

Map Making

Characteristics of a usable map

We have learned:

- A good map reflects the territory structure.*
- A good map has clarity.*
- A good map has prediction value.*
- A good map is geared for the intended audience.*

And we acknowledge:

- The map is not the territory.*
- A map cannot tell 'it all.'*
- A map shows only one view of the territory.*
- Verbal maps are subject to the limitations of language.*

When we decide to make a map we should first:

- Decide why we're making the map and for whom.*
- Decide if it will be used once and discarded or will it be used by many people?*

The map should include:

- Relative information for the user.*
- If necessary, an easy-to-use key.*
- Sufficient information for the user to make use of the map.*
- Good structure.*

What might well be omitted from the map to make it more useful?

- Maps, particularly verbal ones, should remain as clear and concise as possible.*
- The structure of the map should not be obscured with commentary not pertinent to the specific instruction or map.*

Conclusion: Make sure your maps or instructions contain all the information needed by your audience, but do not include extraneous or confusing information.