

**Bill Wolff**  
**Information Ecology, Spring 2009**  
**Google MyMaps Assignment**

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This semester we have been talking about, among other interesting things, Nardi and O'Day's theories on information ecologies. These ecologies are grounded in their locality. That is, they exist in a particular real world or virtual space. One of our debates has been focused on the question of whether Rowan University itself can be considered an information ecology. Our discussion has centered on the question of values: does all of Rowan share a particular value set(s), a necessary feature of an information ecology? If we perceive that Rowan does share a particular value set, then we might call it an information ecology. If we don't think all of Rowan shares a value set, then we can ask if certain segments of Rowan do. And so on.

One way to help us ground our understanding of Rowan as a potential information ecology is to map it. To map the locality of a space is to try to understand geographically how its disparate parts come together. As we know from our reading about mappings, seeing things visually can aid in our ability to understand better what we are looking at.

### **Assignment Specifics**

This project is going to have three parts: a memory map, a remediation of that map, and an analysis of both maps.

1. Create a map of Rowan University made from **memory** with pencils and crayons. This is to be started and hopefully completed in class **without the aid of a map of Rowan**. It should include the following:
  - Label all roads and buildings.
  - Map and label the route(s) you travel on particular days of the week. For example, if you have a particular building route on a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday map that route in one color. If you have another for Tuesday and Thursday, make that in another color. If you have a route for a night activity, mark it in a different color.
  - If you are coming from off-campus, the route should include where you enter the campus.
  - Scan your map into the computer at a resolution of 300dpi.
2. Remediate your memory map of Rowan on Google MyMaps (<http://bit.ly/wM4YN>) by completing the following:
  - Create place-markers in for all spaces you have identified in your memory map.
  - For each place-maker, upload an original photograph and add a brief description of the space. Your description should mention the activities that take place in a particular building (for example, are there departments, offices, classrooms, production centers, and so on).
  - Create and label routes for all routes you have identified on your memory map.

- Include photographs of important points on your route. What you deem is important is up to you. If you'd like, you can go the extra distance and upload a video of your route(s) and embed them with and/or instead of the photographs.
  - Shared your map with the entire class.
3. Compose a 1 – 2 page, single space analysis of your maps in which you discuss the following:
- What is missing from the maps.
  - What the missing items/information says about you as creator and the maps overall.
  - What the maps say about the space as being potential information ecology. If you do think the maps are evidence of the locality for an information ecology, what exactly is the evidence? How do the values inherent in the different spaces merge to create one information ecology? If you think there may be different information ecologies represented on your maps, speculate as to what those might be.
  - Citation is not necessary, but use APA format when you need to.
  - Create an IAOC blog posting in which you present your analysis, include your memory map, and embed your Google MyMap

### **Due dates**

March 29: Blog posting with analysis and maps due on IAOC blog by 11:00pm

March 30: In-class presentation of maps

### **Credits and Other Information**

You can find a instructional video and other excellent information about MyMaps at <http://bit.ly/wM4YN>. This assignment was inspired by Jim Brown's Google MyMaps assignment (<http://bit.ly/TeoOe>) I encourage you to see this excellent discussion of MyMaps in the writing classroom: <http://bit.ly/CXnsJ>.