping impulse has been interpreted during the modernist period. Then, taking into account the advent of digital navigation, the paper discusses a very different interpretation of the mapping enterprise that allows to distinguish in retrospect a mimetic from a navigational use of maps. Consequently, I propose to consider maps as dashboards of a calculation interface that allows us to pinpoint successive signposts while you move through the world, the famous multiverse of James (see November, Hübner-Camacho, Latour 2010). I will argue that this distinction might help on one hand geography to grasp the very idea of risks. On the other hand, it will help to free geography from its fascination with the base map, by allowing a whole set of new features like anticipation, participation, reflexivity, feedbacks, now being included in the navigational definition of maps.

1445 Friday
Nanna Verhoeff (Utrecht University)
Performative Cartography: The Interface of Mobile Screens of Navigation

This paper explores the interface of smartphones and augmented reality applications as examples of screen-based interfaces for what can be called performative cartography. A wide range of innovative navigation software is being developed for smartphones that makes new ways of navigating urban space possible. With touch-screen, camera, compass, GPS, network connectivity, and the various mapping applications that are being developed for them, smartphones are, fundamentally, cartographic interfaces. The hybrid interface of smartphones not only allows for navigation within the machine and on the screen but also within the physical space surrounding it. Mobile navigation and augmented reality contribute to an expanding and transforming field of cartographic screen practices that not only represent space but also truly make space – a hybrid screenspace. This paper argues that smartphones, as machines for performative cartography, allow for a creative navigation of a hybrid space in which pervasive presence, embedded pasts, and evolving futures intersect.

1515 Friday
Sybille Lammes (Utrecht University)
Playful Cartography: Mobile Mapping Interfaces as Ludic Practices

This paper is about the relation between digital mapping practices and play in location-based augmented reality applications for smartphones. Contrary to what media scholars have argued before about new media and contemporary cultures, digital mapping practices have actually brought us new senses of place and a strong urge to locate ourselves and to come to terms with our identities through story-like constructions of our whereabouts. Digital maps have altered our conception of maps as 'objectified' representations of space that has been a touchstone for centuries. Instead, digital maps have become more hybrid and personal sources for constructing stories of one's whereabouts. →

→ This has also opened up new possibilities for maps to function as performative "play equipment" that allows users to engage in what play-theorist Sutton-Smith has called "informal social play" and "performance play." Perhaps they are even an incarnation of what geographer John Kirkland Wright had in mind when he called, in 1947, for an open acknowledgment and incorporation of the emotional and imaginative connection between people, places, and maps. In this paper, I will examine how AR applications on smartphones can function as such playful and personalized mapping practices, particularly paying attention to the theoretical implications of the interface in proscribing spatial and playful meanings.

1545 Coffee break

1600 Friday
Eric Laurier (University of Edinburgh)
What it Means to Change Lanes: Actions, Emotions, and Wayfinding in the Family Car

In this paper, I will examine how the sequential organisation and settlement of disagreements comes to shape and be shaped by navigation. Using extracts of in-car interaction, we examine the gestalt of projectable aspects of road travel, car movements, and driver-navigator talk. Navigation, when accomplished without maps, relies on making sense of streets, landmarks, and signs, activities that are displayed through passengers and drivers giving directions to each other, alongside embodied references to passing roadside features and the movement of the vehicle. More broadly, 'finding the way' is bound up with the social relationships between passengers – in particular families caring for one another and showing their epistemic and emotional stance on particular matters. To examine this, we draw on existing conversation analytic work on epistemics, stance, and emotion to explore the potentially argumentative character of direction-giving and direction-receiving and how this comes to be combined with the task at hand.

1645 Friday
Marc Relieu/Natalia Nobre (Telecom Paristech)
GPS in Action: Making Sense of Vocal and Visual Instructions in Cars

GPS navigation technologies provide both a vocal and a visual aid for the orientation and way-finding of car users. Although there are a few ethnographic studies of GPS technologies, mostly based on informants' reports (see Gilly Leshed et al.: In-car GPS navigation: Engagement with and disengagement from the environment. Proceedings of CHI 2008), we still know little of how they are "made at home in the world" (Sacks). Grounded in ethnomethodology and conversational analysis, this study explores a video record of how people make sense of vocal and visual GPS instructions during a daytrip in a car. Using a video fragment, we examine how the problem to choose between conflicting instructions is collectively posed and solved.

1730 End of the conference