

A CONDENSED DIGITAL TRAVELERS GUIDE: WEB RESOURCES FOR MAP COLLECTORS & ENTHUSIASTS

by Joel Kovarsky

[*Editor's Note:* An Internet link to this article appears on the bottom of the home page of the Washington Map Society – www.washmap.org. Readers can go to that page, click at the bottom and easily access all the web links cited below. The author is constantly making updates to the article accessed via the Internet.]

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 cliché. 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. While my choices may, at times, appear arbitrary, those fourteen categories described below cut across a broad swath of the 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.)

LARGE GENERAL SITES

- ✧ *Oddens' Bookmarks* <<http://oddens2.geog.uu.nl/>> - This is unquestionably the most encyclopedic web site with respect to every aspect of map reference. It is searchable, and the link provided here is to the newer version of the site. The site was started Roelof Oddens, of the University of Utrecht's Faculty of Geosciences.

✧ *Map History / History of Cartography* <www.maphistory.info> - This site is maintained by Tony Campbell, former Map Librarian of the British Library. It has over 100 pages of searchable information focused on its chief subject. Take a look at the summary page <www.maphistory.info/sum.html> to get familiar with the general offerings of this extensive site. There are also general pages for map collecting <www.maphistory.info/collecting.html> and the general commercial marketplace <www.maphistory.info/market.html>.

MAP LIBRARIES AND COLLECTIONS

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

✧ *Library of Congress: Geography and Map Division* <www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap>

✧ *David Rumsey Cartographic Collections* <www.davidrumsey.com/collections/cartography.html> - This extends beyond the better-known site focusing only on his private collection.

✧ *Newberry Library – The Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography* <www.newberry.org/smith/L3rsmith.html> and the online *Newberry Library Cartographic Collection* page <www.biblioserver.com/newberry>

✧ *Perry Casteneda Map Collection (Univ. of Texas)* <www.lib.utexas.edu/maps>

✧ *United States Military Academy (Atlases)* <www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlas/atlas%20home.htm>

✧ *Napoleonic Reference Library of Maps and Geographic Resources* <www.napoleonseries.org/reference/maps.cfm>

✧ *New York Public Library Map Division* <www.nypl.org/research/chss/map/map.html>

✧ *Osher Map Library (Univ. of Southern Maine)* <www.usm.maine.edu/maps/home.html>

✧ *American Geographical Society Cartographic Collection* <<http://leardo.lib.uwm.edu/cart.html>>

✧ *British Library Map Collections* <www.bl.uk/collections/maps.html> - Their map descriptions are accessible via the new experimental interface at COPAC <www.copac.ac.uk/msgw/wzgw>. The map search link appears at the bottom of that page, but apparently not all maps are correctly identified as such, so other field searches may be needed. It was clear that changes are underway for this interface. This is not a digital image catalogue.

✧ *IKAR Map Database* <<http://ikar.sbb.spk-berlin.de/allgemeines/english.html>> - 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 at <<http://gso.gbv.de/DB=1.68/LNG=DU/SMART=RLV/IMPLAND=Y/>>.

✧ *Harvard Map Collections* <<http://hcl.harvard.edu/maps>>

✧ *Royal Geographical Society* <www.rgs.org/category.php?Page=mainarchives>

✧ *National Library of Australia Map Collections* <www.nla.gov.au/map/mapcoll.html>

✧ *National Maritime Museum (charts)* <www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/displayCollection.cfm?item_class=Charts>

✧ *Ryhiner Collection* <www.stub.unibe.ch/stub/ryhiner/images/progress.html>

✧ *GeoWeb* <<http://geoweb.venezia.sbn.it/geoweb/GWindex.html>> - 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)* <www.maps.ethz.ch/maplibraries.html> This is an extensive general list of these resources.

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* <www.oldworldauctions.com>
- ✧ *Paulus Swaen Old Maps and Prints* <www.swaen.com>

MAP FAIRS

- ✧ *London Map Fair* <www.londonmapfairs.com/fair.htm> - These are held quarterly. The larger June fair is held at the same time as the IMCoS (International Map Collectors Society) June weekend.
- ✧ *Miami International Map Fair* <www.historical-museum.org/mapfair/mapfair.htm> - This is usually held over the first weekend in February.
- ✧ *Paris Map Fair* <www.map-fair.com/Paris2.html> - This is the newest of the group, and is held every November.
- ✧ *European Map Fair* <www.map-fair.com/Breda.html> - This is held in Breda, The Netherlands, usually shortly after the Paris fair.
- ✧ *Rocky Mountain Map Fair* <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~mcole/map_fair_4.html> This is usually in mid-September, and hosted by the Denver Public Library and Rocky Mountain Map Society.

MAP COLLECTOR SOCIETIES (ANTIQUARIAN)

- ✧ *IMCoS* <www.imcos.org> - 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* <www-hcl.harvard.edu/maps/bms>
- ✧ *Brussels International Map Collectors Circle* <www.bimcc.org/index.htm> - They meet several times a year, and publish a newsletter 3 times a year.
- ✧ *California Map Society* <www.californiamapsociety.org> - They meet semiannually and publish a quarterly newsletter.
- ✧ *Chicago Map Society* <www.newberry.org/nl/smith/L3rsmith.html> - They meet monthly, except July-August, and publish a periodic newsletter (*Mapline*)
- ✧ *Rocky Mountain Map Society* <www.rmmaps.org>
- ✧ *Texas Map Society* <<http://libraries.uta.edu/txmapsociety/index.html>> - They meet and publish a newsletter semiannually.
- ✧ *Washington Map Society* <www.washmap.org> - 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.
- ✧ *The William P. Cumming Map Society* <www.cummingmapsociety.org>
- ✧ *Map Societies Around the World* <<http://web.ulib.csuohio.edu/SpecColl/maps/MapSoc>> - This site is maintained by William Barrow (European entries by Peter van der Krogt). This is comprehensive in scope, and includes listings for all those groups mentioned above.

CARTOGRAPHIC EVENTS AND EXHIBITION CALENDARS

- ✧ <www.docktor.com> - This extensive list of activities is maintained by John W. Docktor.

ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUPS

- ✧ *MapHist Discussion Group* <www.maphist.nl> - This longstanding list, the most academic of its type, is maintained by Peter van der Krogt, on the Faculty of Geosciences at the University of Utrecht.

- ✧ *MapTrade Mailing List* <www.raremaps.com/maptrade> - This list is maintained by Barry Ruderman, and is generally commercial in focus.

ONLINE BIBLIOGRAPHIES IN THE HISTORY OF CARTOGRAPHY

- ✧ *Concise Bibliography of the History of Cartography* <www.newberry.org/collections/conbib.html> - This was compiled by Robert W. Karrow, Jr. of the Newberry Library
- ✧ *A Guide to Recent Trends in the History of Cartography* <www.fas.harvard.edu/~atlantic/bibliographies/cartography/edney.html> - This was compiled by Matthew H. Edney at the Univ. of Southern Maine.
- ✧ *Bibliographic Essay: History of Cartography* <www.maphistory.info/edson.html> - 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)* <www.maphistory.info/genbib.html>

ANTIQUARIAN MAP DEALERS

- ✧ *Yahoo dealer list* <http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Shopping_and_Services/Antiques_and_Collectibles/Maps> - The reasons and methods for rankings are not

clear, and like with many large online lists, some of the links are non-functional. The main focus here is on dealers with at least some component of an online presence.

- ✧ *MapRecord Antiquarian Dealer List* <www.maprecord.com/Dealers.html> - MapRecord publications is the descendant of the *Antique Map Price Record*, now in CD form, but with experience in dealer lists for many years. This is a large general list, not solely predicated on a web presence. These are organized geographically.
- ✧ *Oddens Bookmarks Sellers of Cartographic Material* - <<http://oddens.geog.uu.nl/browse.php?catnr=8&numb=5>> - This is a large list, organized geographically, and currently a bit hard to follow. Some of the links there no longer work (and a few of the dealers are no longer in business), but that is understandable (as with the Yahoo list, which is much less extensive).
- ✧ *International Antiquarian Mapsellers Association (IAMA)* - <<http://iama.bibliocat.net/>> - This is a specific link to their search engine, the only one online devoted to the antiquarian map trade. The server may move in the near future, but links will be available from their main site <www.antiquemapdealers.com>. Relative to the total dealers listed at the other locations, the number represented is small, but they are focused.

PUBLICATIONS

- ✧ *Journals and Newsletters Related to the History of Cartography* <www.maphistory.info/journals.html> - This is a sizable general list at the Map History site, noted above. It contains most of those listings below.
- ✧ *Imago Mundi* <www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/03085694.asp> - 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 <www.jstor.org>. A recent and welcome change allows current private subscribers to access these online back issues. The current editorial board is posted online at: <www.tandf.co.uk/journals/boards/rimu-edbrd.asp>

- ✘ *IMCoS Journal* <www.imcos.org/quarterly_frame.htm> - This is IMCoS' quarterly journal, edited by Susan Gole.
- ✘ *MapForum* <www.mapforum.com> - This was originally a purely online magazine, now resurrected, beginning with the Spring 2004 issue, as a quarterly print journal, with an online component reserved for subscribers. The chief editor is Ashley Baynton-Williams.
- ✘ *Neatline* <<http://libraries.uta.edu/txmapsociety/neatline.html>> - This is the semiannual publication of the Texas Map Society, currently edited by Kit Goodwin.
- ✘ *The Portolan* <www.portolan.washmap.org> - This is the journal of the Washington Map Society, published 3 times a year. This has been published since October 1984, is indexed, and is currently edited by Tom Sander.
- ✘ *Terra Incognita* <www.sochistdisc.org/terrae_incognitae/terrae-incognitae.htm> This is the yearly publication for The Society for the History of Discoveries, published since 1969, and currently edited by David Buisseret.
- ✘ *California Map Society Newsletter* <www.californiamapsociety.org/newsletters/newsletters.htm> - This is published quarterly, since 1992, and is currently edited by Bill Warren.
- ✘ *Brussels International Map Collectors Circle Newsletter* <www.bimcc.org/bimcc-newsletter.htm> - This is their organizational newsletter, published 3 times a year since 1998, and currently edited by Jean-Louis Renteux.

✘ *Journal of Maps & Geography Libraries* <www.haworthpress.com/web/JMGL> - This is a new academic journal, just released (2004), edited by Mary Lynette Larsgaard and Paige G. Andrew, and published quarterly by Haworth Press.

PRESERVATION ISSUES (PAPER AND DIGITAL)

✘ *Conservation Course Syllabus (Stanford Univ.)* <<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byauth/lowengard/syllabi>> - A large online syllabus from Stanford, covering many topics.

✘ *Northeast Document Conservation Center* <www.nedcc.org> - This is also a large, multi-faceted site, including its *Handbook for Digital Projects* <www.nedcc.org/digital/tofc.htm#TofC> and its *Preservation 101: An Internet Course on Paper Preservation* <www.nedcc.org/p101cs/p101wel.htm>.

✘ *Caring for Your Document and Art on Paper (Stanford Univ.)* <<http://aic.stanford.edu/library/online/brochures/caringpaper.pdf>> - This PDF file is a straightforward discussion of basic elements pertaining to the care of old maps.

✘ *Caring for Your Collection (IMCoS bulletins)* <www.imcos.org/caring_frame.htm>

✘ *Archival Supplies* – Dick Blick Art Materials <www.dickblick.com>, Gaylord <www.gaylord.com>, Light Impressions <www.lightimpressionsdirect.com/servlet/OnlineShopping>, University Products (ArchivalSuppliers.com) <www.archivalsuppliers.com/index.html>, Metro Associates- <<http://metro-associates.com/index-4.htm>>

COURSES AND LECTURES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Note that most of these links are through the Map History site.

✘ *International Conference on the History of Cartography* <www.maphistory.info/confs.html>

- ✧ *Maps and Society lectures* <www.maphistory.info/warburgprog.html>
- ✧ *Virginia Garrett Lectures* <www.maphistory.info/garrett.html> - Held alternate years in Arlington, Texas.
- ✧ *Nebenzahl Lectures* <www.maphistory.info/neb.html> - Held alternate years in Chicago, at the Newberry Library.
- ✧ *Oxford Seminars in Cartography* <www.maphistory.info/oxford.html>
- ✧ *Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes: Tutorials and Courses* <www.maps.ethz.ch/gdc-education4.html> - This is their cartography course section, which includes a variety of subjects such as general cartography, history of cartography, map reading, geography and more.
- ✧ *Explokart* <<http://cartography.geog.uu.nl/explokart>> - Univ. of Utrecht research program in the history of cartography.
- ✧ *KVK Catalogue* <www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/hylib/en/kvk.html> - This is a free online search facility linking many of the world's major libraries and their online catalogues. Although the KVK catalogue is less extensive, WorldCat <www.oclc.org/worldcat> and RLIN <www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=638> require access to a library linked to their services, or a potential major expenditure for single membership. None are specifically geared to maps.
- ✧ *Western Association of Map Libraries* <www.waml.org/index.html>, and their associated Map Librarian's Toolbox <www.waml.org/maptools.html> and Map Cataloguing Resources <www.waml.org/mapcat.html> . Some of their links could use updating, if they have the time and inclination.
- ✧ *Professional Development Programs for Teachers* <www.newberry.org/research/L3rteachers.html> - This is maintained by the Newberry Library
- ✧ *Map Reference* <www.andropov.com/mapref/hfdindex.htm> - This is specifically for non-print reference items on historical maps and cartography
- ✧ *Understanding MARC Bibliographic: Machine-Readable Cataloging* <www.loc.gov/marc/umb/umbhome.html>

OUT OF PRINT BOOK SEARCH ENGINES ON THE WEB

- ✧ *Advanced Book Exchange (ABE)* <www.abebooks.com> - This is the largest of the independent online search engines.
- ✧ *International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB)* <www.ilab-lila.com/> - This is the international organization linking the major national bookseller associations.
- ✧ *Use of Booksearch Engines for the Map Collector (broad general discussion)* <www.theprimemeridian.com/webbooks.htm>
- ✧ *Currency Converter* <www.xe.com/ucc>
- ✧ *Pricing Guides – Antique Map Price Record CD* <www.maprecord.com> - This is the continuation of the print version, and is fully searchable for all volumes; *Antique Map Price Guide* <www.oldmaps.com> - This is an online service run by the people at Old World Auctions; *American Book Prices Current (ABPC)* <www.bookpricescurrent.com/> - This is the most expensive of the

ODDS & ENDS

- ✧ *Discussion of issues pertaining to book and map theft* <www.maphistory.info/thefts.html> - This is maintained by Tony Campbell.
- ✧ *Map Projection Essentials* <www.mapmathematics.com/Essentials/Essentials.html> - This is maintained by daan Strebe.
- ✧ *History of Cartography Project* <<http://feature.geography.wisc.edu/histcart>>

resources, although there are dealer discounts. There are print and CD (fully searchable; 26 years of auction records for books, maps, broadsides, etc.) versions.

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' may be a new and useful area.

With time, improved informational quality and accessibility will prove beneficial to all those taking the time and trouble to look. New (and particularly better) ways of disseminating information to students at an early 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.

—WMS member Joel Kovarsky is
owner of 'The Prime Meridian:
Antique Maps & Books'
(www.theprimemeridian.com).

RODNEY SHIRLEY'S TEN KEY POINTS FOR MAP COLLECTORS

1. Follow up that initial urge to start a collection or broaden out into a new sector.
2. Cast your acquisition net widely: pester dealers, poke around stalls at map and print fairs and attend auction sales.
3. Seek a rationale or theme to give a focus for developing your interests.
4. Learn about what you have bought or are looking for: ask dealers, read books or magazine articles, visit libraries or other institutions with map collections.
5. Become aware of the range of prices and appreciate the factors influencing value, but do not be a purist over condition.
6. Write about your theme or what interests you, and take trouble to get it published, somewhere, somehow.
7. Share your enthusiasm with other collectors or those who are knowledgeable in allied fields.
8. As the opportunity arises, upgrade the quality of your collection.
9. Store your items carefully so that they do not deteriorate.

These points, I feel, are just as applicable to institutional curators as to private collectors. Except that I would add a tenth for the former:

10. Actively seek to display as much of your collection publicly as possible.

Editor's Note: Rodney W. Shirley is perhaps best known for his definitive work *The Mapping of the World: Early Printed World Maps 1472-1700*, now in its fourth edition. In addition to publishing and speaking worldwide on the history of cartography, Mr. Shirley is a past president of the International Map Collectors' Society. Used with permission. This article appeared originally in *Portolan* Issue 48.