The Basics of Viewing a Google Lit Trip

Installing Google Earth and Downloading GoogleLitTrips
Viewing a Google Lit Trip requires that you have the free Google Earth application already installed on your computer. Google Earth, which is compatible with Macs, PCs and Linux machines, is available at:
http://earth.google.com/download-earth.html

Once you have Google Earth installed, then download Lit Trips of your choice from the Google Lit Trip site at:
http://www.GoogleLitTrip.com

Downloaded Google Lit Trips will appear on your computer's desktop or other location where your downloads appear.

Figure 1: Downloaded file formats

They may appear as .kmz files, as .kml files, or as a folder with a doc.kmz file inside. The .kmz format and the .kml format work exactly the same as far as the user is concerned. The only difference is that .kmz files have been compressed (zipped).

Opening A Google Lit Trip File
Regardless of the file format, double clicking on the blue globe icon should open Google Earth *and* bring the Lit Trip into the **Temporary Places** section of Google Earth's Side Bar.
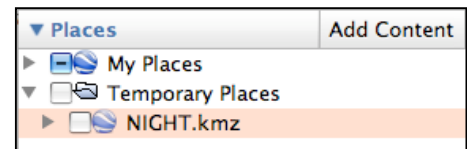

Figure 2: Temporary Places

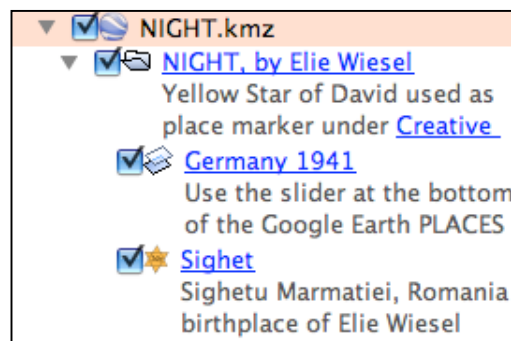## Viewing the entire Contents of a Lit Trip

Figure 3: "Folders" structure

Since Google Earth has so many available resources, to avoid "flooding" the Google Earth Viewer (globe) with content, Google Earth places a blank check box next to everything. To actually get a resource to be visible, it is necessary to check the check box next to any resource you wish to have appear in the Google Earth Viewer.
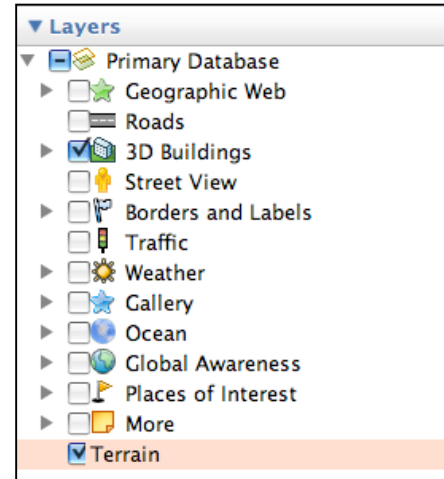
Google Earth files (kmz or kml) also are structured like typical *folder* files on most computers. This means that you may need to "open a folder" to see its contents. In **Figure 2 above,** taken from a Macintosh, you can see a small triangle pointing to the right. This is the Macs standard indication of a closed folder. Clicking on the triangle causes the folder contents to be revealed. "Open folders" are indicated with the triangle pointing down as can be seen in **Figure 3**. PCs use a "+" as an indicator of a closed file. The "+" suggesting that there is "more" content and a "-" as an indicator that there is no more content in the folder.
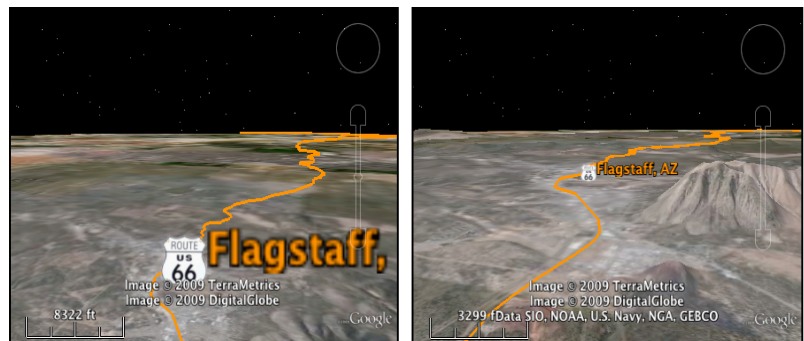
Options for Enriching Google Earth Viewing

Google Earth provides many built in resources in the *Layers* section of the Side Bar (see Figure 4) that can dramatically enhance the viewing of a GoogleLitTrip. Unfortunately, the developers of GoogleLitTrips do not have a way of pre-selecting or de-selecting these resources as a part of developing their files. A good way to take advantage of these features is to:

Figure 4: Options in the Layers

1. Deselect all layers by clicking the checkbox next to the Primary Database layer. This ensures that you won't have extraneous data appearing as you view a GoogleLitTrip.

2. Click the checkbox next to the Terrain layer. This causes Google Earth to show simulated 3D views of the terrain rather than a flat 2D view. (see figure 5 for a comparison)
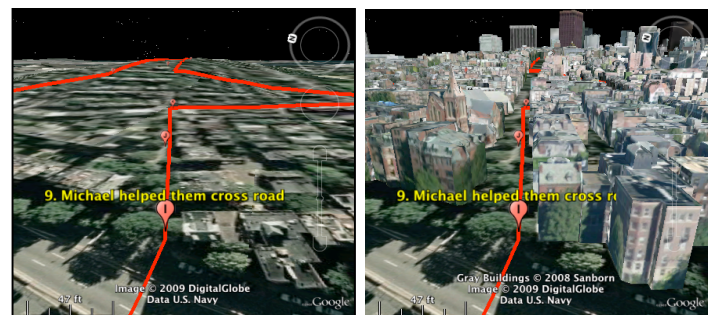
3. Determine whether the GoogleLitTrip would benefit from the appearance of 3D buildings or not. For example, stories set in relatively contemporary times such as *Make Way for Ducklings,* set in 20th century Boston (see Figure 6) are enhanced by the appearance of 3D buildings, while stories set in the distant past such as *By the Great Horn Spoon,* where some scenes are set in 1850's Boston, are not.

Figure 5: Scene from *The Grapes of Wrath*. Left without Terrain layer selected; Right with Terrain layer selected.

4. Similarly, turning the Borders and Labels layer on or off allows the display of various levels of government borders and for the display of city names. The appropriateness of displaying this information should be determined by the time frame of the GoogleLitTrip you are viewing.

Figure 6: Scene from *Make Way for Ducklings.* Left without 3D Buildings layer selected; Right with 3D Buildings layer selected.
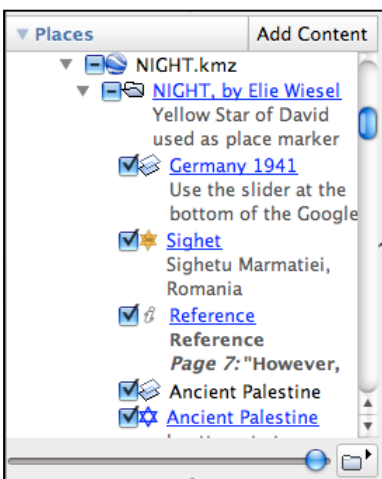
Navigating a GoogleLitTrip

You are now ready to view the actual GoogleLitTrip! The most common way to view Google Earth resources is to "fly" a tour using the "play" button or the "tour" feature available in Google Earth 5. Though this seems to be the obvious way to move around a GoogleLitTrip, I tend to discourage this method for several reasons. The most significant reason is that this automates a fly over of the entire GoogleLitTrip file rather than allowing users to control when to move to the next place

mark and how long to stay there. Automatically flying a file also eliminates the possibility of users taking appropriate "side trips" at their own discretion as they move through a GoogleLitTrip.

By manually controlling the use of a GoogleLitTrip, users can coordinate their interaction with the GoogleLitTrip with such needs as matching the pacing of a reading schedule for longer works. Users who happen to know relevant geographical and historical information related to particular locations can create their own "side trips" since they can always manually navigate around locations within a GoogleLitTrip.

Therefore, I generally offer the following tips for manually viewing a GoogleLitTrip:

Figure 7: The checkbox, icon, title and pop-up

Notice that each item typically has (from left to right) a checkbox, an icon, a title, which may be black or blue, and below the title, a bit of the pop-up description showing.

1. **SELECT First:** By clicking on the icon *or* on the description excerpt the entire marker will be selected.
2. **Then FLY:** Double clicking either the icon or the description excerpt "flies" you to that location *and* orients the view, tilt, and zoom pre-programmed into the marker. This is the view the developer wants you to see before you see the contents of the pop-up window.
3. **Then SHOW POP-UP:** Once you are looking at the pre-determined view of a location, THEN click on the title *if it is blue.* Blue text indicates that there is actual content in the pop-up window. This will cause the place marker description window to appear.

"Special" Place Marks

Figure 8: Images show how transparency slider affect overlay visibility when slid from left to right

Not all place marks indicate locations in Google Earth. The icon for Germany 1941 and for Ancient Palestine in Figure 8 indicates the presence of an image overlay. When image overlay markers are selected, a transparency slider appears as is also visible in Figure 7. Sliding it from right to left causes the image (see Figure 8) to "fade." This is useful for comparison and for removing the overlay to make the terrain below it visible when viewing the place marks in that area.

"Special" Place Marks
The first time GoogleLitTrip files are opened, they appear in Temporary Places. When you quit Google Earth, you will be asked whether you want the items in Temporary Places to be saved to your My Places. If you say yes, then that GoogleLitTrip will be stored in Google Earth and be there when you reopen Google Earth. If you do not save it to My Places, the file can be saved on your hard drive, but must be reopened if you wish to revisit the file.