New open source tool for journalists and designers to weave interactive stories content into their storytelling

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Ｎew York, NY -- CartoDB today announced the Beta release of Odyssey.js, an open source library that content creators can use to build interactive stories on the web. The tool was developed with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Although the Web brings a new world of possibilities in terms of content formats, we still mostly rely on formats from past: long text, photos and some video. While a number of innovators are pushing new methods, the mechanisms for telling interactive stories are still technically complex and remain difficult to adopt by many news organizations. Most of the modern storytelling tools emerging still rely on a level of software development, that involveswriting custom code.

Odyssey.js aims to change that. Funding from Knight Foundation's Prototype Fund, which supports early-stage media and information ideas, has enabled CartoDB (the open source mapping tool) to create a first functional version of the Odyssey.js library. The tool enables creators to build interactive stories without coding skills.

Odyssey makes map-based interactive storytelling easier to develop. It uses a human readable markup language, Markdown, to mix narrative, interaction, and multimedia.

"Odyssey.js was born out of a prototyping process that has allowed CartoDB to rapidly develop a practical tool, taking into account current digital news workflows and user needs," said Chris Barr, who leads the Knight Prototype Fund. "We hope its launch will help journalists produce rich interactive stories and spark more media innovation."

CartoDB is a mapping tool which lets you visualize and make sense of your data. Many media organizations use CartoDB to solve their mapping needs, such as the creation of real-time election maps, interactive animated maps, data journalism visualizations... With the Odyssey.js library, CartoDB adds storytelling capabilities to their suite of tools.

Some Odyssey.js projects have already been created by different organizations. You can checkout some:

- People tweet a lot about major events, and that tells stories. Checkout how Twitter is visualizing these stories in features like Ramadan, how the world celebrates and #wimbledon2014: Men's final match
- What is the story of a t-shirt? Loomstate, creators of sustainable clothing, tell us in Making the most

[traceable tee in the world](#)

- Music festivals in the US and Europe, plan your holidays with a map.

In the Odyssey.js website you can read tutorials, access the complete documentation, watch screencasts, and start creating your stories: cartodb.github.io/odyssey.js

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more, visitwww.KnightFoundation.org.

Contacts

Álvaro Ortiz, Director of Communications, CartoDB, 917-463-3232, alvaro@cartodb.com

Anusha Alikhan, Director of Communications, Knight Foundation, 305-908-2677,media@knightfoundation.org

QUOTES

> *"Odyssey.js was born out of a prototyping process that has allowed CartoDB to rapidly develop a practical tool, taking into account current digital news workflows and user needs. We hope its launch will help journalists produce rich interactive stories and spark more media innovation."*
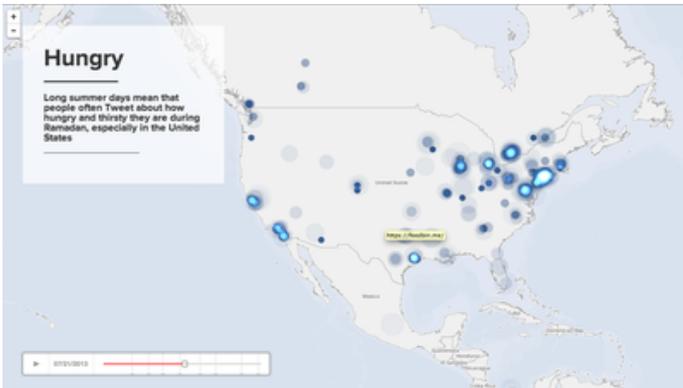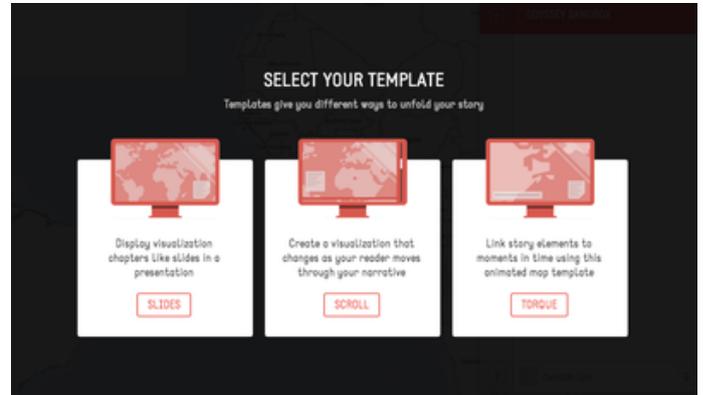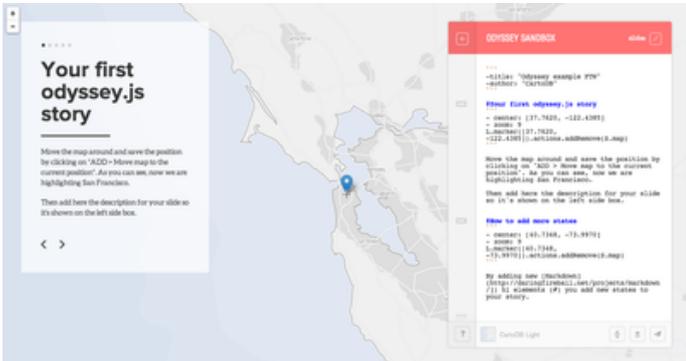> — Chris Barr, Knight Foundation Prototype Fund

> *"In CartoDB we are firm believers that there are lots of stories hidden in your data, our Map Editor is a tool to help people tell those stories. With Odyssey.js we dig further in this direction*

> *of enabling and making it easy to do storytelling."*
>
> — Andrew Hill, Senior Scientist, CastoDB

ABOUT CARTO

CARTO leads the world of location intelligence, empowering any organization and individual to discover and predict key insights through location data. With CARTO's intuitive location intelligence platform, analysts and developers build self-service location based apps that help optimize operational performance, strategic investments, and everyday decisions.

Founded in 2012 by a team of experts in geospatial development, big data analytics, and visualization techniques, CARTO is based in New York and Madrid, with additional locations in Washington D.C., London, and Estonia. CARTO has a team of 100 employees, a portfolio of 1,200 customers including BBVA, BCG, NYC, Twitter, and Vodafone and more than 200,000 users over the globe. The company is backed by investors such as Accel and Salesforce Ventures.

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