Finding maps on Enterprise

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Searching for thematic maps and map series

Box 1: Types of map
Maps can be general purpose or thematic.

General purpose maps vary from detailed site plans, to topographic Ordnance Survey maps, to road maps, to country or world maps found in an atlas.

Thematic maps are devoted to a particular subject. They include physical properties of the land eg geology, soil, land use, as well as socio-economic topics which have a spatial dimension eg population.

We will look for a geological map of Norway. See Box 1 for information about types of map.

Please note: your search results may differ from the ones shown

Type the words ‘Norway geology’ in the search box and click on Search. This will give you 38 results; limit the results to ‘Maps’ using the ‘Limit these results’ function on the left-hand side of the page. This will give you 22 hits.

[TIP: include a thematic search term in your original search string, rather than refining by subject. Many unclassified maps have only a basic record and so are not included in the subjects listed in ‘Limit these results’]
Click on the title and look at the record shown below in more detail (you may need to scroll down the page to find it). It is a detailed map at a scale of 1:50 000, and it is part of a map series (see Box 2 for more information). You know this because the detailed record tells you so, and also because it has an open date range (1972-).

In this case, individual sheets are listed below the record, but how do you know which sheets you want? There is a link to a map or graphic index which shows you which sheets are available. You will need to note the sheet numbers that you need from this index in addition to the title, scale and location.
Box 2: Map series

“A number of maps relating to a defined area of the world, published sequentially, based on a common grid ... drawn to a common scale and using common cartographic symbols to convey information. The combined sheets of the series, possibly as many as several thousand sheets, theoretically form one large map, but each sheet is also a complete 'self-sufficient' cartographic product” (Farrell, B. and Desbarats, A. (1984) Guide for a small map collection 2nd. ed. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Map Libraries)

We catalogue map series as a single item, so to work out which single sheet you need you will have to look at an Index map, or graphic index. Some are online and are linked from the record, others are in bound volumes kept on the 2nd Floor.

Now type the words ‘Kenya geology’ in the search box, then refine by ‘Maps’ to give you six records.

Click on the title shown below.
It is also a series. However, there is no link to a graphic index. Instead make a note of the title and scale and see the Map Librarian to look at the index book.

For more information on how to obtain the maps, see Finding maps on Enterprise 1.