



Google Earth Studio

About Vox

Vox is an American general interest news site noted for its focus on explanatory journalism, with a mission to help readers understand the news. Over the last year they have used Google Earth Studio to explain current news and create dynamic video content.

Key Features of Google Earth Studio

- **Animate the entire world and more.** Google Earth imagery encompasses satellite imagery everywhere and extensive aerial 3D imagery coverage.
- **Advanced camera controls.** Set anything in motion using keyframes and animation curves. Multiple camera viewports allow you to preview your animation from different vantage points.
- **Animatable effects.** Earth Studio allows you to animate more than just the camera. Adjust the field of view, animate the position of the sun, toggle on/off both clouds and the ocean topography.

To learn more about the product, visit g.co/earthstudio.

Vox Video brings dynamism to its videos with Google Earth Studio

Google Earth Studio is a web-based animation tool for Google Earth imagery. Create animated content with Google's incredible dataset of satellite and high quality 3D imagery with advanced control. Earth Studio is free to use and runs on Google Chrome.

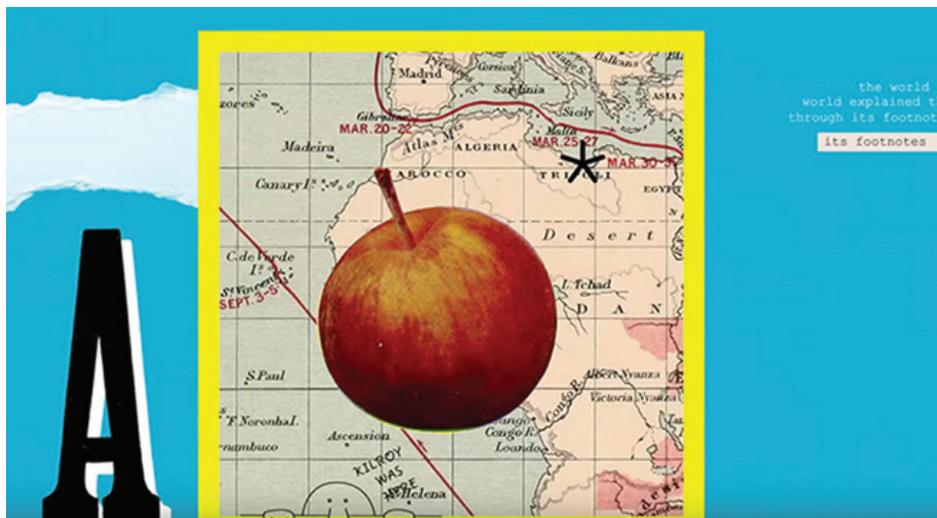
[Google Earth Studio](#) has been used by publishers around the globe to bring their reporting to life. Vox, for example, has used this tool on numerous occasions, adding dynamism to their [videos](#). You might have seen "[Why this black hole photo is such a big deal](#)," a video explaining what it took to collect 54-million-year-old photons from a supermassive black hole. It received over 5.3 million views on YouTube, and was one of Vox's most popular videos posted in the last year. Another video, "[The Problems with Rebuilding Beaches](#)," explains how about 80 to 90 percent of sandy beaches along America's coastlines are eroding, and what this will mean for home-owners, business-owners, and tourists. In this story, a Vox video producer, sent Earth Studio animations to a drone operator to pre-visualize flight paths.

Below, Vox Senior Producer, Sam Ellis, shares his experience with Google Earth Studio.

Sam Ellis, on Google Earth Studio:

Vox is all about explaining the news, which means we bring context to the really fast-moving headlines you see every day. Over at Vox Video we do the same thing, but we have the luxury of also showing you what a story is about, how it's unfolding, and why it's important.

We use this same approach to cover topics like science, culture, tech, and history. So if we're not explaining a current news story, then we're finding the answers to really interesting questions that you didn't realize you wanted to ask — like how "[Leonardo da Vinci created a "satellite" map in 1502](#)."



Vox Almanac: [How Leonardo da Vinci made a "satellite" map in 1502](#)

Maps have been used in journalism for a long time, but really only to do one thing: show the viewer where something is taking place. That's a pretty straightforward thing to do on a static map.

But if we're going to explain how and why something is taking place, then we need to have the ability to move around, draw, identify and overlay images and text. In our most complicated stories, we love the ability to add spatial datasets. That's the kind of "visual gold" we love to use. All of these things require a lot of flexibility that only animated maps have.

Personally, I love the close-up details I can show with Google Earth. A lot of my Vox Atlas stories are explainers about geopolitical events, so I spend a lot of time zoomed out in "world map" mode, moving from country to country, and region to region. But it's not a complete explanation if I don't show what these policies, histories, and forces look like on the ground.

The best example is a story I did about Brazil's Car Wash scandal, a massive corruption scheme where governments colluded with oil and construction companies to inflate Latin American infrastructure project prices and embezzle huge amounts of public money. When the scheme was uncovered, it shut down dozens of enormous projects all over Latin America, and thousands of people were laid off.



Vox Atlas S1-E13: [The biggest corruption scandal in Latin America's history](#)

In explaining how the scheme worked and why it became such a big deal, I really needed to show where these projects were and what they looked like. Instead of simply creating a boring list or a table, I showed the real projects themselves using Google Earth Studio. I zoomed in on a bunch of them to show the viewer that this power plant was shut down, this nuclear energy plant closed, and this river-dredging project had to lay off hundreds of workers. It added really powerful visual evidence to the story.

I used the map mostly to show some of the specific infrastructure projects that were closed due to the corruption scandal — the most important being the Comperj Petrochemical Plant in Itaboraí, Brazil. It was pretty easy to find the plant and set up a slow orbit, to make it look like we were monitoring it from a drone. I did the same for other projects across Latin America.



Orbiting the Comperj Petrochemical Plant in Itaboraí, Brazil.

Then I exported the JPEG series into Adobe After Effects where I linked it to my master world map. That way, I could start zooming out over the whole country of Brazil and quickly move in to see Comperj. I was able to simply draw lines and arrows to point out important parts of Comperj, like refineries and the petrochemical plant.

I also used Earth Studio to show a Brasilia gas station where the Car Wash investigation began. Usually I'd use headlines or a news article, but Studio allowed me to zoom into a 3D render of the gas station, then using After Effects, draw a demonstration of how money was laundered through the gas station.

These kinds of visuals just add so much dynamism and production value to the videos — without a ton of effort.

To get started, I would just dive in and play around with it! Zoom in on any place in the world that interests you and think about how you would try to tell a story about it. For journalists, this tool gets you closer than any other mapping tool, and it's the most dynamic. Embedding these images in stories will really help aid your articles and videos, and engage readers and viewers.

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The work that Vox has produced using Earth Studio content has been used to explain current news and to find the answers to really interesting questions that you didn't realize you wanted to ask. In doing so, they have also generated millions of views and trended on YouTube.

More amazing Google Earth features:

- **Quick Start Projects.** Start from scratch or use one of our animation templates to get started. Zoom to a place, animate from point-to-point, orbit or fly-to-and-orbit a point of interest.
- **KML Support.** Import KMLs from Google Earth right inside Earth Studio.
- **Integrates with Adobe After Effects.** Export camera data and tracking markers to Adobe After Effects to easily composite 2D and 3D elements over Google Earth imagery.
- **Export images up to 4K.** Render multiple animations as JPEG image sequences.

For more, please view the [full Vox interview here](#). | [Try Google Earth Studio today](#), and let the earth tell your story.