Building Smart Interactive Maps: Enabling Map Projections in Adobe Flash

Nathanial V. Kelso
The Washington Post, Hyattsville, USA

Abstract

Adobe Flash allows cartographers the opportunity to build interactive graphics with rich user experiences. However, there are few cartographic tools available for Flash. Most are limited to merely integrating Google Maps, Yahoo! Maps, and Microsoft Virtual Earth services into the Flash display. What if you have created your own map with a custom graphic style and a more appropriate, non-Mercator projection?

This presentation demonstrates several working examples that read data from external files and then plot features onto world, continent, and country level maps. Choropleth map shading is also supported with several classification options. Using a generalized component tool, maps can quickly be "registered" in Flash by setting several control points and providing projection parameters. More than 10 common projections are supported, including several interrupted forms. Map users are able to interact with the map by reading specific feature names, descriptions, and even data values.

Flash's ability to spatially enable your maps and its many graphic tools allowing interface customization give it a real advantage over generic online services.