Shaping San Francisco

shapingsf.org

foundsf.org

Shaping San Francisco is looking for help to create a new map interface to the contents of our digital archive at Foundsf.org.

Shaping San Francisco is a participatory community history project documenting and archiving overlooked stories and memories. We believe that history can be a process that grows naturally from our desire to understand the world, and we seek to discover history together. Our growing, participatory online archive, Foundsf.org— a place to discover and shape San Francisco history—is a product of hundreds of contributors.

What we have
- A mediawiki platform with 1,657 pages with somewhere around 7,000 photos.
- The site is indexed by geography (neighborhood), decade, population, theme, and almost a dozen custom tours.
- About 10-15% of the photos on our site have been geotagged with latitude/longitude information via an iPhone app we have called the FoundSF Geotagger.

What we want
- To create a robust map as a front end interface to facilitate access to our uniquely wide and deep archive.
- For the user to be able to find interesting historic content as they navigate the city geographically, ultimately pulling together a downloadable custom tour on Foundsf.
- The ability to call up a map of San Francisco on your computer or your mobile device, zoom in to an area of town, draw a marquee box in that area and then specify some parameters of topical interest (e.g. labor, 1930s-1950s, ecology, and Filipinos—or any other combination of topics, decades, and populations) that is associated with that geographic zone described by the marquee box. Having specified the area and the interest areas, the map would be populated with buttons that are direct links to pages and photographs in the FoundSF.org archive.
- To deliver our content to portable devices, smart phones, tablets, etc. for a user's mobile experience of history.

We need help implementing the right tool, designing the interface we'll use, adding geographic ID to the various elements of our pages (i.e. photos, text blocks, static historic maps, pages as a whole, etc.), and determining where to store that information so it is accessible and works with the mapping tool. Hopefully we can build on the information already gathered by our iPhone app.

The tool
There is a new set of mapping tools available as a plug-in running on the Mediawiki platform. Our preference would be to implement our plan with OpenStreetMap, or some other open, nonproprietary mapping system, but we can live with Google maps.

The evolution of our digital archive: The history of the history
Shaping San Francisco began its conceptual life in 1995 during the early "interactive

multimedia" boom that swept over the city before the first Dotcom boom really took off a few years later. We sought to **bring a radical, critical sensibility to San Francisco's history**, and to use the new art form represented by nonlinear media (then delivered over CD-ROM and public kiosk) to **make it a public, interactive experience***. In January 1998 the first iteration went public with the installation of a half dozen public kiosks around town as well as the release of our first edition CD-ROM and our first book with City Lights, *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture.*

Over time we ran into some interesting technological cul-de-sacs resulting in the need for the project to be entirely re-engineered between 2003 and 2005, as we migrated to an opensource archival software. In 2009 we reintroduced Shaping San Francisco's digital collection as foundsf.org, where it continues to grow and thrive, enjoying between 25,000-45,000 unique visitors a month.

Our model for the maps
In the original version of our software we had a linked set of crude maps that would display either the whole city or specific neighborhoods. In a neighborhood map the user could click on specific regions, or specific icons related to landmarks, famous characters, social events, etc., and bring up buttons that linked to the pages where one could delve more deeply into the topic at hand.

Some of the examples we currently see around us in the history and interactive data world are: OldSF and HistoryPin use mapping technology to make history relevant to place through photos, close models of what we want to create. David Rumsey's map collection inspires us. Stamen Design has created interactive maps that highlight various city statistics (i.e. planting of trees) that we find conceptually interesting. With the publication of our book, *Ten Years That Shook the City: San Francisco 1968-1978*, we designed a Mission District map and audio tour.

*The interactivity we sought to stimulate would be between public users/viewers of our material—perhaps strident discussions and even arguments would break out!