

Web Resources for Map Collectors & Enthusiasts

By

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Very few people will contest the sheer vastness of information on the web. There are so many bits and bytes that the notion of "information poisoning" might be considered a legitimate diagnosis, at least as an emotional, if not physical, disorder. Yet this blizzard of sites and details carries with it the promise of the most diversely accessible public education ever seen. In spite of all legitimate criticisms about the fleeting and unedited nature of these sites, technocrats, scholars and amateurs of all sorts are already hard at work to improve the quality of this public experience. Few expect the process to be quick or simple, but many can agree on the enormous potential to inform, not unlike the revolutions engendered with the appearance of radio and television.

Collectors of all types flock to the web, sometimes with mixed emotions. eBay is an international economic phenomenon. Access to out-of-print books and old papers has been revolutionized, whatever the attendant aggravations. I do not want to overstate this case, or understate the continued importance of brick and mortar institutions, since with any new technology opportunity and difficulty seem to trip hand in hand. But any modern map collector would be unwise to ignore the web, however much nostalgia might be held for the musty smells and quiet corners of one's favorite shop. In addition, if dealers wish to expand their clientele and collectors their aggregate numbers, it will be necessary to embrace the web and all its foibles. There are younger generations growing up in this digital world, it is a place where many work and play, and if you wish to reach that group, you have to go there.

This is not intended to be an encyclopedic review. On one level, that simple statement is a clichè. On another, it reflects the different face presented by the physical world of the book, its fixed and relatively permanent nature after publication, as opposed to the more fleeting and untouchable web world.

Most of the sites I have chosen are in English, in part because this is understood by the broadest group of collectors, but also because of my own lack of facility with other languages. For those I have offended for leaving out a favorite site or including a site thought less than intellectually adequate, mea culpa. A number of excellent sites are not referenced here. But I have enjoyed the challenge of attempting to reduce the enormous amount of available information to a few manageable pages, which will hopefully be of use to others. Some my choices may appear arbitrary, yet those fourteen categories described below cut a wide swath across the landscape of available online information. This should help some collectors, particularly those less familiar with what is available on the web. You will notice a complete absence of direct references to books on collecting old maps. This is intentional, given the topic at hand, although some of those titles will appear within the chosen links. (Some of

these titles may be found within the links provided in section 8 below.)

1. Large General Sites

- [Map History / History of Cartography](#) - This site is maintained by Tony Campbell, former Map Librarian of the British Library. It the best of the online gateway sites to the subject. Take a look at the [summary page](#) to get familiar with the general offerings of this extensive site. There are also [general pages for map collecting](#) and the general [commercial marketplace](#).

- Oddens' Bookmarks - Although still actively mentioned in many places, this site has been deactivated.

- [Cartes et figures du monde: histoire de la cartographie, cultures et savoirs géographiques](#) - The site is managed by the Commission 'histoire' of the Comité français de cartographie. It contains a broad array of information pertaining to the history of cartography, including publications, exhibitions, conferences, and research projects. It is not confined to activities in France.

2. Map Libraries and Collections

- This focuses, though not entirely, on sites with larger image collections.

- [Library of Congress: Geography and Map Division](#)

- [David Rumsey Cartographic Collections](#) - This extends beyond the better-known site focusing only on his private collection.

- [The National Map: Historical Topographic Map Collection](#) - This is maintained by the US Geological Survey, and will eventually contain over 200,000 topographic map images dating from 1884..

- [Newberry Library - The Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography](#) and the online [Newberry Library Cartographic Collection page](#). The single maps cataloged within the latter site are not available via OCLC's WorldCat.

- [Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection \(Univ. of Texas\)](#)

- [United States Military Academy Digital Map Library](#) and [United States Military Academy Atlas Collections](#).

- [The Napoleonic Series Map Archives](#)

- [New York Public Library Map Division \(Digital Gallery Historic Map Guide\)](#)

- [Osher Map Library \(Univ. of Southern Maine\)](#)

- [American Geographical Society Cartographic Collection](#)

- [British Library Map Collections](#) - Their map descriptions are searchable via a trial interface at [COPAC](#), which is not a digital image catalogue.
- [IKAR Map Database - Map catalogue](#) representing a consortium of German libraries, now numbering well over 200,000 maps (textual entries only), mostly prior to 1850. Manuscript items are excluded. This is the explanatory page, and the actual search page may be reached [here](#).
- [Harvard Map Collections](#)
- [Royal Geographical Society](#)
- [National Library of Australia Digital Collections: Maps](#)
- [National Library of Scotland: Maps](#)
- [National Maritime Museum Collections Online: Charts & Maps](#)
- [Normal B. Leventhal Map Center](#) at the Boston Public Library
- [California Map Society Union Catalog](#), containing over 3700 map images of California and the World from three collections: The Huntington Library, Art Collection & Botanical Gardens, the Pasadena Museum of History and the Altadena Historical Society.
- [Maps and Plans](#) of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
- [Ryhiner Collection](#)
- [GeoWeb](#) - This is the home of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, which has a large number of historically important maps online. When you get to the search page, click on the catalogue selection box and the top of the choice section, and go from there.
- [Map Libraries and Map Archives \(ETH-Bibliothek Zurich\)](#) - This is an extensive general list of these resources.
- [Map Library of Catalonia](#) - Maintained by the Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya.
- [Historic Cities](#) - This impressive site contains maps, literature and various other documents pertaining to its topic. It is a collaboration between the Dept. of Geography of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Jewish National and University Library, and The Shapell Digitalization Project.
- [Collaborative Digital Libraries](#) - This multilingual site (English, French, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese-- for the respective segments) is sponsored by the Library of Congress and corresponding national libraries, and details elements of exploration and discovery of the Americas. At this stage, the

histories and digital presentations link to the roles of France, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain and Brazil (Portugal).

- [Realms of Gold: A Catalogue of Maps in the Library of the American Philosophical Society](#) - This extensively illustrated site "...contains information on some 1,750 printed maps, over 1,000 manuscript maps, 136 atlases, two globes, and one model." There is extensive bibliographic information, although not all the items are illustrated online. Those that are illustrated are in JPEG2000 format.
- [Afriterrra: The Cartographic Free Library](#) - "The AFRITERRA Foundation is a non-profit Cartographic Library and Archive assembling and preserving the original rare maps of Africa in a definitive place for education and interpretation."
- [Star Atlases, Charts and Maps](#) - This remarkable online collection is provided and maintained by the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering and Technology, in Kansas City, Missouri.
- [North Carolina Maps](#) - This is a comprehensive, online collection of historic maps culled from three of the state's largest map collections -- the North Carolina State Archives, the North Carolina Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill, and the Outer Banks History Center.

3. Map Auctions - The focus here is on auctions largely devoted to maps. There are a number of general auction houses that have periodic map (and other cartographic item) sales, including Bloomsbury, Christie's, Pacific Book Auctions, Sotheby's, Swann and Dominic Winter. These are easily found online. eBay has some interesting map material, if you understand the pitfalls of this combination auction house, discounter and flea market.

- [Old World Auctions](#)
- [Paulus Swaen Old Maps and Prints](#)

4. Map Fairs

- [London Map Fair](#) - This large June fair is usually held at the same time as the IMCoS (International Map Collectors Society) June weekend.
- [Miami International Map Fair](#) - This is usually held over the first weekend in February.
- [Paris Map Fair](#) - This is held every November.
- [Virtual Antique & Rare Art - Book & Map Fair](#) - This is ongoing.

5. Map Collector Societies (Antiquarian)

- [IMCoS](#) - This is the largest of the single groups, and is international in scope. They have several

meetings during the year, including an International Symposium, and a June weekend, held in conjunction with the London Map Fair (see section 4 above).

- [Boston Map Society](#)
 - [Brussels International Map Collectors Circle](#) - They meet several times a year, and publish a newsletter 3 times a year.
 - [California Map Society](#) - They meet semiannually and publish a quarterly newsletter.
 - [Chicago Map Society](#) - They meet monthly, except July-August, and publish a periodic newsletter (Mapline)
 - [Rocky Mountain Map Society](#)
 - [Texas Map Society](#) - They meet and publish a newsletter semiannually.
 - [Washington Map Society](#) - They have ten meetings a year (workshops, seminars, fieldtrips), and publish The Portolan three times a year. This is the largest publication of its kind in the USA.
 - [New York Map Society](#)
 - [Map Societies Around the World](#) - This comprehensive site is maintained by James Speed Hensinger, and includes listings for all those groups mentioned above.
- 6. [Cartographic Events and Exhibition Calendars](#)** - This extensive list of activities is maintained by John W. Docktor.

7. Online Discussion Groups

- [MapHist Forum](#) - This online forum replaced the longstanding email list in January of 2012. The forum is administered by Peter van der Krogt, on the Faculty of Geosciences at the University of Utrecht.
- [International Society for the History of the Map Forum](#) - The ISHM site is administered by Zsolt Török, on the faculty of the Department of Cartography and Geoinformatics, Eötvös Loránd University. The forum (see drop-down menu under "members area") currently requires paid membership for access.
- [MapTrade Mailing List](#) - This list is maintained by Barry Ruderman, and is generally commercial in focus.

8. Online Bibliographies in the History of Cartography

- [Concise Bibliography of the History of Cartography](#) - This was compiled by Robert W. Karrow, Jr. of the Newberry Library
- [A Guide to Recent Trends in the History of Cartography](#) - Compiled by Matthew Edney, Director, History of Cartography Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison. This is the 2006 update available at the Coordinates website (see bottom of publications, section 10 below).
- [Bibliographic Essay: History of Cartography](#) - This was written by Evelyn Edson of Piedmont Virginia Community College, and reproduced on the Map History site (see above) with the permission of the author and Choice: current reviews for academic libraries.
- [General Bibliography Page \(Map History\)](#)
- [History of Cartography Tutorial](#) - This is a multi-lingual, collaborative site, developed by: University of Southern Maine (George S. Carhart); Eötvös Loránd Universität, Budapest (Zsolt Török); Universität Passau (Thomas Frenz). This short introductory tutorial is clearly written, illustrated, and divided into eight sections, with two added areas for auxiliary and in-depth studies. Several areas are still under construction, and completion will make this site more useful.
- [The Mapping of California as an Island](#) - This basic reference is by Glen McLaughlin.
- [An Annotated List of Reference Books for the Antiquarian Map Collector](#)

9. Publications

- [Journals and Newsletters Related to the History of Cartography](#) - This is a sizable general list at the Map History site, noted above. It contains most of those listings below.
- [Imago Mundi](#) - This is the major academic print journal for the history of cartography. This link is for current issues. Back issues (i.e. those published prior to Taylor & Francis) may be found online, through subscribing libraries (not accessible to general public) at [JSTOR](#). A recent and welcome change allows current private subscribers to access these online back issues. The current editorial board is posted online [here](#).
- [IMCOS Journal](#) - This is IMCOS' quarterly journal, edited by Valerie Newby.
- [Neatline](#) - This newsletter of the Texas Map Society is currently edited by David Finrock.
- [The Portolan](#) - This is the journal of the Washington Map Society, published 3 times a year. This has been published since October 1984, is indexed and posted to the website, and is currently edited by Tom Sander.

- [Terra Incognitae](#) - This is the yearly publication for The Society for the History of Discoveries, published since 1969, and currently edited by Marguerite Ragnow.
- [Brussels International Map Collectors Circle Newsletter](#) - This is their organizational newsletter, published three times a year since 1998, and currently edited by Jean-Louis Renteux.
- [Journal of Maps & Geography Libraries](#) - This is a relatively new academic journal, just released in 2004, edited by Paige G. Andrew and Katherine H. Weimer, and now published by Taylor & Francis.
- [Coordinates](#) - This was the "*Online Journal of the Map and Geography Round Table, American Library Association*". It ceased publication in 2011.
- [Cartographic Perspectives](#) - This is the journal of the North American Cartographic Information Society. They maintain an online archive (<http://www.nacis.org/index.cfm?x=5>) to the full text for quite a number of back issues, with about a two to three year lag.
- [e-Perimtron](#) - Launched in 2006, this quarterly open-access journal is a "pluralist peer reviewed international journal which does not obey any particular ideological, theoretical or methodological approach in dealing with humanistic, artistic, scientific and technological issues related to map history and cartographic heritage in the large. The journal is published quarterly during the four seasons of the year."

10. Preservation Issues (Paper and Digital)

- [AIC Resource Center](#) - This is supported and maintained by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.
- [Northeast Document Conservation Center](#) - This is also a large, multi-faceted site, and has reinstated its online course, [Preservation 101](#). It also has an extensive online list of [Preservation Leaflets](#).
- [Caring for Your Document and Art on Paper \(Stanford Univ.\)](#) - This PDF file is a straightforward discussion of basic elements pertaining to the care of old maps.
- [Rare Book Photography: An Introduction](#) This is an online discussion published by Yale University (2011), with text by Bryn Savage and photography by Bill Saco.
- [Caring for Your Collection \(IMCoS bulletins\)](#) There is a good bit of information here, although the section on photography could use some updating, particularly in the area of digital photography.
- Archival Supplies - [Dick Blick Art Materials](#), [Gaylord](#), [Light Impressions](#), [University Products \(ArchivalSuppliers.com\)](#), [Metro Associates](#), [Atlantic Protective Pouches](#).

11. Courses and Lectures open to the public - Note that most of these links are through the Map

History site.

- [International Conferences on the History of Cartography](#)
- [Maps and Society lectures](#)
- [Virginia Garrett Lectures](#) - Held alternate years in Arlington, Texas.
- Alan P. and Nathalie Voorhees Lecture on the History of Cartography - This is a yearly event, usually in March, hosted by the Library of Virginia in Richmond. The dates may be found via John Dockett's Cartography Events Calendar (link via left hand frame on this page).
- [Nebenzahl Lectures](#) - Held alternate years in Chicago, at the Newberry Library.
- [Oxford Seminars in Cartography](#)
- [Cambridge Seminars in the History of Cartography](#)
- [Groupe des Cartothécaires de LIBER](#) - Tutorials and courses.

12. Out of Print Book Search Engines on the Web

- [Advanced Book Exchange \(ABE\)](#) - This is the largest of the independent online search engines.
- [International League of Antiquarian Booksellers \(ILAB\)](#) - This is the international organization linking the major national bookseller associations.
- [Use of Booksearch Engines for the Map Collector \(broad general discussion\)](#)

13. Odds & Ends

- [Discussion of issues pertaining to book and map theft](#) - This is maintained by Tony Campbell. Related to this topic is the [Missing Maps](#) page maintained by John Woram, including links to a master list of items reported stolen by Forbes Smiley in the recent theft cases involving several major libraries. Other resources regarding theft issues may be found via the [Rare Book and Manuscript \(RBMS\) Security Committee website](#).
- [Cartographic Fakes, Forgeries and Facsimiles likely to deceive](#) - This is also maintained by Tony Campbell. Distinctions are drawn between fakes, forgeries, and legitimate facsimiles.
- [MapRecord Antiquarian Dealer List](#) - MapRecord publications is the descendant of the Antique Map Price Record, and has experience with dealer lists for many years. This is a large general list, not solely predicated on a web presence, is organized geographically. [NOTE: The Antique Map Price Record -- also a pricing guide--is now available by online subscription via [OldMaps.com](#)

- [Ownership Marking of Paper-Based Materials](#) - This page is maintained by The Library of Congress.
- [Definitions of the word 'map', 1649-1996](#) - These 321 definitions were prepared by J.H. Andrews.
- [Milestones in the History of Thematic Cartography](#) - This online article, dedicated to Arthur Robinson, was prepared by Michael Friendly.
- [John Harrison and the Longitude Problem](#) - This online article is by J. O'Donnell and hosted by the National Maritime Museum.
- [Ordnance Survey glossary: Mapping terminology and acronyms](#) - This is a very useful and reasonably extensive list of terms.
- [Dictionary of Abbreviations and Acronyms in Geographic Information Systems, Cartography, and Remote Sensing](#) - This is authored by Philip Hoehn and Mary Lynette Larsgaard, and hosted by the Earth Sciences & Map Library, University of California, Berkeley.
- [Bookbinding and the Conservation of Books: A Dictionary of Descriptive Terminology](#) - This is a very nice resource for terminology relating to antiquarian books and related materials.
- [ABC for Book Collectors](#) - The 8th edition of this classic reference is maintained online by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers.
- Map Projection Overview - There are two sites I would recommend here: [USGS Map Projections](#) and [Map Projection Essentials](#) by daan Strebe. For a more detailed explanation, see John Snyder's [Map Projections: A Working Manual](#).
- [History of Cartography Project](#) - Volumes I and II are now freely [available online](#).
- [Explokart](#) - Univ. of Utrecht research program in the history of cartography.
- [Searching for Early Maps: Use of Online Library Catalogs](#) - This online article, published in 2010 in PDF format, discusses the use of major OPACs and meta-search engines which can be used to discover early cartographic material. Among those options discussed are the KVK catalog, the various interfaces of WorldCat, and the IKAR map database. There is also some discussion of major digital image sites catering to early map material.
- [Western Association of Map Libraries](#), and their associated [Map Librarian's Toolbox](#) and [Map Cataloguing Resources](#). Some of their links could use updating, if they have the time and inclination.
- [Rare Map Cataloging: A Case of Special Consideration](#) - This is a general, introductory, and illustrated PDF article which first appeared in the Winter 2006 issue of [The Portolan](#) (Number 67).

- [Pathfinder for the History of Cartography](#)
- [Historical Celestial Atlases on the Web](#) - This is maintained by Robert Harry van Gent.
- [Historic Maps in K-12 Classrooms](#) - This is maintained by the Newberry Library.
- [Teacher Resources](#) - This is maintained by the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center of the Boston Public Library.
- [The Many Dimensions of Map Use](#) - This is maintained by James R. Carter.
- [Map Reference](#) - This is specifically for non-print reference items on historical maps and cartography
- [Understanding MARC Bibliographic: Machine-Readable Cataloging](#)
- [Currency Converter](#)
- As of January 2012 the Antique Map Price Record was merged into [OldMaps.com](#). This is the most expansive of the pricing records/guides focused on antiquarian cartographic materials. [American Book Prices Current \(ABPC\)](#) is the most expensive of the pricing records/guides. Its online search facility has decades of auction records for books, maps, broadsides, etc., although when compared with OldMaps.com there are neither as many entries nor as much detail with respect to individual maps.

I hope this series of web links proves useful. Some of these will disappear, an unavoidable and natural attrition. Other sites will continue to evolve, and begin to develop into their own online institutions. Some of these new institutions will be offshoots of our major brick and mortar facilities, while others will be something new, or perhaps a hybrid. Given the fluctuations and potential evanescence of web related resources, the notion of "web librarianship" is a useful concept. With time, improved informational quality and accessibility will prove beneficial to all those taking the time and trouble to look. New and better ways of disseminating information to students of any age should help all concerned. I hope to be able to update this guide periodically, with the intent of keeping it short, but reasonably current. Any suggestions would be appreciated, keeping in mind that this is to be a general reference source aimed at early collectors and enthusiasts.

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