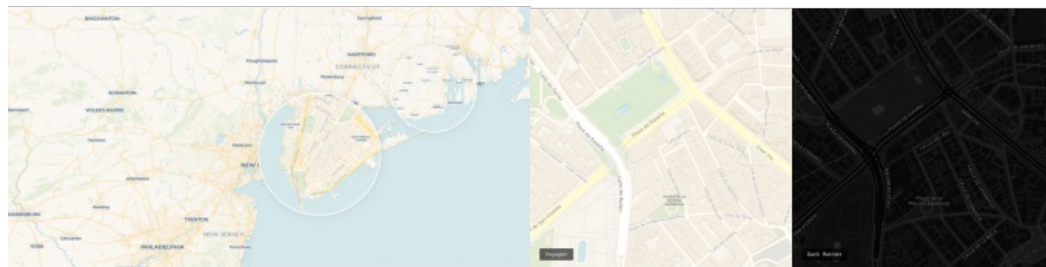


How to Create Effective Basemaps with CARTO



The basemap is the unsung hero of cartography. Regardless of the intended purpose, scale, or theme, the basemap must always provide the proper context, use a clear visual language, and effectively communicate the underlying data. For that reason, CARTO is constantly working to improve its basemaps and has decided to release a new version: Voyager.

Designed by head of Cartography, Mamata Akella, this mobile-optimised basemap comes in three flavours (labels on top, labels under, and no labels). In addition, this iteration makes it even easier to incorporate vital street-level data, better understand the potential flow of traffic within an area, and create stunning, intelligible maps.

Door to Door Service: Building Addresses Now Available

At the largest zoom, individual building addresses now appear directly on the map, allowing users to operate at the level of the street. For example, a real estate firm can now use Voyager to track and manage its properties. Or, city planners can visualise and more quickly respond to all of the residencies and businesses that have made 311 calls, reported crimes in their area, or need to have their driveways ploughed for snow.

A financial firm can even create a map that easily visualises its highest value properties and identify where additional investments and opportunities are located without additional building data.

Main Boulevard, not Main Street: Visualising Roadways

Under Positron, every avenue, highway, and back-woods road was depicted using the same white colour. In Voyager, different colours show a clear hierarchy of highways, major roads, and minor roads. Each one is also labeled, which is more than just an aesthetic improvement.

Under this new system, users can identify specific road segments and intersections, giving their maps yet another level of complexity. For example, after a natural disaster, first responders can identify streets that have been damaged and assign service providers accordingly. While the crews work on repairs, officials can devise the safest and most efficient detours, allowing the entire system to recover as quickly as possible.

And, just like Positron and Dark Matter, all information about roads, buildings, and points of interest is regularly updated and maintained for accuracy.

Tiny Tweaks: A Host of New Design Features

CARTO has also made several subtle design changes in order to ensure that maps are as clear as possible.

- City icons are now squares instead of circles to eliminate any confusion. Bodies of water now have drop shadows to further emphasize important boundaries.
- Labels are no longer written in all caps for greater legibility, and their size has been limited to remove unnecessary clutter. And, as a user zooms further, more labels appear, which allows maps to contain rich details without becoming overcrowded.

All of a user's existing maps will remain as they are. However, anything new will be on Voyager, except for Legacy Editor maps, which will still use Positron. And, Positron and Dark Matter will still be available in the basemap selector.