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Geog-2100

11DEC2014

Reflection on Final Mapping Project

In regards to my final proposal I created a graduated color map that shows the population change in Utah over the course of 110 years of data. While creating this final mapping project, I first encountered the challenge of importing data from Notepad to an Excel file. Since the data I chose to utilize from the U.S. Census Bureau was not in an Exel file I needed to first copy and paste the data into Notepad. From Notepad to Exel the data would only import into one cell. In order to fix this I open the data from Notepad in a program called Open Office. With open office I was able to format the data into individual cells. From Open Office I copied my newly formatted cells and pasted them into Exel.

Now that I had useable data in a folder connection in Arcmap, I quickly encountered another problem when joining my newly formatted data. I needed to join the Utah counties base layer with the counties layer from my Exel spreadsheet. I was attempting the join using the number of counties in Utah, 29. The base layer map had zeroes in front of numbers 1-9 whereas my Exel spreadsheet did not have zeroes in front of each county number. Exel was not allowing me to simply add zeroes to the county number’s 1-9 in order to fix this I had to change the row to text. Once changed to text I was able to add the zeroes and the two shapfiles joined successfully by county number. From here I was able to create a map of the population change in Utah over a 110 year period.

Along with the data problems I found it difficult to write, and explain exactly what the main story this map creation tells us. Viewing this map I see how the data is interpreted but describing the map with text and facts is difficult. I may try to right the text first, and then build the map before seeing what I’m trying to explain. Coming up with a title for my map also proved to be a problem and I should have been brainstorming earlier on in the project. With the text on each map I could have centered the paragraphs much better. That being said, the next time I build a map I won’t insert large text while in layout view. I will choose to wait and insert the text to the map using Power Point. This way if I notice spelling or grammar errors I won’t have to go back into Arcmap and make adjustments there. This will save time and the text on the map will be more centered.

I could have been more creative with my design topic. A choropleth, population map has been done several times in cartography and I just used the concept to create a map of my own. Since I am learning the basics of cartography I felt it was a good idea to enjoy building this map instead of making it a real pain. This way I stay interested and not give up.