

Maps of Humanity

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Period: Sep. 2016 – Feb. 2017

Client information

Map of Humanity is a non-profit startup that aims to create a map of the history of the world. That means that it would be possible to see all places of the world at any time in history as long as humanity had the knowledge. This is a monumental task and will probably take a decade to accomplish, however, others like Wikipedia have shown similarly big goals are reachable using open source and cloud source technology.

The ultimate long-term goal is to create a platform with an open source database of the history of humanity. Other goals include creating lively, interactive visualisations in 3D of some interesting times/moments in history using new and innovative tools like virtual reality.

Project Background

The platform should be crowdsourced, crowdfunded and open source. The diversification of the funding is to ensure independence from too big and too powerful donors. Open sourcing is needed to gain transparency to build trust. Crowdsourcing is fundamental to build the ability to create sufficient amounts of data in the foreseeable future.

The project copes with several challenges, some of which will be described below:

Data visualisation - Data density and diversity will be of new heights compared to traditional maps. This creates new visualisation challenges.

Artist impressions - In order to improve visualisations, it will be needed to fill in some gaps using informed and specialised opinions.

Partnerships - This project is not feasible without partnerships with organisations that have historical data or implications such as archives, museums and other.

Data management - How to store big data in a responsive way while using open and scalable options.

Project

To complete the project a working prototype is needed. This prototype can be restricted in area and time but needs to use real data. It should work as a proof of concept for the global Map of Humanity project.

During the build of this prototype, some of the challenges mentioned above will emerge. The challenges that emerged and the one's that didn't need to be investigated and dealt with in thoughtful and efficient ways. These solutions could be used in the final global live software of Map of Humanity.

Constraints & Practical Aspects

The prototype needs to run using conventional map tools used for a web interface. This is needed to use it as a proof of concept.

The prototype will be used by Map of Humanity to show the potential of their ambitions.

Presented solutions to the challenges should keep in mind the aimed scale and ambitions of Map of Humanity

A partnership with an organisation with historical data or implications would be seen as a great advantage. One of the considered organisations is the University of Twente.