

The Green Map of Rio de Janeiro

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The Green Map System (GMS) is a system created by the Modern World Design from New York City, USA. It is a system designed to create urban maps linked to natural environments and the city. These maps are extremely useful to disseminate ecological information, specially those connected to the tourism, culture and leisure activities of a city.

The target of this project that is being executed by the Núcleo de Pesquisa em Design (NPD) of the Centro Universitário da Cidade – UniverCidade, is the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The original idea of the GMS project began on Earth Summit, also called ECO 92. It was a worldwide ecological event that was held on Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Since that time, the GMS project increase worldwide. The Rio de Janeiro Green Map is the map number 100.

The city of Rio de Janeiro is in a privileged position, between the sea and the mountains. In spite of being a huge metropolis, with more than 5.800.000 habitants, Rio de Janeiro is a city full of natural beauties that could and should be known.

It is important to create consciousness to the need to protect nature of the city through the presentation of significant places in the ecological meaning, by creating a new way to observe and know a city. We hope that, in this way, to start a validation process that will encourage to include the urban ecology in the collective opinion as an habitual component to the planning activity.

In order to educate, inform and promote an ecological consciousness, the Green Map of Rio de Janeiro will identify points of ecological and environmental importance, as well as the nature cities resources. By giving references to people and showing how `green` is the Rio de Janeiro city. It will have important references (address, telephone and other additional information) in each point inserted in the map that will help the users. Also observing, the importance of people with activity limitations.

The objectives of the Rio de Janeiro Green Map are:

- To develop the ecological tourism in Rio de Janeiro.
- Inform about “green areas”.
- Helping on the preservation of city’s “green areas”.
- Create ecological consciousness to the population.

The Green Map project of Rio de Janeiro intend to promote an ecological consciousness by involving teachers and students of UniverCidade and others institutions during the mapping of the city in a general effort.

The Green Map of Rio also intend to inform about some special places through the environmental point of view, by presenting green areas and ecological projects that is being developed by the city

mayor and other organizations as the same as historical reports, ecological attractions, panoramic views and reference places of the city.

This project will encourage designers to consider the environmental benefits with the use of sustainable development principles, by showing ecological design projects developed by UniverCidade and other institutions. A dynamic website was created in order to converge information to promote and sponsor activities linked to environmental preservation and restoration. We are going to create an electronic forum to encourage the change of ideas about environmental subjects.

Rio de Janeiro is going to make a significant revival of its history and the major of the city are working on public parts. UniverCidade is being very active in this kind of sector and we are collaborating with this initiative. The Green Map of Rio de Janeiro will divulge historical information about some mapped points, by showing the evolution of some selected places. Some approaches will be related to restoration and preservation of local historical forests and trails.

We believe that the Green Map of Rio will be very useful to promote sites with environmental interests, and it will be for everyone: for tourists and residents.

Methodology – A way to go

The GMS project of Rio de Janeiro was started on the final of the year 1999 by the School of Design of UniverCidade. And now, there are many ways to the developing of the map.

- Research of the places that will be mapped, by using specific selection criteria to the information that will be included on the map.
- Project's progress monitoring and data collection to be included on the map.
- Mapping trials.
- To develop a research on the iconography sector of the Brazilian National Library in order to find historical visual references.
- The creation of new icons that will be included on the map.
- The study for the location of information icons.
- To develop a marketing politics in order to divulge the map in many ways.
- To design the website.
- To design the map that will be on paper.
- Monitoring the production through the website.

The first version of the bilingual (Portuguese and English) website could be accessed in the address <http://www.univercidade.br/greenmaprio>.

There also be a printed version and the both version will show:

- Specific “green areas”;
- Trails;
- Information about the environment (positive and negative aspects);
- Historical information about specific places;
- Places with cycling facilities and routes;
- Places with facilities for people with activity limitations;
- Points of outdoor sports;
- Points of natural beauties;
- “Green” stores;
- Information concerning to the public health;
- Points for recycling materials;
- Places of scientific and cultural interests;

- Places that shows the sustainable environmental development;

This list could be enlarged. A numerical reference to each site of the map is being used as a key with information of names, address, telephones and a little summary, as well some actual and old images of some mapped places.

Digital maps were obtained with the mayor and we are developing a huge work to obtain and certificate information to be included in the map. In this case we also included the photographic survey. In spite of the great volume of information, we need to choose the best expressive places and information to be included.

The group that works on this project are formed by students of Design, Information Technology and Communication and by teachers from many areas (Design, Architecture, Biology, Geography and Cartography) that create a great possibility of information changing. Students of the discipline Ecology of the Design course of UniverCidade working to select places that could be included in the map. Students of the discipline Visual Project working with the development of the new icons and so on.

Nowadays we are doing some contacts for continuing of the work, according to the objective of the maximum involvement of the people in the project.

The new icons

As we can see on the GMS Homepage: “Icons make each Green Map easier to explore, regardless of the language and cultural orientation of the Mapmaker. Primarily, they represent beneficial green and cultural sites of every description, but there are symbols for vital infrastructure sites and challenging toxic hot spots, too. There is general agreement on each Icon's meaning, but the local Mapmakers determine the precise definition for each Icon they use.”

Actually, we have 125 icons on GMS that generate many information related to a city. Icons shows that it is very easy to explore the map and the city, no matter what the language. The language of the icons is universal.

New icons were developed with specific themes of Rio de Janeiro city. These new icons were included on GMS as Local, Place-based Icons for Green Maps.

Conclusion

The developing of the Green Map of Rio de Janeiro is a work with a didactical sense. The inclusion of the data, since the city's historical information through the specific point that will be shown by the icon, it is a work that should be realized in a continuous way, involving students and teachers and promoting the environmental consciousness for people that collaborate for the project and for people that will look for some information on the website or pressed map.

We hope that the Green Map of Rio shows, in an agreeable way, that Rio de Janeiro is a very special urban city, fenced by mountains and the sea, that owns many ecological attractions, information and places beyond the worldwide known Sugar Loaf Mountain, Corcovado and Copacabana beach.

References

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