

Reviews

Cartography Design Annual #1

Compiled and edited by Nick Springer

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Cartographics, LLC

77 pages, with full color reproductions of maps throughout

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Nick Springer, the editor of *Cartography Design Annual #1*, might best be described as a cartophile. In the foreword to his book, he reveals that he earned a degree in Geography but most enjoyed the hands-on design work in the cartography lab. He began his career in graphic design only because he was unable to obtain a job designing maps. He ultimately went out on his own and established a freelance cartographic design business.

Although he greatly enjoyed his work, Springer felt increasingly isolated as a cartographer and began to think he was one of the only ones out there. He searched the Internet for any online community for cartographers that might fill the void, but he was unable to make any connections at the time. In 2004, Springer created Cartotalk.com as a place for cartographers to share ideas, get peer feedback, ask for and receive advice, and generally communicate about the interests they shared. He has since discovered that there are many cartographers out there, and they have often expressed to him a similar longing for community.

As Cartotalk grew in popularity, cartographers began to post their maps on the site. Springer believed that the best of these maps should be compiled and shared in book format. His goal was not to create a competition, *per se*, but simply to select what he felt were the best designed maps of a particular year and showcase them for the world to see. He did not limit his choices to any specific design process, so hand-drawn maps appear side by side with GIS or graphically designed maps.

Cartography Design Annual #1 represents maps published in 2007. Springer admits that the thirty-six maps showcased in his book should not be considered a comprehensive collection by any means, since submissions were solicited mostly through the Cartotalk Web

site. Many worthy cartographers may have been unaware of this first book and were, therefore, unable to contribute. Springer hopes that word of mouth and the book itself will encourage even more submissions for the next edition, which will showcase maps published in 2008.

Springer chose the maps for *Cartography Design Annual #1* based on their overall aesthetic value, the clarity of their data, and any unique design elements that made them stand out from the others. All decisions were purely his own, and he admits to including some of his own work in the collection. His real goal, he indicates, was simply to showcase beautiful maps.

So, what constitutes a "beautiful" map? I chose to review this book from among others offered to me in an effort to find that out. My company creates maps for a variety of municipal applications. The best of these are both functional and beautiful; others tend more to the former than the latter. Our maps have won a number of local awards for excellence, which seems to indicate they are pleasing in some manner, but I notice that in the civil engineering field the mapping awards tend to go to the purely functional, rather than to the purely beautiful, map. In other mapping competitions, however, I notice that only the graphically enhanced or similarly eye-pleasing maps seem to win. Even those that I consider to be less than functional or very rudimentary for the purposes intended will often take the prize if they include some particular types of graphic element. This is fine to a degree; but, like fabric or wallpaper, I think a map can sometimes be too "busy" or even too plain to be really effective.

Cartography Design Annual #1 features a variety of maps that appear eminently functional for their respective purposes, as well as aesthetically pleasing. To me, this represents the epitome of mapping excellence. Most of the maps deal with North America and other northern hemisphere nations, though a few maps represent the southern hemisphere or even the entire world. Contributors range from recognized names, such as National Geographic, McGraw-Hill and the U.S. National Park Service, to independent cartographers and cartographic design firms.

Each map in *Cartography Design Annual #1* is presented on two facing pages. One page shows the overall map in its entirety, while the other page shows an enlarged detail from the map to provide a closer look. Each cartographer's name and employing company or organization is included, as well as a Web address where more information about each map can be

found. Data sources are listed for most maps, as well as the software applications used to create them. No other text is provided. The maps are allowed to speak entirely for themselves.

Support for this book was provided by Avenza Systems, Inc., producers of MAPublisher and Geographic Imager. Many of the maps showcased were created, in part, with Avenza software applications. Other frequently used applications include ESRI, Adobe, Quark, Manifold System, and Corel products.

A wide cross-section of mapping is represented in *Cartography Design Annual #1*. Road maps, relief maps, trail maps, route maps, tourist maps, pictorial maps, atlas maps, and street maps are featured. Also included are a map of golf courses, a map showing fire history, a map documenting plant life, and even part of a world map that was made into a global beanbag chair. Gives a whole new meaning to the phrase “sitting on top of the world,” doesn’t it?

These are some of the specific maps that caught my attention:

- *The Ships Atlas – Plate 7 – Piracy Incidents Map* by Shipping Guides Limited provides an overview of piracy incidents throughout the world during 2005 and 2006. Piracy locations are marked with the image of a skull and crossed swords—the larger the image, the more piracy incidents have occurred there. The map also features detailed graphs and charts at the bottom to provide additional information. If this map is any indication, piracy is occurring even more frequently and in more widespread locations than the nightly newscasts would allow.
- *Expressive Map: Bangkok* by Olason Cartographic Artistry is a road map that has been visually enhanced with superimposed images of local architecture, folklore, and tourist attractions. Because many of the images on the map are placed on their geographic locations as well as in a collage around the map’s perimeter, I could imagine its being used equally well as a tourist guide or educational tool. This map provides the overall ambience of Bangkok even for those who aren’t visiting there. Although not shown, annotation indicates that detailed maps of the central business district, old city, and riverfront areas are included on the reverse side as additional reference. It seems to be a comprehensive mapping product.
- *Sierra County*, produced by Chicago CartoGraphics for the Directory Plus phone book of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, is a spare, clean, matter-of-fact road map that is as appealing as it is simple. Pastel colors, major roadways, and a hint of topography all surround the western city that was originally called Hot Springs and then

renamed in 1950 in honor of the iconic television show, *Truth or Consequences*. Television was so popular at the time that this seemed like a great publicity gimmick for the city, and residents have voted to keep the name ever since. It’s a name that would stand out on any map, but looks particularly chic on this one.

- *Brossard (North America) Geopictorial Map* by GEOgrafix shows a portion of the boundary between the United States and Canada from a unique vantage point. Both countries have been rotated clockwise, so the eastern boundary of the State of Maine appears at the bottom of the overall map, and the City of Chicago appears near the top. Brossard, in Canada, and other, more well-known cities in both Canada and the United States are each represented on the map with a group of their most recognizable buildings rendered in ink and watercolor. The buildings even have shadows to add to their three-dimensional appeal. The purpose of the map is to show that Brossard has “room for growth,” which seems to be indicated by its small collection of representational buildings surrounded by many apparently larger cities and the vast open spaces in between. The more I look at this map, the more detail I see, including a tiny skier on a snow-covered mountain in Vermont, boats and barges in the rivers, an airplane in flight (complete with shadow), a lighthouse, and even a miniature representation of Niagara Falls. Absolutely amazing.
- *GVA Williams Manhattan* by Halcrow, Incorporated, depicts Lower Manhattan in great detail. Color-coded building footprints and recreation areas enhance the well-labeled streets, landmarks, and mass transit routes. A lot of thought must have gone into designing a map that is not overwhelmed by the intensity of population and architecture it depicts, but works to present them in a crisp and consistently readable format. Even the orderly way in which the annotation was applied is impressive. Each font is distinct, yet they all work together quite well. It is a very neat and well-organized map that would accommodate the needs of any visitor to Manhattan.

I would definitely recommend *Cartography Design Annual #1* to anyone with even a passing interest in cartography or geography. The quality and color saturation of the map reproductions is impressive throughout, which really enhanced my overall enjoyment of the book. The maps seem to jump right off the page. Although it is a slim volume, it is one that readers will find themselves perusing again and again, like a favorite art book or photo album. There is always another detail or nuance to discover.

I admit that I liked some of the maps in *Cartography Design Annual #1* much more than others, and a few just didn't seem worthy of their place in the book in comparison with the rest of those chosen. Even with maps, it would seem, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. But for the true cartophile, there is plenty to behold in this book.

Cartographic Relief Presentation

By Eduard Imhof

ESRI Press, Redlands, California, 2007

436 p., 14 color plates, bibliography, index.

ISBN: 9781589480261

soft-cover \$59.95

*Reviewed by Dawn Youngblood, PhD
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Swiss geographer Eduard Imhof's classic text is once again available in English. Within the discipline of cartography, few works are considered classics and few of those remain relevant beyond the transition to GIS mapping. Imhof's text on relief representation, however, can still be viewed as a masterpiece. Imhof combined intellect and graphics in the solution of map design problems; his mission was clearly to improve the precision and readability of maps. He writes on page 359 of this volume that "Only simplicity provides a lasting impression," and what makes Imhof a master cartographer is his ability to take a large amount of complex topographic data and transform it into something not only simple in its ability to be interpreted but beautiful as well.

Eduard Imhof (1895-1986) was a professor of cartography at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich from 1925 to 1965 and devoted his career to raising the standards of map design. He is best known for his relief shading work and mountain cartography. Considered the founder of modern academic cartography, Imhof was one of the people responsible for the inspirational and accurate Swiss national maps. In 1965, his breakthrough book, published in German, *Kartographische Gelände Darstellung*, filled a need in cartographic instruction by offering guidelines for properly rendering terrain in maps of all types and scales. The book was translated into English in 1982 for Walter de Gruyter publishers of Berlin as *Cartographic Relief Presentation*, and the translation served to expand its influence globally. *Cartographic Relief Presentation* was an expensive book with a limited press run that made it a rare find until this new ESRI Press edition was issued. The reissue should benefit mapping professionals, scholars, scientists, and students alike, whether their maps are drawn by traditional

means or with the aid of a computer. This new edition of *Cartographic Relief Presentation* preserves Imhof's insightful commentary and analytical style through the application of sparse editing. All the color maps, aerial photographs, and instructive illustrations are faithfully reproduced. It should come as no surprise that gorgeous full-color cartographic plates used as examples for the text feature the geographer's Swiss homeland, particularly the Alps. In the 1982 English edition published by de Gruyter, the plates were loose and were included in a sleeve in the back of the volume. In the ESRI Press edition, they are bound into the back. *Cartographic Relief Presentation* was among the essential mapping and graphical design books of the twentieth century. Many such volumes suffer the "out of sight, out of mind" syndrome when they fall out of print, but the recognition by the new publishers of the continuing relevance of *Cartographic Relief Presentation* for the twenty-first century has saved Imhof's work from a similar fate.

The sixteen chapters guide the reader from the "Topographic Foundations" of Chapter 2 through to the "Interplay of Elements" in Chapter 14, with additional observations and future developments in Chapters 15 and 16, respectively. Chapter 1 is a fifteen-page history of cartographic relief presentation beginning with the earliest known map—an earthenware plate from Mesopotamia some 4,400 years old. While brief, the history is thorough and does not stray from the specific topic of relief presentation. Whether the reader is interested in history or not, the demonstration of knowledge gives him or her a sense of the deep and thorough scholarship Imhof devoted to his task. The author, for instance, credits Leonardo da Vinci for first showing relief forms individually and continuously related, as if seen in an oblique bird's-eye view.

Chapter 2 lays the topographic foundations of relief presentation from classic survey methods, through issues regarding accuracy, to the use of general or derived maps at smaller scales as working bases. Chapter 3 goes deeply into general principles on the study of topography including landscape drawing, aerial photography and its interpretation, field reconnaissance and identification, rectification, and an excellent explanation of the differences between aerial photographs and maps. The chapter also explores binocular viewing in stereo pairs before ending with a brief but clear statement of the importance of the cartographer in advancing scientific knowledge as part of a reciprocal relationship with geomorphologists.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the theory of colors. One look at the beautiful reproductions of Imhof's own work found among the color plates will encourage the cartographic student at any level to read this chapter. His use of hypsometric tints and colors demonstrates his mastery of composition and harmony using strict