
Subject: Re: Better (updated) political boundaries on maps?

Posted by [Andy Sayer](#) on Tue, 29 Oct 2013 15:15:31 GMT

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As an update on this, the thematicmapping link is ok but the shapefile includes continental boundaries as well as political ones. So it may not suit everyone's purposes.

I did find, however, that GSHHS v2.2.2 now has shapefiles for political boundaries from the World Data Bank (in addition to shorelines): <http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/shorelines/> It doesn't have South Sudan but appears to have a bunch more updated boundaries than the default IDL database, plus has state-level boundaries for a whole bunch of countries.

Andy

On Friday, October 25, 2013 4:46:07 PM UTC-4, AMS wrote:

> Thanks, David. I'll look into this next week. But this is really something which I think ExelisVis need to fix "out of the box" in IDL, too. It's embarrassing to have borders 20 or more years out of date. I notice the shapefile from your link is Creative Commons to perhaps ExelisVis could even implement that directly.

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> Andy

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> On Friday, October 25, 2013 3:18:46 PM UTC-4, David Fanning wrote:

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>> AMS writes:

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>>> I know there are improvements over the standard IDL shoreline database (e.g. GSHHS as written about by David here: http://www.idlcoyote.com/map_tips/gshhs.html), but is there a similar better possibility for political boundaries?

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>>> I ask as the database within IDL is quite outdated and if you want to make a region map
showing e.g. eastern Africa, several countries (South Sudan, Eritrea) don't seem to exist on it.
There are also some incomplete borders (e.g. between Saudi Arabia and Oman/Yemen). Maybe
there are other issues elsewhere in the world. A quick look shows Montenegro is also missing.
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>>> For publication/presentation graphics for use in material produced by government-affiliated
researchers and institutions, using outdated political boundaries is not ideal.
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>>> For an example, try running the following commands and comparing to a recent atlas or
Google Earth:
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>>> map_set,limit=[-10,15,35,55]
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>>> map_continents,/hires
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>>> map_continents,/countries
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>>> I know some countries (e.g. South Sudan) have been fairly recently recognised, and some

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such as Kosovo (also missing) are not entirely internationally recognised, but others such as Eritrea and Montenegro became independent in 1991 and 2006 respectively. Interestingly the Czech Republic and Slovakia are shown as separate countries although this happened in 1993, more recent than Eritrea... And I understand ExelisVis might not want to make political statements about

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>> which borders it considers, but surely some update is overdue here.
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>>> I contacted ExelisVis support about this last week but didn't hear back yet.
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>>> This appears to be an issue in both IDL 7.x and 8.x.
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>>> If there's no workaround, can this be considered a bug report? ;)
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>> Here is a reference from about 2008. I haven't used it, but it is worth
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>> a look, probably:
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>> http://thematicmapping.org/downloads/world_borders.php
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>> Cheers,
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>> David
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>> David Fanning, Ph.D.
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>> Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
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>> Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.idlcoyote.com/
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>> Sepore ma de ni thue. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
