Summary

The objective of the FieldScope Usability Assessment Project, managed by the NMC, is to assess the various web sites and pages that are being developed as part of the NSF-funded FieldScope project by the National Geographic Society. In this case, the NMC is evaluating a set of wire frames that mimic a series of user tasks listed on the side bar of each wire frame. This assessment will inform the National Geographic Society of any changes or additions that need to be made before the web pages are created.

The wire frames in the subset evaluated in this report are entitled:

1. **Browse Maps Landing Page**
2. **Create Map: Step 1 Select Base Map**
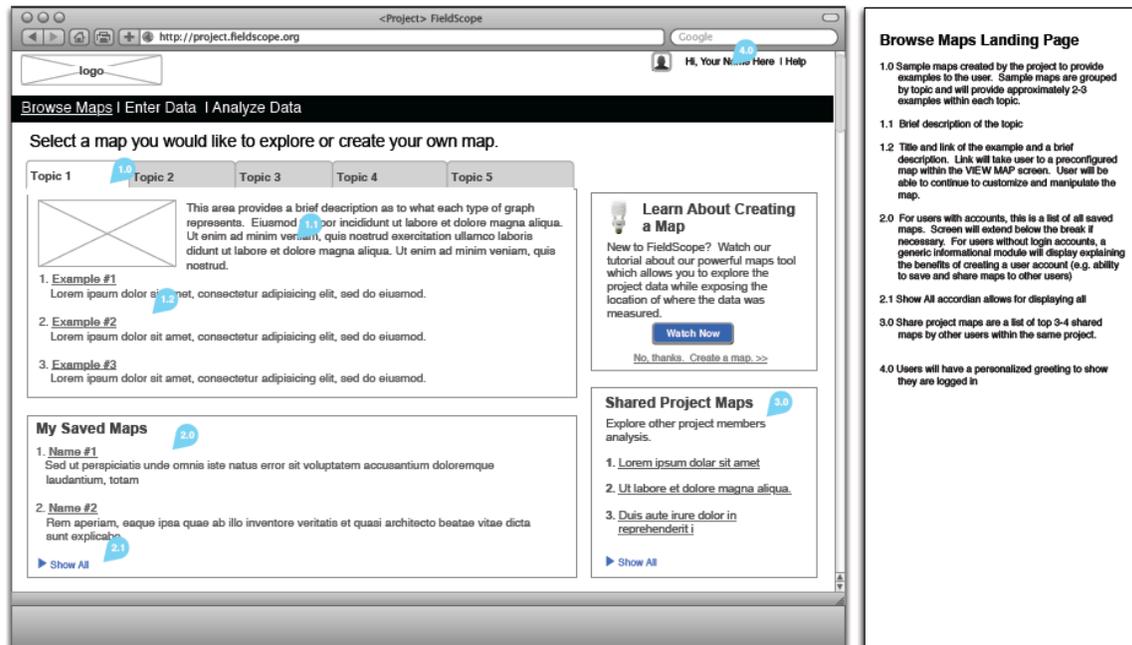3. **Create Map: Step 2 Set Map View**

Throughout the assessment, the NMC's evaluators will use a uniform set of criteria referenced in the initial review provided in FieldScope Usability Assessment Report 1 for evaluating Project BudBurst and Project FrogWatch. These criteria are: user friendliness (usability); completeness; and the ability of the site to sustain interest. Each is informed by a guiding question.

Usability Assessment Criteria

User Friendliness	Completeness	Sustained Interest
Is the site organized in a way that is easy/intuitive to use and navigate?	*Is there key information missing from sections that may be helpful to a user in completing or understanding a task?*	*Does the site inherently promote further exploration/sharing/return visits?*

Using these criteria, each of the three wire frames was assessed; the results are presented in the sections that follow.

1. Browse Maps Landing Page

User Friendliness

The layout is intuitive and the content is organized in a structured fashion similar to other modern sites that deliver content and encourage sharing among participants. There are four main modules that represent the main tasks: 1) Select an example map to explore by topic; 2) access the user's saved maps; 3) explore other users' shared projects; and 4) watch a tutorial to learn the mapping tool.

More specifically, Task 1.0 shows the scope of work by topics and Task 1.1 is where the user would expect to see a description of the topic, which is well placed next to the image space. Examples in Task 1.2 provide the user with a space to analyze previous work, which would be helpful if it were their first encounter or if they wanted to refer back while interacting with their saved map.

For those returning to this page, Task 2.0 provides an area to quickly retrieve previous work. By placing the Show All tab in Task 2.1, it makes efficient use of the page space above the break.

Task 3.0 features shared maps. While is nice to see what others are doing, it could lead to redundancy by having two spaces for example work as it appears to be very close in function to Task 1.2.

Task 4.0 shows that the user is logged in and makes it feel like it is a personalized space. The "Learn About Creating Maps" module is in a helpful place for reference. That module also has some hyperlinked text that says "No thanks, Create map." It is unclear where this would take

the user, and whether there is another button for creating maps, or if they should assume the "Enter Data" tab is where they need to go to get started.

The tutorial, which is essential for a first time user, is well-placed and designated by a blue button that says "Watch." If the user already has experience with the mapping tool, they can click the link below to create a map. This appears to be the only link on the page to create a map, unless the links at the top of the "Select a map" module. i.e. "Enter Data" or "Analyze Data" serve that function.

Displayed on the left-hand side are maps that have already been created and are organized by topics. The tabs are wide and very visible, so it would be easy for a user to navigate through the different types of maps offered. It is difficult to see, however, where a user can create their own map on this module.

At the upper right corner of the screen is the personalized greeting, which appears to be a place where the user can access their profile. The 'Help' link next to it is easily to spot.

Completeness
All of the tools are clearly laid out. One concern on this wire frame is that there is no button for creating a map; the only place to "Create a Map" is in the box "Learn about Creating a Map." It would be helpful to have a button specifically for create a map on the page.

In the "Shared Maps" box, it would be nice to have either images of the person whose map was shared, or a graphic to support that link. Also, the user cannot see an explanation of why creating maps is important on this main page. Perhaps Topic 1 could be an overview of the maps themselves, instead of jumping right into the actual map topics. The user may not understand why the maps are important to create, save, and share. The user is also curious as to how the top three-four shared maps are determined and more information would be helpful regarding where these maps come from and how the user can share their maps.

This wire frame also raises some questions: will the logo be hyperlinked back to the homepage? How does a user leave this page?
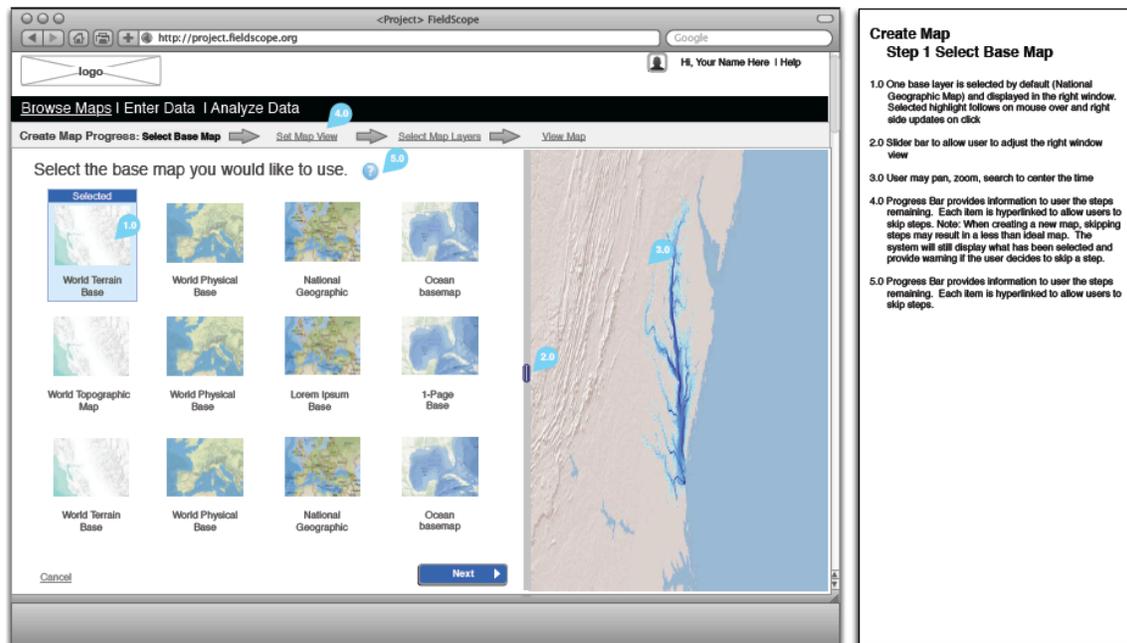
Sustained Interest
The way the frame is set up encourages the user to click through the tabs and view the maps of the first module on the left side. In addition, there are a variety of activities that can be explored right on the main page.

With the Sharing Project Maps included, the user may feel an urge to return to see what other maps are available. It is also helpful that the user can have their image for their profile shown on their landing page, making it more customizable to suit their needs.

The Task 1.0 Topic tabs are limited to five with three examples each. This seems like an appropriate amount of topics, providing enough variety to sustain the user's interest. If the user had no background information for this project, they find the video tutorial helpful. Returning users should feel comfortable knowing where to pick things up again. Without much background in this particular area, there is enough available to begin.

2. Create Map: Step 1 Select Base Map

User Friendliness

At first glance, the user sees a number of selections for which base to use, each depicted with an image. The base selected is clearly designated by a blue box. The "Cancel" link in the lower left corner will likely lead the user back to wire frame 1 (Browse Maps Landing Page), if they choose that they do not want to create a map at the moment.

In the lower right-hand corner of this window is a "Next" button, which will take the user to the next step of the creation process. It is helpful that the flow chart at the top shows which steps will be completed as a user goes through the activity of completing a map. Because they are hyperlinked, it appears that a user can go back and forth between steps easily if they change their mind about a selection.

It is unclear what the outcome of Task 2.0, "adjust the right window view," will do. Currently, it appears as though it would adjust the left window to the user.

The thumbnails in Task 1.0 on this wire frame are intuitive and appealing. It is clear that the highlighted thumbnail is being shown larger and in greater detail on the right in Task 3.0, and the vertical slider in Task 2.0 is easy to understand. However, the space for Task 3.0 is in a portrait orientation, yet the user does not see a horizontal slider given that the thumbnail is in a landscape orientation.

The description for Task 3.0 reads that the viewer can pan and zoom, but those functions are not visible. Perhaps it would help if the user were able to hover over the steps and get a pop-up description. Additionally, it is unclear as to which base map the user should begin with.

One particularly effective feature is the Progress Bar in Task 4.0, which helps users see what stage they are in for the map creation. It is easy for a user to understand what is expected of them to complete the task.

The cancel link seems a bit small compared to the "Next" button, and it would beneficial to make them consistent in size.

Completeness
There are a lot of options on this page and It would be helpful for the user to know why they would want to chose one base map over another. There are multiple thumbnails of the same map, and it is unclear, for example, why the top row and bottom row of maps are identical.
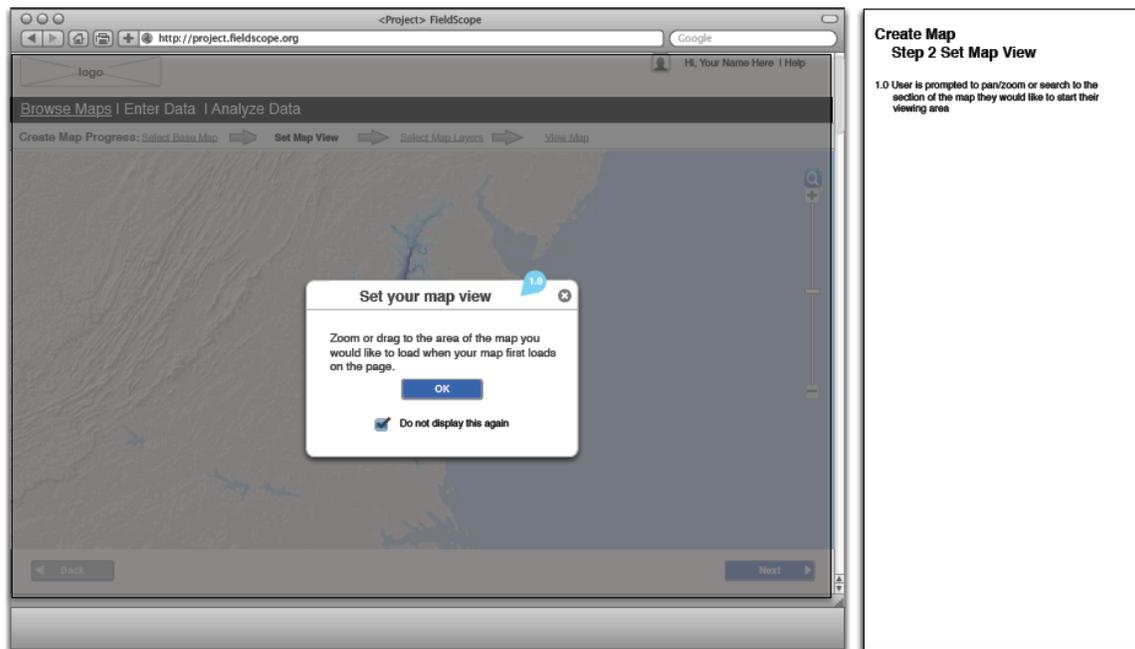
Regarding Task 3.0, "User may pan, zoom, search to center the time:" How will users know they can take these actions? Additionally, how does the question mark next to "Select a Base" differ from the "Help" link at the top of the screen? Does it pop up with a quick explanation of what "selecting a base" is? These questions are not yet clear based on the wire frame. The user sees that they are still in the "Browse Maps" area, but is unsure how it relates to the previous wire frame. The steps need to be explained and the maps need to be differentiated for this page to be entirely complete.

Sustained Interest
Because this wire frame is the first step of the map creation process, it seems likely that the user will spend some time selecting different bases and seeing their results appear in the right-hand pane of the window. There are a variety of features and maps on this page, so there is plenty to explore and manipulate. But without a clear objective, the user may need more direction in order to sustain interest.

3. Create Map: Step 2 Set Map View

User Friendliness

This screen is intuitive for the user. They grayed out screen tells the user they are still in the same location but moving on to the next screen. There are three interactions possible on this wireframe: 1) Click "Ok"; 2) uncheck "Do not display this again"; and 3) close out the window. No matter what the user chooses to do, all three options are clearly displayed.

This wording can be confusing: "Zoom or drag to the area of the map you would like to load when your map first loads on the page." To make it clearer, this instruction could be reworded to "Zoom in or drag your mouse to the area of the map you want to load on the page."

Based on the text headings, perhaps the pop-up should say "Set your Map View," instead of "Set your map view" to remain consistent with the casing?

Completeness

Nothing is lacking or missing. The title of the window "Set your map view" is visible, and the description underneath it is easy to understand.

Sustained Interest

Because this wireframe displays a pop-up window, the user will complete the task, and leave the window. This is a logical action. This wire frame is one that the user can opt into seeing or opt out of, which is appreciated. While this page does not allow further exploration or sharing, it does sufficiently execute the purpose.