

Extracted from:

GIS for Web Developers

Adding *Where* to Your Web Applications

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Preface

We are on the edge of the next big wave of technology, and it has GIS written all over it. Soon every new cell phone will have GPS (or some form of location-based services) built in as a standard feature. Nearly every major database vendor now includes native geographic data types. Free sources of geographic data and free applications are just waiting for you to pull them together and do something clever. You might create a simple digital version of the pushpin map, or you might write the next Google Maps killer.

All of our lives we've asked "Where am I?" and "How do I get from here to there?"

You start by rolling over, then crawling, and then walking. You walked to school or were driven or took the bus. Maybe you eventually drove yourself. When you got older, you joined a society of people who use different modes of transportation every day. We ride subways to work. We take airplane flights to far-off places. We visit client locations. We attend conferences or night classes. We go shopping. We eat out at restaurants. Unless you spend your days physically tied to something large, heavy, and immobile, you probably spend a significant portion of your time thinking about how to get from here to there and back again.

And how does traditional geography make that easier? It offers you vector and raster data, orthographically rectified and portrayed in the Universal Transverse Mercator projection. (Don't you feel better already?)

Even asking a simple question like "What is your current latitude and longitude?" will likely cause most people to back away slowly, hands up, muttering, "That's OK—I'll ask someone else for directions."

In *GIS for Web Developers* we'll talk about GIS in simple terms and demonstrate its real-world uses.

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