

Choropleth Mapping with Color-It

Color-It

This article is part of a series on choropleth mapping, to see other solutions, please visit the introduction [here](#).

Color-It is a choropleth mapping application produced by Zonum Solutions. It essentially is a large SQL database of coordinates for various countries and provinces/states. It is used in the following fashion.

Process:

Users must first specify what type of mapping is to be done, either “Color according to a value” (Choropleth) or “Manual Color Selection” (simple colored map). The user must then select the country or region of interest by continent. The list is very comprehensive, but not complete. Once a country has been selected, the user must click “Color this map.” A page with a table on the left and a map on the right will be produced. The table will have regions of interest, followed by a value. Sample values have been given, but data must be manually entered by region. The user may also select start and end colors of the color ramp, as well as the outline color and thickness. Once the user is satisfied with the data and settings, click “Draw map.” It may take a few moments for the application to display on the map on the right, but a rough choropleth map should be generated. This roughness is due to the limitations of Google Maps. If the user desires, there is also the option to generate a KMZ file, which is a standard mapping format for Google Earth. The KMZ file contains the full sets of coordinates, and when viewed in Google Earth, will not have the roughness of the online preview. For more detailed mapping, exporting to Google Earth is essential for combining various regions on a single map, something that Color-It cannot do online due to Google Maps limitations.

Pros:

- Most comprehensive geographic database (particularly U.S. States and Counties)
- Generates Google Maps preview
- Exports to KML
- Flexibility to manipulate data within application

Cons:

- Closed source (Software is free, but author doesn't want to open the source)
- A few ads
- Can be slow depending on the machine
- KML generated may not be compatible with Mac OS X
- Manual data entry may be tedious for large data sets
- Limited to a single region by Province/State but not multiple countries.

Comments:

I believe that Color-It is the tool that should appeal to most users. It is very straightforward in its interface, and produces quick and easy choropleth maps. When used in conjunction with Google Earth, its capabilities rival those of MapPoint or ArcGIS. The major downside is that the author was unwilling to publish his source code. I have a suspicion that he considers the tool a revenue stream due to the ads that are on the page.

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Revision #8

Created Wed, Jan 23, 2008 10:32 AM by Joe Luk

Updated Tue, Jul 20, 2010 8:34 AM by Franks, Mike