



A First-Year Writing Course

"The Influence of Place"

Marcy Thomas



- 1) Explore location as a focal point for research and writing.
- 2) Understand the bidirectional effect of place on organisms.

Introduce GIS and integrate the use of maps in writing

Comparisons of Place Using Global Indices

Environmental Health

The Geography of Gender

Extreme Habitats



← TO NATICK

WEST ENTRY

TO DOWNTOWN WELLESLEY →

CENTRAL STREET - ROUTE 130

Exercise here

Live here

Never go here

Classes here

* My mother left me

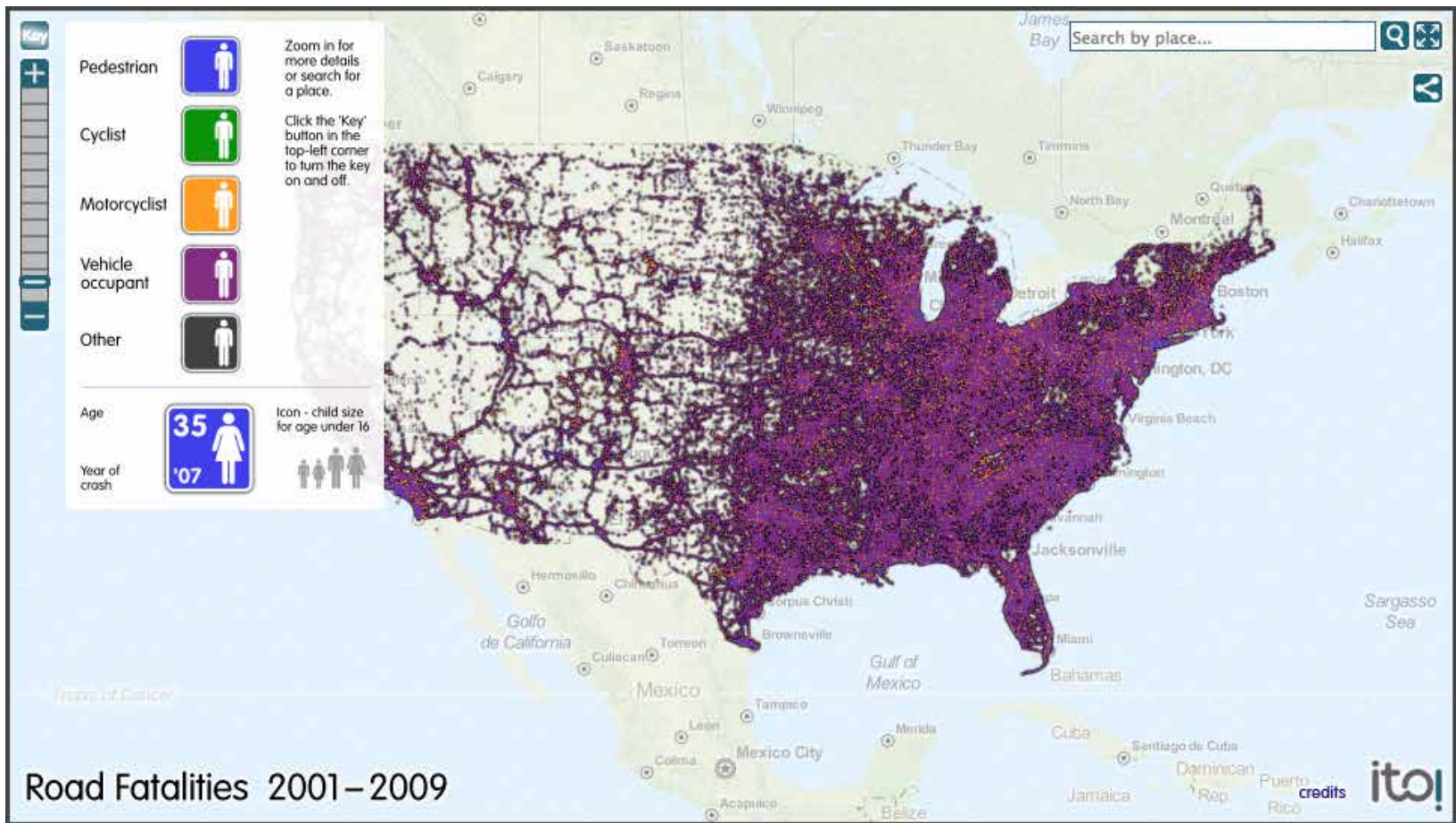




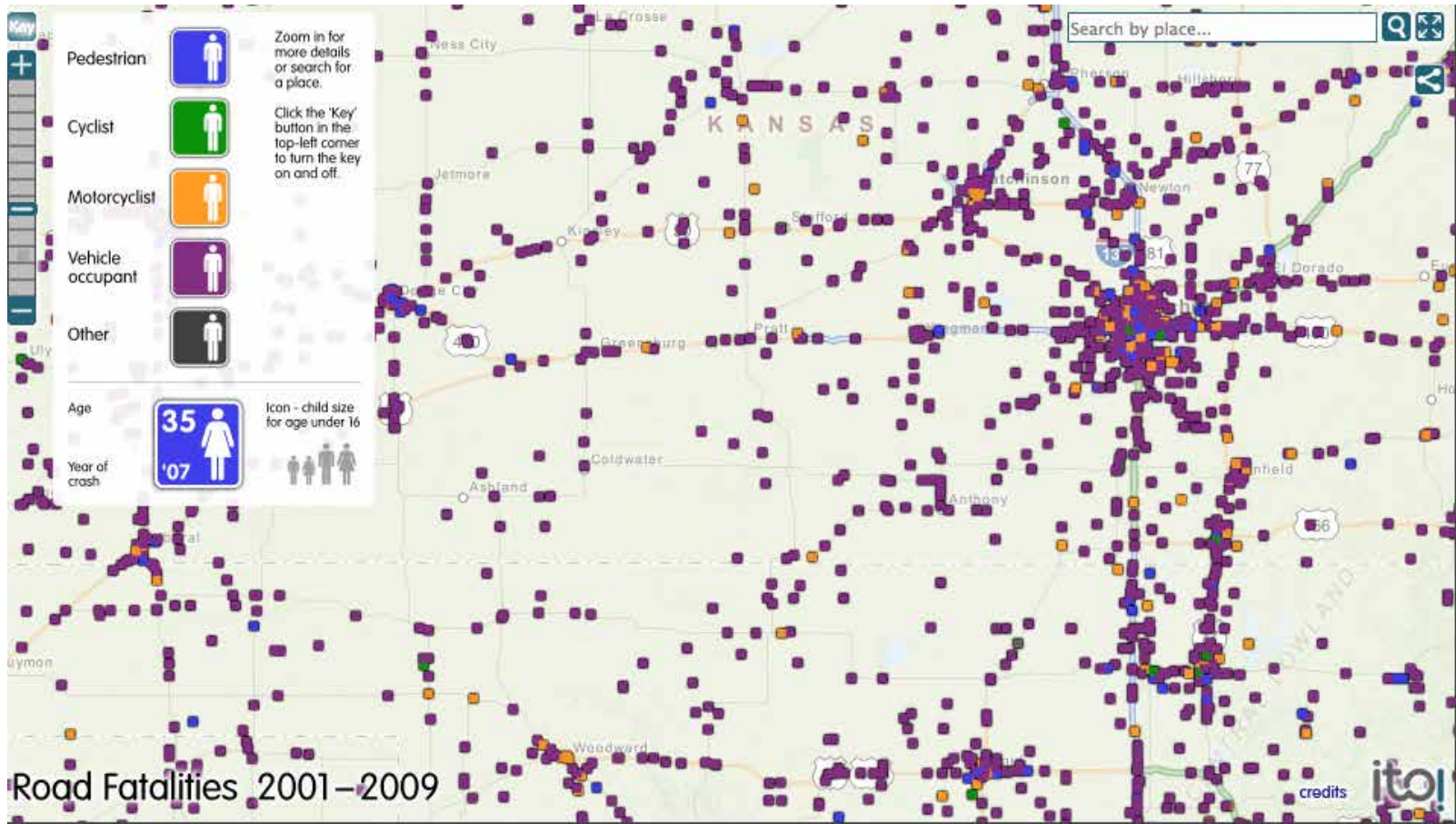
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Maps as diaries or journals

Investigate the blank spots



<http://map.itoworld.com/road-casualties-usa>



“As the map emerged, piece by piece, on my slow-loading computer, I began to see the familiar outline of my own country: The United States of America. My country was speckled with blue, green, yellow, purple, and black dots. In some places the dots were few and far between, in others, there were so many they ran together. The patches stained the white background dark, like the bloodshed they represented—for this is no population density map, as I had suspected when I first glanced at the page. Each color dot represented a type of US road fatalities from 2001-2009. As I realized this, the lines formed by hundreds of dots connecting cities began to make sad sense. Road fatalities can only happen on roads. My eyes sought out the mostly blank portions of the map and settled on a solitary purple dot in rural Montana, indicating the deceased were vehicle occupants. My mind could not help but wonder who these people were, what they were doing so far out on Creek Road, and why had they all crashed at the same point on this otherwise death-free road. I sighed knowing these questions were too much to ask of this map.”

Suzanne Barth '16

The Blank Spaces

“Whoosh! I cough and blink through watery eyes, as dust rises from my newly unfurled map. A relic of my grandfather’s basement, I have decided this gigantic, old, and dusty map will fill the remaining blank wall space in my new room. As the dust settles and I stand back to admire my handiwork, I begin to wonder about the blank spaces on this map: places where cities and towns do not appear and where rivers cease to run. These blank spaces are places most human visitors will condemn as devoid of life and potential, places that can be bypassed on the interstate, places that are forgotten. To us humans, these dreaded deserts are the scene only of stranded travelers and banished outlaws, never of flourishing life.

Deserts are reserved for only the toughest of characters and most humans just don’t make the cut....”

The synthesis of writing and technology is quite necessary and can add power to geospatial thinking and interpretation.