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A mindset for user-centered spatial applications

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Maps govern our understanding of the world in which we live – but this does not always mean that they govern fairly. This paper describes a new theoretical framework for mapping applications we call user centered mapping. Grounded in our understanding of real world models of spatial decision-making and the failings of traditional mapping applications to conform to these models, user centered mapping hopes to provide the tools for a new approach to mapping that mirrors the way we think about space. Through a survey of the existing approaches, insights into relevant material about the mental process of map making as a tool for the organization of spatial information, and a demonstration of a real world framework for developing user centered maps this paper provides a new model for creating applications that increase our awareness of spatial information effectively. This approach to the organization and utilization of this spatial information constructs a map based on an existing model of the user and their needs. Such as approach allows for more powerful and flexible maps designed not around the lay of the land, but around the user's own spatial landscape.

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