Call for Papers

Special Issue “Maps in/as Media – On the Mediated Production of Geographical Knowledge”

The Special Issue “Maps in/as Media - On the Mediated Production of Geographical Knowledge” takes maps as a central element of media ecologies and asks how geographic visualizations participate in the production, circulation and contestation of spatial knowledge. Maps are not only means, tools and instruments for the representation of spatial facts and relations; they function as mediating instances that stand between world and viewer and thereby constitute specific forms of spatial knowledge. As geomedia, maps actively produce spatial realities and enable - or prevent - certain ways of thinking, knowing and experiencing space.

In contemporary media environments, maps circulate within heterogeneous constellations: in journalistic formats, on digital platforms, in social media and in fictional media worlds. Embedded in complex media-technological assemblages, their epistemic, aesthetic and social functions shift: maps become dynamic interfaces in which human and non-human actors, data flows and algorithmic processes intertwine, and in which spatial knowledge is newly formed in relational, processual and situational configurations.

The Special Issue of the GI_Forum “Maps in/as Media” invites contributions that examine these configurations in depth and situate them within broader debates in critical cartography, media and communication, design studies, GIScience, human geography, and spatial theory. We are particularly interested in the role of cartographic visualizations within media ecologies: as epistemic tools, carriers of narration, visual arguments and affect amplifiers as well as sources of spatial imaginaries.

Key Questions and Themes

We welcome theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions that address, among others, the following questions and themes:

- How does the role of cartographic visualizations change through its embedding in digital media environments (e.g. as map-mashups, platforms, dashboards, apps, XR environments)?

- Which new actors (platform companies, data providers, civic tech communities, AI systems, crowds) and production logics (datafication, platformization, automation, personalization) shape the (big spatial) data economies of maps in/as media?
- How do algorithmic processes, real-time data streams and Big Geo Data transform the production, circulation and reception of maps in and across media?
- Maps in journalistic formats: news cartographies, evidentiary functions of maps, epistemological foundations of data journalism, crisis and conflict mapping and the news, visual rhetorics of urgency and (un)certainty, Mappings of local news ecosystems
- Maps on digital platforms and in locative media: maps as navigational interfaces, underlying recommendation logics, platform governance, everyday navigation and the quantification of movement and mobility
- Maps in social media: virality, memetic cartographies, activist and antagonistic mappings, platformed counter-mapping.
- Maps in fictional and audiovisual media: imagined geographies, maps in digital and analogue games, speculative mapping, world-building and spatial storytelling.
- Affective, aesthetic and sensory dimensions of maps in/as media: atmospheres, styles, genres and design languages of cartographic representations.
- Critical and decolonial perspectives on cartographic representations in/as media: counter-publics, marginalized perspectives, Indigenous and community mapping, feminist and anti-racist cartographies.
- Critical accounts on strategic uses of maps for propaganda, disinformation and geopolitical narration, as well as practices of resistance, exposure and evidencing through counter-maps.
- Maps as infrastructural and epistemic interfaces: integration into data infrastructures, smart city systems, sensor networks and decision-support environments.
- Pedagogical and educational uses of maps as media, including their role in (geo)media literacy and critical spatial citizenship.

Submissions may engage with these topics from inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives, including (but not limited to) media and communication studies, GIScience, cartography, geography, design research, science and technology studies, urban studies, political science and education.

Types of Contributions

The Special Issue welcomes a range of contribution types, provided they align with the journal's focus on innovation in education, science, methodology, technologies and communication in the spatial domain, and contribute to a more just, ethical and sustainable science and society. Possible formats include:

- Conceptual and theoretical papers (e.g. media-theoretical, infrastructural, critical cartographic or STS-inspired framings of maps as media)

- Empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods) of specific map-media constellations

- Methodological and design-oriented contributions (e.g. critical data visualization, participatory and counter-mapping approaches, experimental interfaces)
- Reflexive accounts of practice-based research, co-creation and collaboration across academia, civil society, public institutions or artistic practice

All submissions must be original, unpublished work and will undergo double-blind peer review according to GI_Forum's standard procedures. Only English-language contributions can be considered for publication.

Important Dates

- Abstract submission deadline: **14 June 2026**
- Notification of invitation to submit full paper: **early July 2026**
- Full paper submission deadline: **end-November 2026**
- publication planned for **spring 2027**

(Exact dates for full papers and subsequent review rounds will be communicated with invited authors.)

Submission Guidelines

Authors are invited to submit an extended abstract (max. 500–800 words) outlining: title, authors and affiliations, research questions, theoretical framework, methodology, empirical material (if applicable) and expected contribution to the theme of the Special Issue.

Based on the abstracts, selected authors will be invited to submit full papers through the GI_Forum online submission system. For full papers, the journal recommends a maximum of 5,000 words at initial submission so that there is sufficient room for revisions; in any case, manuscripts must not exceed 7,000 words (excluding references).

Detailed author guidelines, including formatting requirements, referencing style, and information on the Open Access policy (CC BY-ND), can be found on the GI_Forum journal website. GI_Forum implements a double-blind peer review process via its Open Journal System, with quality assured by an international team of established scholars.

GI_Forum is published by the Austrian Academy of Sciences; article processing charges apply, but authors may apply for a fee waiver in cases where institutional or project funding is unavailable. https://www.austriaca.at/GI_Forum

Submission and Contact

Please submit your abstract by **14 June 2026** via e-mail to the Editors of the Special Issue and indicate “GI_Forum Special Issue ‘Maps in/as Media’ – Abstract Submission” in the subject line. Invited full papers must then be submitted via the GI_Forum OJS platform (see “For Authors” on the journal website). https://www.austriaca.at/GI_Forum

Editors for this special issue:

- Pablo Abend, https://pabloabend.de/
- Helena Atteneder, https://uni-tuebingen.de/de/206967

For questions about the Special Issue’s scope or suitability of a contribution, please contact us via e-mail: kontakt@mediengeographien.de

We look forward to receiving your submissions and to collectively exploring how maps in/as media shape the epistemic, aesthetic and political conditions of spatial knowledge today.

About the Journal

GI_Forum Journal is an international, peer reviewed Open Access journal that provides a forum for the critical examination of spatial enquiry. It publishes high quality original research across the transdisciplinary field of Geographic Information Science (GIScience), Media Geographies and Geomedia Education. The journal provides a platform for dialogue among GI-Scientists and educators, technologists, social scientists, and critical thinkers in an ongoing effort to advance the field and ultimately contribute to an informed GISociety.

Submissions focus on innovation in education, science, methodology, technologies and communication in the spatial domain and their role towards a more just, ethical, and sustainable science and society. The journal explicitly welcomes contributions that emphasise efforts to address spatially relevant issues from an inter- and transdisciplinary, theoretical as well as empirical perspectives.
GI_Forum Journal is a journal of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.