

# Learning (like) in real life – Geocaching, Mobile apps and virtual city tours

## Part I: City tours with Google Maps – Daniel Eisenmenger

### What is Google Maps?

**Google Maps** is a global, multilingual map service from Google. Various views are possible, e.g. of street maps, satellite images or **Google Earth**. Individual locations can be displayed. Besides that, though, there is also a route planner for the car or walking routes. In the extra functions there is the opportunity, among other things, to have shops, service stations or public transport means displayed. Google Maps also includes **Google Street View**, which is already available in complete form in many countries and has also been available for a while for a number of cities in Germany too.

### Opportunities for use in historico-civic education

There are various fields of use at school and during lessons, archive, museum and memorial site work or also in city tourism. Maps can be used for information and public image. They can be teaching and learning material or products of pedagogic activity. The opportunities here lie in particular in bringing together different materials (e.g. texts, images, videos, contemporary witness interviews) that originate from several sources or are self-produced, and locating them at an actual point on the map. As a result the materials are given a concrete spatial reference point that takes understanding of historical and political contexts into consideration (proximity vs. remoteness of locations / institutions, routes). Additionally changes in locations, houses, streets etc. can be depicted and compared in the course of time. Links enable the map materials to be integrated on the Internet and refer to described institutions or continuing information at another point.

Created maps can be used as a starting point for preparing excursions, city tours or talks, as material in workshops and lessons. In addition such maps can be produced collaboratively by students. For young users activities of a playful nature are conceivable: searching for specified locations today, e.g. based on old photos, taken from the same perspective using mobile phone photos and then published by the students on a map. There are also numerous opportunities to link this map work with geocaching.

### How can this actually look? 4 examples

- 1) London Remembers: [Memorials](#)
- 2) City tour: [Koblenz during the National Socialist period](#)
- 3) Thüringen school portal: [Extracurricular places of learning](#)

#### 4) Streetview: There & then

## Part II: Geocaching (and Mobile Apps) – Jöran Muuß-Merholz

### What is Geocaching?

*Geocaching*, now also called “GPS scavenger hunt,” is like an electronic treasure hunt: Somewhere in the world (*geo*) the treasure (the *cache*) is hidden. Via a website (e.g. geocaching.com) seekers find out the geocoordinates of the hiding place and, using a GPS receiver (or a map) go off in search of the treasure, usually a fairly little plastic box. It does not turn out quite so easy in practice, as often puzzles need to be solved during the search for treasure in order to find out the coordinates of the next stop (*multicache*) or of the destination. There are now far in excess of 1 million such caches hidden almost everywhere in the world, in town or countryside. Soon such hiding places will be found every 200 metres in conurbations.

### What makes geocaching and education go so well together?

*Running through the world, finding one's way, searching for a destination and hopefully finding it.* That is geocaching. And it is a great definition of education. From the perspective of history didactics geocaching can be a way of linking together past and present via the shared location. As a result of the link between (what tends to be) abstract information and actual locations, history becomes a liveable experience and more lifeworld-based. The historical location existed back then and still does today; continuity is thus made visible. The location generates a link that builds a bridge across temporal distance.

### How can this actually look? 3 examples

#### **Berlin: In the footsteps of Martin Luther King**

In 1964 Martin Luther King travelled unannounced from West to East Berlin. The civil rights activist spontaneously preached freedom in churches to GDR citizens. The cache leads to the venues of the events and tells an unusual story.

The cache was available in 3 variants: a Smartphone-compatible version (the requirements were a GPS module, a QR code-reading app and Internet access), a GPS-compatible version (the requirement was a GPS device) and a printer-compatible version (the requirement was a printer).

#### **Düsseldorf: Great politics on the banks of the Rhine and Landtag (hi)stories**

In Düsseldorf it is possible to follow the trail of democracy in North Rhine-Westphalia with two multicaches. On the “Landtagsgeschichte(n)” tour one is led to the four locations where the Düsseldorf Landtag has worked since it came into being. One learns where and why the parliament was obliged to move again and again: from the partially destroyed opera to the spectacular new building, from the improvised roost

in the corner pub to the feudal manor house. The “Große Politik am Rheinufer” connects four locations beneath the Rhine Tower, where crucial courses were set for federal state history in North Rhine-Westphalia. Nazi functionaries, British officers, German presidents and even Chancellor candidate Horst Schlämmer – they were all there.

### **Outlook: Augmented reality and omnipresence of the Internet**

Just as society is starting to comprehend the big changes that the Internet brings with it, the next stage is already imminent: with the omnipresence of the Internet via telephones with computer functions, the depiction of the world through services such as Google Streetview and the linking of location-based information a film of information is being laid across our world. This is visible for example via smartphones. Under the keyword “augmented reality” there are already applications that overlay the image of the world with additional information. Thus, for example, the Berlin Wall can be superimposed onto the image that I can see in Berlin today.

### **Part III: What is possible, what is useful?**

Joint discussion and brainstorming