

The Africa Atlas

Thank you for using the African Atlas. It is our hope that you find it informative and helpful.

The Africa Atlas uses Dynamic Atlas software, which can take virtually any data and help you publish it in an integrated and easily useable and accessible way – on the desktop and over the Internet.

The Africa Atlas was compiled to demonstrate the functionality and effectiveness of Dynamic Atlas software for use in education/capacity building; program management; and decision-making. It was also developed because of our commitment to Africa and the many peoples' dreams of empowerment and self-sufficiency.



You can do a lot with the atlas once you start to use it. Below are some ideas on how you can make it come to life for you.

Getting Started

In the “**Topics and Views**” Window – click on any of the topics there to access the related map layers, data sets and documents. Each Topic is like a chapter in a book. But you read that chapter in any order you want.

In the “**Map Layers**” window, click on a map layer to turn it on and off and make it “Active”. Everything happens on the “active” layer. An active layer appears highlighted with a big dark-blue background. Practise making layers active, and then use the “Select” function and “Identify” function to get information about that feature. Making a Map Layer active will also make all its data sets available.

The “**Tabular Data Sets**” window has data sets that can be accessed by clicking on them – they will appear in the Spreadsheet window and their related map layer will be made “Active”.
Note: some topics don’t have Data Sets.

The “**Related Information**” window contains links to all the web links and documents registered for that topic. Click on one to launch it and to automatically select the related map features.
Note: Some topics don’t have Related Information.


Adding Your Own Documents and Web Links



By first selecting any feature or features on any map layer, you can then add related information (documents, pictures, web links) to it by using the “Add Related Information” button. For example, in the “Health and AIDS” topic, each country has a link to its related WHO page. You can easily do the same thing for a topic of your interest.

In this way, you can use the atlas as a way to organize and provide access to your documents, reports, pictures, videos, and more.


Creating PowerPoint Slides

 The Map Composer integrates with PowerPoint (find it in File/Compose Map). And what's more, once the map is exported to PowerPoint, your map features can be “ungrouped”(!) and you have individual control of each feature – have a country zoom in, make one bigger and draw an arrow to it, whatever PowerPoint offers.


Some Tips:

- Turn off all the map layers you don't need before composing your map and exporting to PowerPoint.
- Only create the map with the surround components you need – e.g. the legend.
- “Ungroup” the legend in PowerPoint to edit it.

Asking Questions of the Data with Query Builder

 The strength of this atlas is its data from World Bank, WHO, UNAIDS, and FAO. Use them! The Query Builder function in the Spreadsheet is a very powerful and intuitive tool that can help you find a value and map it, find a value range and map them, create a sub-set of the data and map them, and create a sub-set of the data and export them to Excel for more analysis and the creation of charts and graphs.


Creating Charts and Graphs

 The Dynamic Atlas software doesn't create charts and graphs, but you can easily export your data to Excel and do it there.

Labelling the Map with Spreadsheet Values

Many people don't know that the software lets you label the map features (e.g. countries) with the values from a field in the Spreadsheet. For example, your GDP map can display the GDP values on the map. That feature is in the Spreadsheet under “Tools / Label Features”.

Creating New Indicator Maps

 Almost all the Topics use Class Rendered maps – i.e. indicator maps that are based on values in the spreadsheet. You can edit any of these or create your own with any numeric field in any database by using the Class Rendering function in the Spreadsheet.

Adding Your Own Data from Excel or Access

If you have data for the various countries in Africa – or if you use the data in the Atlas to create some new data, you can add that data to the atlas. The only stipulation is that your data must have a field that contains the “FIPS” country codes – which you can get from any of the country data sets in the atlas. Once you've got an Access or Excel data set ready, use the Data Set/Import Data Set function in the Map View.

Adding Your Own Map Layers and Topics

To add your own map layers, make changes to them or add new Topics, you need to use Dynamic Knowledgebase. It's best if you contact me (Hugh Williams) at hugh@dynamicplanet.com for help getting started with it.

Comments?

I'd love to hear about how you are using the Atlas. It was a lot of work to put it together – so it would be great to know it's being used! Please contact me with any questions or comments.

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