SHORT TAKES



Global Overlay Mapper

Tim Makins, EI8IC, has developed a unique approach to computer mapping for radio amateurs. His *Global Overlay Mapper* is a package that consists of detailed maps that can be literally overlaid one atop the other. Unlike many software packages, *Global Overlay Mapper* is *platform independent*, which means that you can run it under *Windows*, *Linux* or *MacOS* as long as you have a Web browser that supports *Javascript*. Most browsers support *Java*, although you may have to enable it through OPTIONS or SETTINGS menus. If in doubt, use *Internet Explorer* 5 or 6.

Using the Mapper

When you start the *Global Overlay Mapper*, it opens your Web browser and appears in the main window. This does *not* mean that the software is connecting to the Internet. On the contrary, *Global Overlay Mapper* simply uses your browser as a means to display information. Once the program is up and running, you are presented with a graphic menu offering your choice of seven continental maps and 27 subcontinental maps.

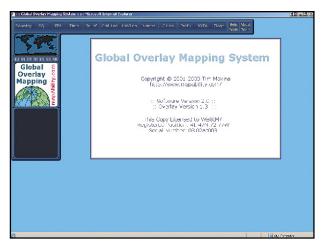
The fun starts when you select a country and begin choosing the overlays you want to display. Click your mouse along the tabs at the top of the window and you will see overlays of political borders, topography, time zones, CQ zones, ITU zones, IOTAs, grid locators, a latitude/longitude grid, ham prefixes, more than 2204 major cities and even flags. In the US map, the *Global Overlay Mapper* even showed state flags. You can select a single overlay display for clarity, or compare and reorder the information on several at once.

When you purchase the *Global Overlay* Mapper, you submit the latitude and longitude of your station, which is then incorporated into your version of the software. The result is a display of distance and beam headings at the bottom of the browser window. As you drag your mouse cursor across the maps, the distance and beam headings change. This makes the *Global Overlay Mapper* particularly useful to contesters and DXers.

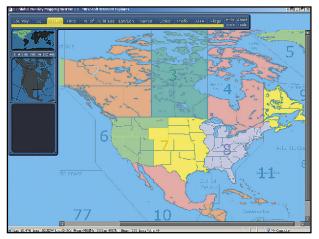
Well-Designed Software

Tim has put a lot of thought into the Global Overlay Mapper and it shows. The design is highly attractive and the software is remarkably easy to use. If you can drag and click a mouse, you can use the Mapper. With the ability to run on almost any computer that has a Web browser, the Global Overlay Mapper is bound to appeal to a wide audience. From my experience with the Mapper, I think it could also be an educational tool beyond its Amateur Radio applications.

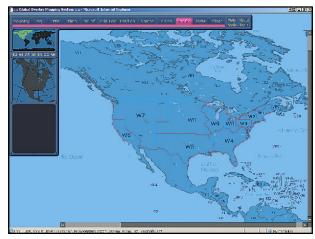
You can purchase and download the entire package on the Web for \$23. It is a 17.5 Mbyte download split into five files for convenience. Or, you can order the *Mapper* on a CD-ROM for \$29. Orders are accepted on-line at Tim's Web site at **www.qsl.net/ei8ic/** (where you'll also find an on-line demo), or by postal mail at MapAbility, Coolmeen, Ballyfarnon, County Sligo, Ireland. Be sure to include your call sign and latitude/longitude coordinates if ordering by mail.



The Mapper boots into your Web browser with this "home" window. You select continents and subcontinental areas at the left side of the window.



ITU zone overlay.



Amateur prefix overlay.

QST~