

MapsAlive® User Guide

Ready Maps

Last updated March 22, 2016

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MapsAlive Ready Maps

1 Introduction

What are Ready Maps?

Ready Maps are ready-to-use maps and shapes that let you instantly create a MapsAlive interactive tour with pre-defined shape markers. The Ready Maps collection includes common maps such as USA, county, and world maps. You can add your own content that displays when you mouse over or click the shape markers. The map images that are part of the Ready Maps collection can also be used without their corresponding shapes making them a great source of maps to use with your own markers and content.

What does this guide cover?

This guide covers how to use the Ready Maps and shapes that come with MapsAlive and how to choose different marker styles to change the appearance of the shapes.

How to get more information or assistance

If you need more details, a better explanation, or just a little bit of hand-holding, we are here to help. Please email questions to support@mapsalive.com.

You can find other MapsAlive User Guides at <http://www.mapsalive.com/LearningCenter>.

Terms of Use

The Ready Maps images are intended for use in conjunction with normal usage of MapsAlive. Any other use is prohibited.

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2 Terminology

MapsAlive

MapsAlive is a web application that runs in your PC or Mac browser with a high-speed internet connection. There is no software to install and you are always using the latest version.

Tour Builder

The MapsAlive Tour Builder is where you create, edit, and publish interactive maps. When you login to your MapsAlive account you can use the Tour Builder to upload map images and photos, enter text, create hotspots, choose layouts, and set the appearance and behavior of your interactive maps.

Tour

A tour is one or more interactive maps and data sheets that are usually related to each other. *Many tours might only have one map. Other tours, like a house tour, might have several floor plans together in one tour to let a prospective buyer explore the house.* You publish your tours when you are ready for other people to use them.

Map

A map is a component of your tour that serves as a container for a single map image, the map's hotspots and hotspot content. You upload a map image and add hotspots to the map using the Tour Builder.

Data sheet

A data sheet contains photos, text and other information related to your tour, but it has no map. A data sheet might be used to display introductory text, contact information, specifications, or similar non-interactive content.

Map Image

A map image can be any image such as a diagram, floor plan, geographic map, or even a photograph. You can think of it as a background layer beneath a layer of hotspots. You upload one map image for each map in your tour.

Hotspot

A hotspot is a location on an interactive map that shows content associated with that location when the mouse moves over it, off of it, or clicks it. The size, shape, and appearance of a hotspot are indicated by a marker.

Hotspot Content

Hotspot content is the information associated with a specific hotspot such as photos, text, and videos. When the mouse moves onto or clicks a hotspot, the content displays. A hotspot can also have an action associated with it.

Marker

A marker can be an image (like an arrow), a visible shape (like a rectangle or polygon), or an invisible shape, that marks the presence of a hotspot on a map. Each hotspot on a map has a marker associated with it. The marker can be unique to one hotspot or the marker can be used by several hotspots.

Tiled versus Popup Content

Tiled content means that your hotspot content displays alongside the map – both the content and the map display within the rectangular canvas area. Popup content is hotspot content that displays in a rectangular area that pops up on top of your map when you mouse over a hotspot on the map.

Canvas

Every tour has a canvas area that displays one map or data sheet. For maps with tiled content, the canvas area contains the map image and the hotspot content. For maps with popup content, the canvas area contains only the map image. For data sheets, the canvas area contains the photo and text for the data sheet.

3 Ready Maps Overview

Ready Maps is a collection of ready-to-use maps and shapes that let you quickly create interactive maps and add your own hotspot content. The available Ready Maps include USA maps, state maps with county outlines, USA regional maps, Canada, and world and continent maps with country outlines.

When you use a map and its corresponding shapes, MapsAlive automatically creates hotspots for each shape, like the states on a USA map. These hotspots can display photos, text, or video when you mouse over or click them.

Some Ready Maps have several map variations to choose from, like different colors or an outline map only, and some maps have more than one group of shapes. For example, the USA maps have corresponding shapes for each state and also shapes that define four regions of the country.

To use a Ready Map you choose a map image from the available maps and optionally import the corresponding shapes for the map. Section 3.1 explains how to choose a map image. Section 3.2 covers importing shapes. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 discuss how to specify the appearance of the shapes on the map.

You can also use Ready Maps without their corresponding shapes if you want to use your own markers, such as dots or flags, to denote hotspot locations. In fact, for some interactive maps you may not want to use the shapes at all.

Lastly, you can use a Ready Map and its shapes in conjunction with your own markers. You might do this to create an interactive US map where the states highlight and display content, but also add markers such as stars or pins to denote capital cities or sales offices within each state. Section 3.5 discusses adding content to your Ready Map and section 3.7 explains how to add your own hotspots.

3.1 Choosing a Map Image

When you create a new tour, or add a map to an existing tour, you can choose to upload your own map image from a file on your computer or you can choose a Ready Map.

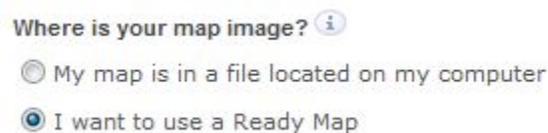


Figure 1 - Choosing a Ready Map

Tip: When you create a new tour or add a map to an existing tour, choose the option to have MapsAlive display step-by-step instructions. The instructions walk you through the process of using a Ready Map.

When you choose a Ready Map, the available maps are organized and displayed in a tree on the Choose Map Image screen. You can expand the entries in the tree to find the map you are interested in. When you move your mouse over the maps in the tree a small preview image of the map displays so you can see what each map variation looks like.

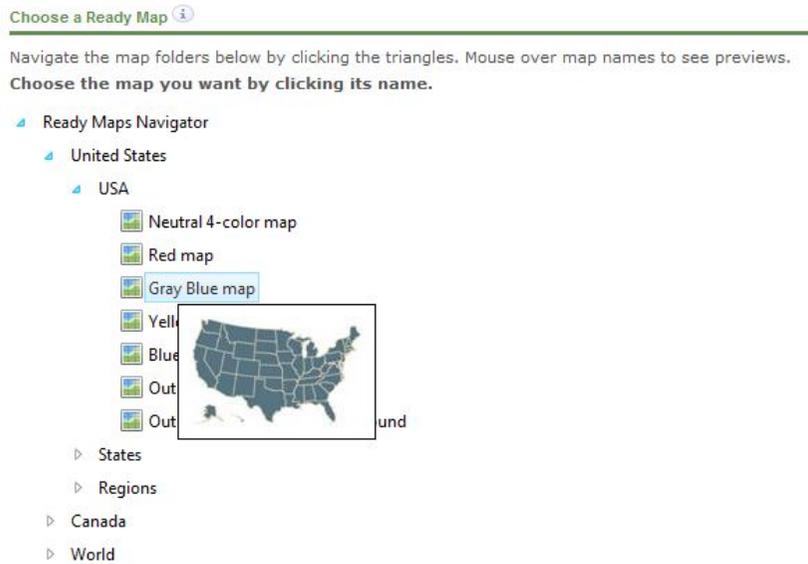


Figure 2 - Ready Maps Navigator

To choose a Ready Map you click its name in the Ready Maps Navigator.

3.2 Importing Ready Map Shapes

After you choose a Ready Map, MapsAlive displays the Import Marker Shapes screen and highlights the shapes available for the map you selected.

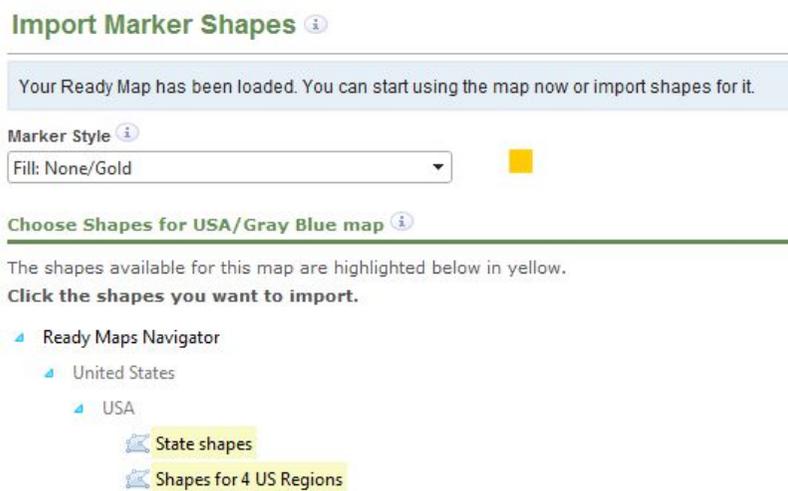


Figure 3 – Shapes available for the selected Ready Map

You can import the shapes for the map right away, import them later on the Import Marker Shapes screen, or use the maps without shapes.

In this example, you can choose state shapes or region shapes. When you select a shape set MapsAlive creates a hotspot for each shape in the set and places it on the map. For example, if you choose the Gray Blue map shown in Figure 2 and then select the State shapes shown in Figure 3, MapsAlive creates one hotspot for each state and places it in the correct location on the USA map. You can also select a marker style to specify the appearance of the shapes as explained in Section 3.3 below.

After selecting the shapes, you can preview your tour and see a working interactive map where each state highlights as you mouse over it. Your map might look like this when the mouse is over the state of Texas:



Figure 4 - Interactive US map with Texas shape marker

All of the hotspots created from the imported shapes are displayed in the Tour Navigator on the left side of the Tour Builder screen as shown in Figure 5. By default each hotspot displays a tooltip when you mouse over it, but you will probably want to display your own hotspot content. See section 3.5 to learn more about adding hotspot content.



Figure 5 - Tour Navigator shows hotspots created from Ready Map shapes

3.3 Choosing a Marker Style

Before you import shapes, you can select a marker style to define the appearance of the shapes on your map. MapsAlive will apply the selected marker style to all the hotspots that are created from the shape set. You can change the style for all or some of the shapes later as explained in section 3.4.

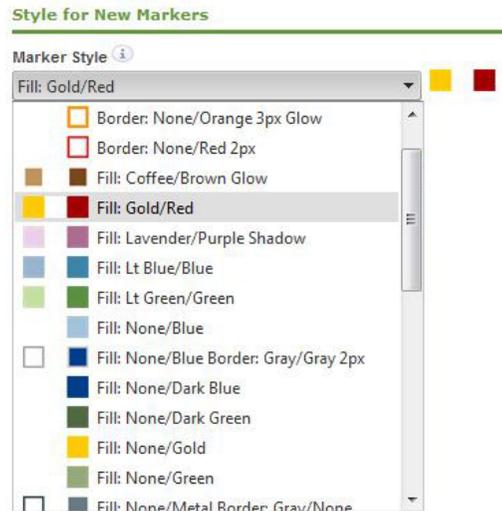


Figure 6 - Choosing a marker style

Marker styles define the fill color and fill opacity, line color and line opacity, and special effects for both the normal and selected appearance of your shapes.

The US map shown in Figure 4 uses a marker style that has no normal appearance and a red fill color and a shadow effect for its selected appearance. The hotspots on the states that are not selected are transparent so the map background displays. In the example, Texas is the selected hotspot so its appearance is red.

Guidelines for choosing marker styles

You can use different marker styles to achieve different looks for your map. However, not all marker styles are appropriate for all maps. When choosing a marker style, consider whether the map image is light or dark, whether it has boundary outlines and how thick they are, whether the map image has text or other symbols on it, and so on.

It is easy to experiment with different marker styles to find one that looks good with your map image. There are many pre-defined marker styles that come with MapsAlive that will work with most maps. You can also edit an existing marker style or create your own to get just the look you want. You can change the marker style for some or all the markers on your map at any time as explained in section 3.4.

Here are some suggestions for choosing a marker style:

- If the map image has background coloring, use a marker style with no normal appearance so the background color shows through.
- For outline maps, use a marker style with both a normal and selected fill color if you want to color the map.
- Try a marker style with only a selected border to highlight the selected shape with an outline.
- Use a marker style with the Glow or Shadow effect to make the selected shape really stand out from the map. This works best when the effect is only applied to the selected appearance, but can be interesting when applied to both the normal and selected appearance as well.
- Use the blend effect on the normal and/or selected appearance of the marker style to allow color and borders to show through the marker.

To learn more about markers and marker styles see the *MapsAlive User Guide to Hotspots and Markers*.

3.4 Replacing Marker Styles

You can change the marker styles for any or all hotspots on your map on the Replace Marker Styles screen. Choose **Map > Replace > Marker Styles** in the menu. You can select the hotspots you want to change and then choose a new marker style. This makes it easy to experiment with different styles by previewing your tour each time you replace marker styles.

You can replace the marker styles for individual hotspots on your map without changing the map image itself. For example, you could choose a USA map image and choose different marker styles for different states to show election results by state, population or other statistics, or sales territories using different colors. Here is an example of the same map image used in Figure 4, but with different marker styles applied to different groups of states:

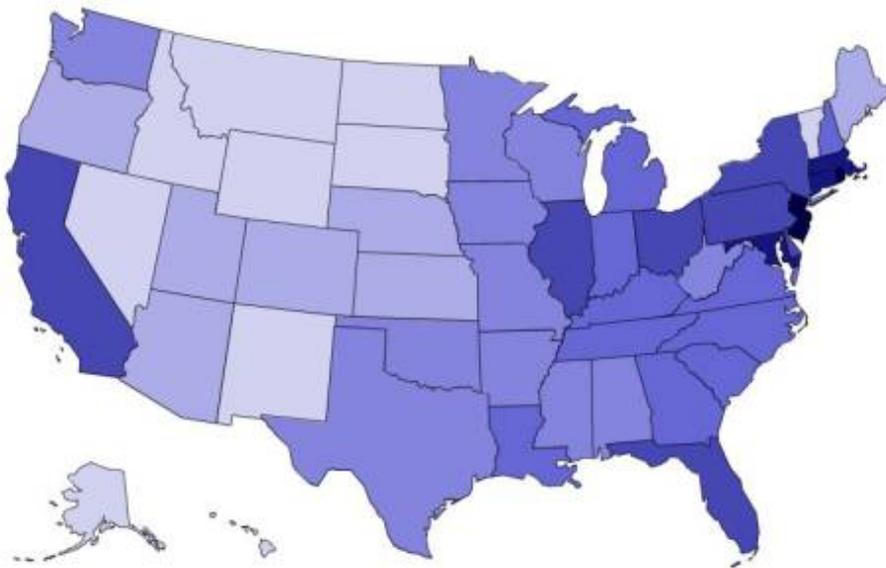


Figure 7 - Map showing population density per square mile for each state

On this map, six different marker styles were used to show the population density per square mile for each state. Marker styles with darker fill colors were used for states with a high population density and marker styles with lighter fill colors show states with lower population densities. The result is a color coded map created in minutes. If the data that your map represents changes, it is easy to choose a different marker style for a hotspot to change its appearance.

3.5 Adding Hotspot Content

Once you have created your map and added imported the Ready Maps shapes you probably want to add your own content. To add content for a hotspot, click its name in the Tour Navigator to go to the **Edit Hotspot Content** screen where you can upload a photo, add text or video, and specify a tooltip. You can set other hotspot options by choosing **Hotspot > Advanced Hotspot Options** in the menu. Click **Tour Preview** at any time to see your tour and test your hotspot content.

If you have a lot of content, you can consider importing your photos and other content. To learn more about importing and managing content in MapsAlive see the [*MapsAlive User Guide to Content Management*](#).

3.6 Linking to a Web Page or Drilling Down to another Map

You can link to a web page or drill down to another map in your tour by clicking a hotspot. You might do this if you have a US map and want to be able to click a state to go to a state map like the one shown in Figure 8 or if you want to click a state to go to the state's official web site, for example.

First select the hotspot in the Tour Navigator and then Choose **Hotspot > Hotspot Actions** in the menu. When you select Go to Page from the Click Action dropdown you can then choose which page in your tour you want to go to. If you want to click to go to a web page, choose Link to URL and then you can enter the URL.

3.7 Adding Your Own Hotspots

You can add your own hotspots to a Ready Map. These hotspots can be in addition to or instead of the shapes imported for the map. To add your own hotspots to the map choose **New > Hotspot** in the menu. This adds a hotspot and takes you to the Edit Hotspot Content screen where you can add content for the new hotspot.

Here is an example of a state map of Maine that has shape hotspots for the counties and a hotspot that uses a star marker to denote the capital city of Augusta. The map on the left shows how the shape hotspot highlights and displays the county name when you mouse it. The map on the right shows how a popup displays with information about the capital city when you mouse over the star marker.

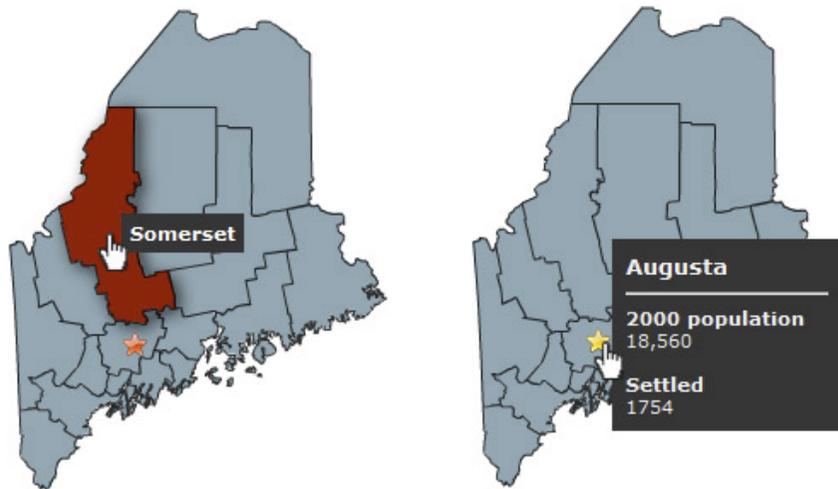


Figure 8 - Adding Your Own Hotspots to a Ready Map

If you just want to use the map image, don't import the shapes as described in section 3.2. Instead proceed right to creating new hotspots, adding content and placing your markers on the map.

3.8 Deleting Ready Map Hotspots

You may find that you don't need all the shapes that come with the Ready Map you are using. For example, you might only want to display content for the seven states where your sales offices are located and you don't need hotspots for the other 43 states. You can delete the hotspots you don't need by clicking **Map > Delete Hotspots** in the menu. Select only the hotspots you don't need and delete them.

3.9 Replacing a Map Image

You can replace an existing Ready Map with a new Ready Map on the Choose Map screen. This is useful if you want to select a different color variation of the same map, for example. So long as you choose a map from the same group as the current map, the marker shapes will still align correctly. To replace a map image go to **Map > Choose Map Image** in the menu.

If you want to start over with a new map altogether you can delete the current map (choose **Map > Delete**) and add a new one (choose **New > Map**).

3.10 Map Format and Size

The map images that are part of the Ready Maps collection are SVG files (scalable vector graphics) and can be scaled up or down without losing image quality. MapsAlive automatically scales the shape markers so they always match the map image. This means you can choose an initial tour size and MapsAlive will fit your map and shape markers within the available space. If you change the tour size later, both the map image and the shape markers will scale accordingly.

You can also use the MapZoom feature if you want to be able to zoom in and out of a map. The shape markers will continue to scale with the map as you zoom. You can turn MapZoom on or off on the Map Setup screen. Choose **Map > Map Setup** in the menu.

4 Creating Your Own Shapes

Ready Maps come with corresponding shapes, but you may need a different set of shapes for one of the Ready Maps or your own map image. For example, you might want to use the USA map, but you need to define regions based on your sales territories. You can create your own shapes in any program that can create HTML image maps and then import the image maps into MapsAlive. Some examples of programs that can create HTML image maps are DreamWeaver, MapEdit , Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe Fireworks.

To learn more about creating your own shapes and about hotspots and markers see the *[MapsAlive User Guide to Hotspots and Markers](#)*. Note that this user guide also discusses exporting shapes from an Adobe Illustrator document for use with MapsAlive.