



Sarah Robin Daniels

My Cartographic Process

My ability to find and illuminate the story behind the data is how I work. I use my communication and design skills to create enticing, engaging, informative and clear maps. I approach my projects by emphasizing collaboration with my clients. Combining the client's industry knowledge with my geographic abilities to view the big picture, I deliver more than just an aesthetic map, I deliver insightful and actionable information by using design driven techniques in GIS.

Defining the purpose of the map:

Who is the user and what will they get out of using the map?

The first steps are to identify the purpose and audience of the map as this will determine what elements are included, how the information is portrayed and the general layout and format of the map. How the map is used is also a key consideration, for example, for presentation, white papers, or field work. They all have their own particular design implications.



Choosing a map type and simplicity

Once communicated what needs to be presented, a map type is chosen. There are various map designs such as topographic or thematic maps, each of which has its different advantages in communicating the map's purpose to the user.

One of the main objectives is that key features should stand out against lesser features. Pivotal to great design and clarity is simplicity. The choice of what information and level of detail to include on the map is at the centre of the process. I employ techniques to simplify, generalise and aggregate information to make the map messaging clearer.

Graphic Representation

All maps are made with the goal of communicating spatial information. The correct use of symbology, colour (including colour blind friendly palettes), and typography will produce remarkable differences in legibility and emphasis on maps. The areas I consider when defining graphical representation are: Symbology, colour palette, text, messaging, typeface, and layout.

Aesthetics and beauty

Great map design uses cartographic impressions and artistic tweaks to make a map look clean and attractive. It comes down to portraying the truth (i.e. facts about the environment) and the essence of cartography (informing through design driven techniques). Great design – as in something pleasing to the eye – releases a chemical reward in the brain, giving a feeling of satisfaction. If the map attracts the reader's attention through aesthetics and beauty, they will naturally be more receptive to the map's message and purpose.

