

Using Images from Photo Sharing Sites in ArcGIS Online and Apps (including Story Maps)

Update: September 2018 – Joseph Kerski

There are many options for using images in ArcGIS Online. Choose a method that works best for your situation and needs. The methods below are just a subset of the many methods that are valid.

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2 Rules of thumb:

1. ArcGIS Online and apps (including story maps) are continually evolving. The photo sharing tools are likewise continually evolving. These procedures are thus subject to change, so be flexible.

2. To be successful with using photos in ArcGIS Online:

(1) Make sure they are your content, or are in Creative Commons or are not copyrighted, or you have permission to use them.

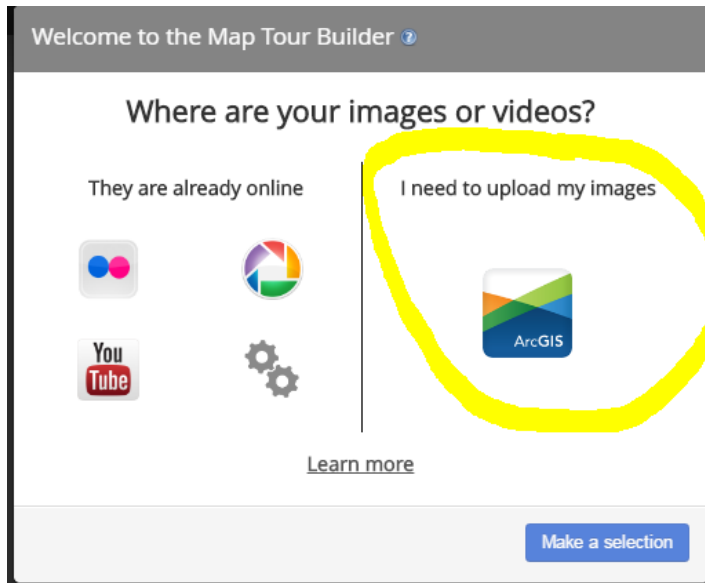
(2) That the photos are shared with the public.

(3) That the photos are of modest size; i.e. not too large that they will slow down the browser; and not too small that they will be grainy.

(4) That you obtain a URL that can be opened in a separate tab in a web browser. If they can be opened in a separate web browser tab, then they will work in ArcGIS Online.

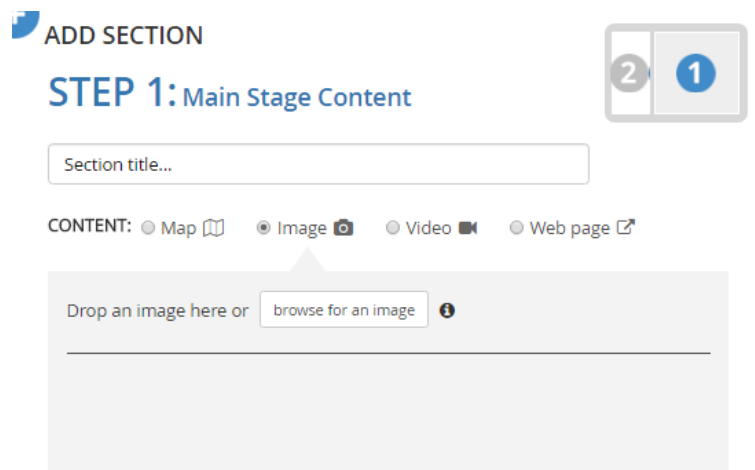
1. ArcGIS Online

One method is to use ArcGIS Online to store your images. One key advantage with this method is that the images can be dragged and dropped to most story map applications right from your computer.



You will not see these images in My Content or in the item itself. The images are stored internally in the story map, and cannot be accessed in any way except by viewing the story map and the images cannot be used in any other maps. If you would like to use images in multiple story maps or ArcGIS Online maps, use Add Item in My Content and add the photos that way.

On a related note: In the Builder Mode, you can also drop images into story maps or browse your computer for them. They will be stored as part of ArcGIS Online:

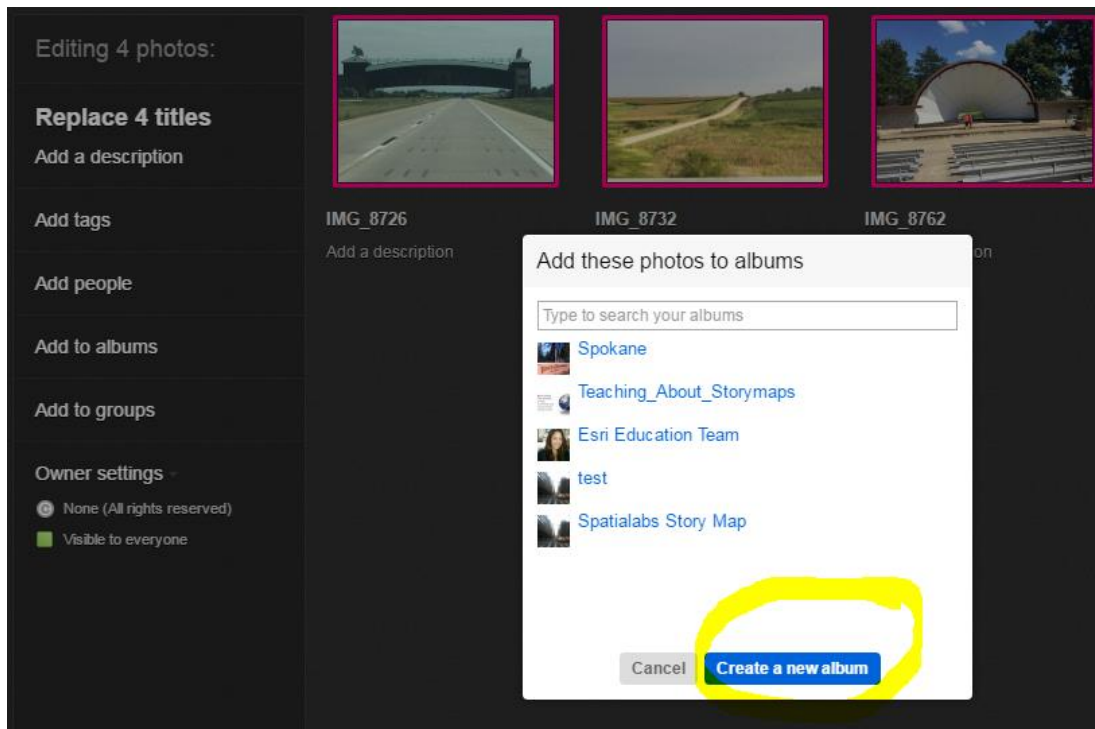


2. Flickr

Flickr is at the present time one of the best solutions because (1) Unlike Google Plus and Google Photos, Flickr does not require you to use their social media platform (Yahoo), to use its photo capabilities. Another advantage is its fairly straightforward way of allowing access to the photo URL. The final advantage is the multiple sizes that it automatically creates, which is handy for choosing full sized images and thumbnails.

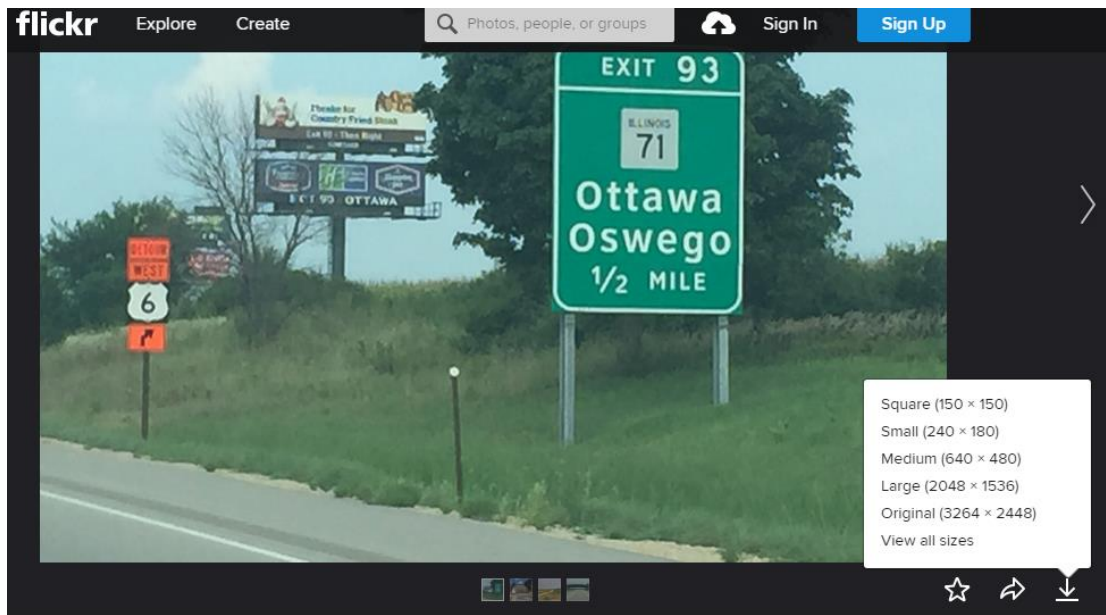
Disadvantage: With Flickr that you cannot create a new album and upload photos into that new album. You must upload photos first and then organize them into albums. Do the following:

Upload > Upload Photos > Create a new album:



Then in upper right – Upload.

To access URL for photos, open photo > Download tool in lower right > View all sizes:



This gives you multiple sizes for your photo. Select the size you need > right click on the photo that appears under that size > copy URL for photo:

Photo / All sizes

License © All rights reserved by joseph_kerski

Download [Download the Small 320 size of this photo](#)

Sizes	Square 75 (75 x 75) Square 150 (150 x 150) Thumbnail (100 x 75)	Small 240 (240 x 180) Small 320 (320 x 240)	Medium 500 (500 x 375) Medium 640 (640 x 480) Medium 800 (800 x 600)	Large 1024 (1024 x 768) Large 1600 (1600 x 1200) Large 2048 (2048 x 1536)	Original (3264 x 2448)
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This URL can be used in ArcGIS Online.

In addition, this album can be seen when using the Story Map Builder mode:

ADD SECTION

STEP 1: Main Stage Content

B

CONTENT: Map Image Video Web page

Flickr joseph_kerski Load albums

The Midwest (4) Spokane (15) Teaching About Story Maps Education (21) Empower Education Team (30)

Selecting the album yields the following:

The Midwest Edit me!

STORY CONFIGURATION SAVE SHARE SETTINGS HELP

A story map Facebook Twitter LinkedIn

1 unsaved change ; Tour is not saved esri

Change Basemap

Change media Change thumbnail

IMG_8872 Edit me!

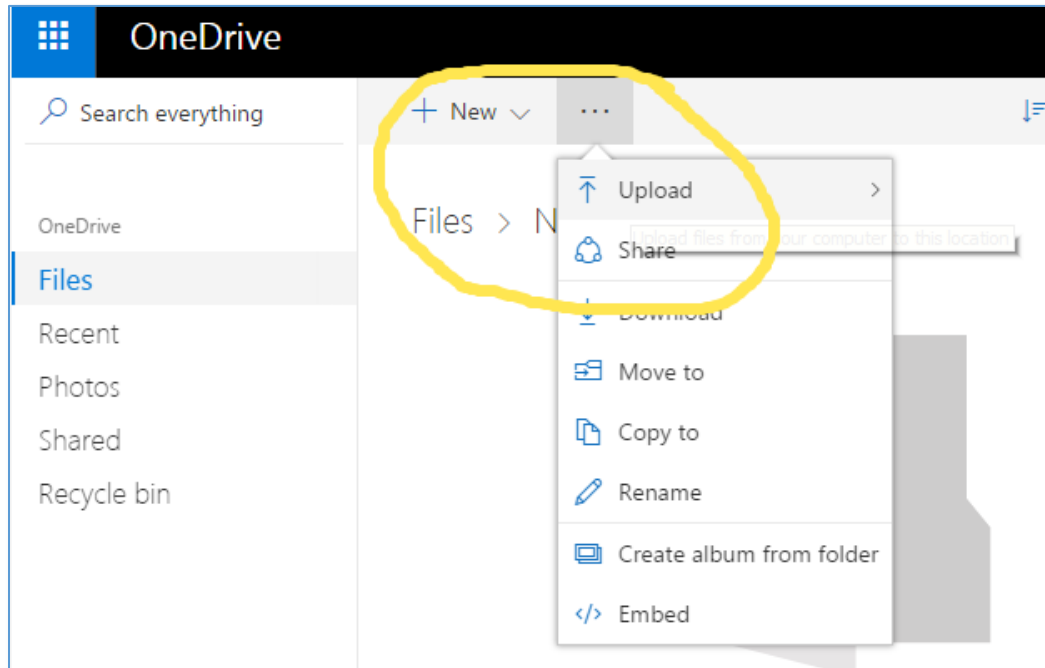
Move me around or change my color

1 2 3 4

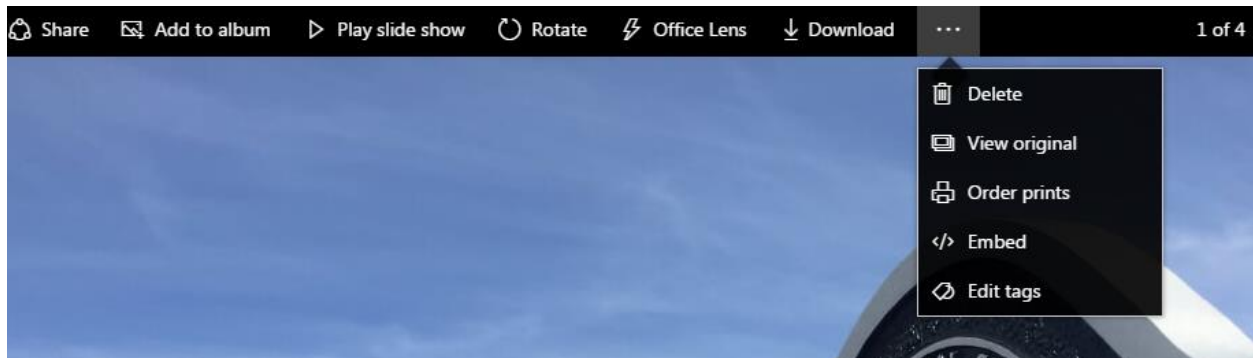
IMG_8872 IMG_8762 IMG_8732 IMG_8726

3. Microsoft One Drive

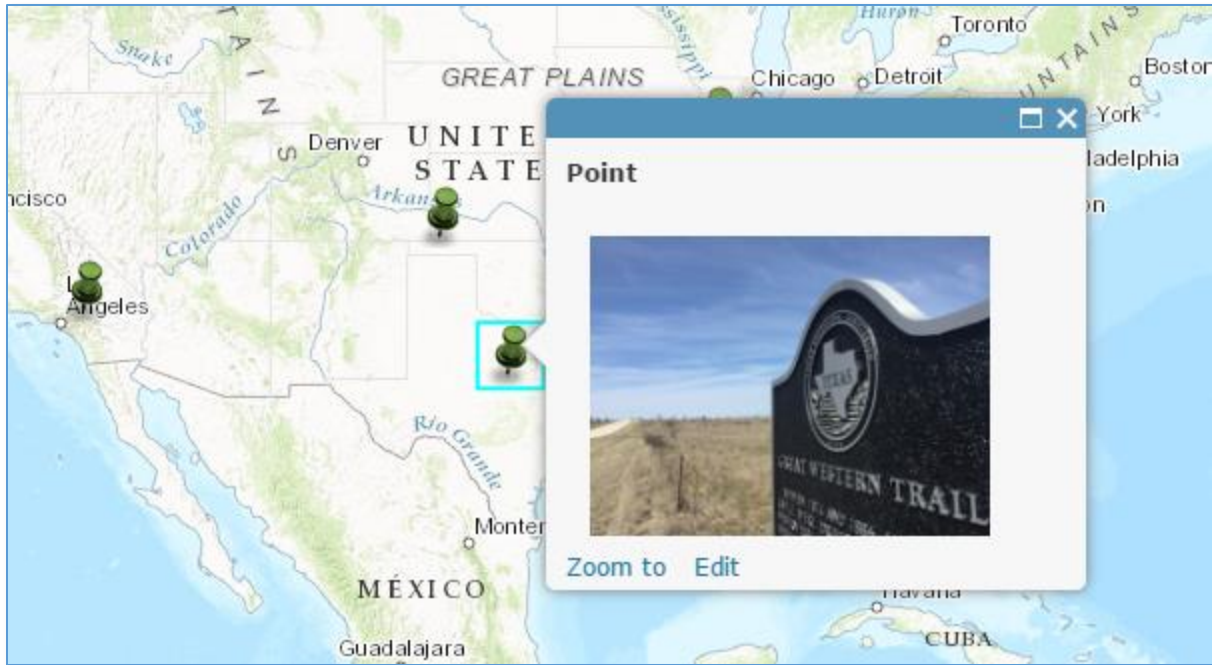
Files > New > New Folder > Give it a name > Select . . . > Upload Files:



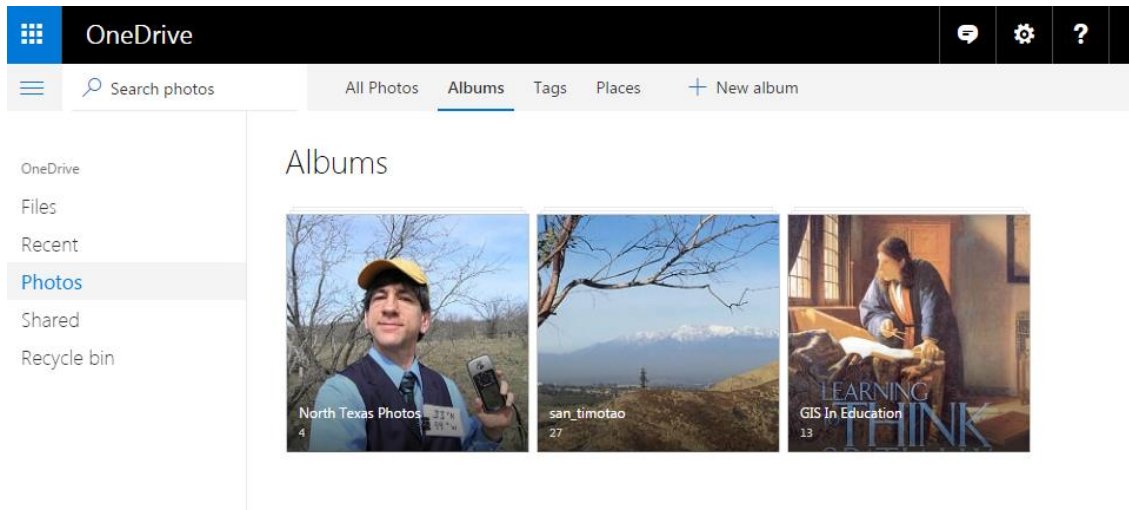
Click on a photo > . . . View original > (as shown below):



This URL is the image that will work in ArcGIS Online. [Example URL is here.](#) Example below:



Optional: OneDrive photos work as Files, but you could “Add to Album” if you wish. If you do, then the photos will appear in your Photos section, as shown below:

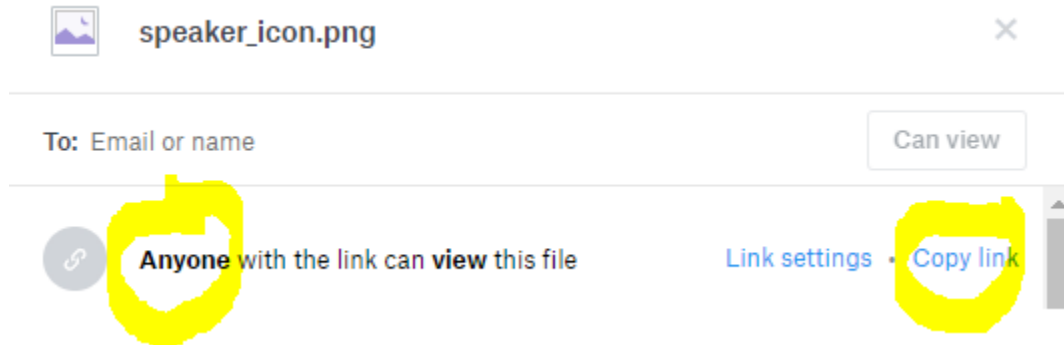


4. Dropbox

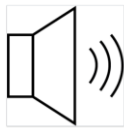
You may see reference and help guides to “Dropbox Public Folders”. Ignore these as the public folder option was “dropped” by Dropbox a few years ago. However, there are still ways to use your Dropbox photographs in ArcGIS Online and in web mapping applications such as Story Maps.

To make a Dropbox image usable in mapping and GIS tools:

1. Upload your images to Dropbox.com using your Dropbox account.
2. Share the images so that anyone with the link can view the image. Copy the link. Both procedures are shown below.



3. You will need to make an adjustment on the image URL because of the way Dropbox stores the images. For example, for my speaker graphic shown here:



The URL is:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/9w9dzd8liottl8a/speaker_icon.png

Change your URL to the following form: (1) Change www.dropbox.com to dl.dropboxusercontent.com. (2) Make sure the URL is https and not http.

Thus, the URL above needs to be changed to:

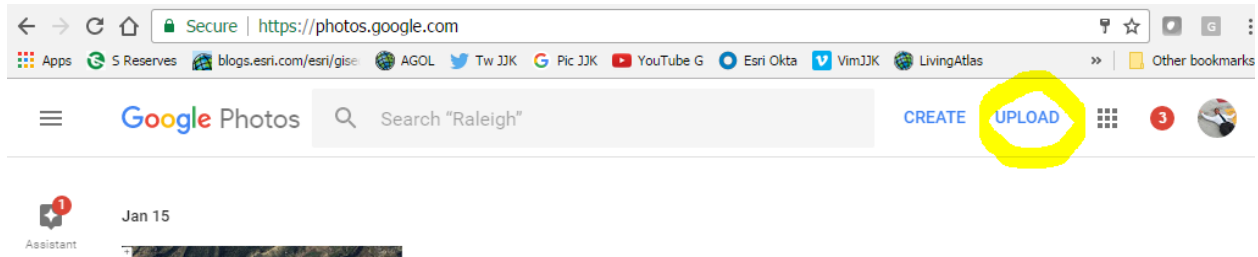
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/s/9w9dzd8liottl8a/speaker_icon.png

and it will now work in ArcGIS Online and in Story Maps.

5. Google Photos

Note: The interaction between Google Plus and Google Photos is not straightforward. For more, see: <https://productforums.google.com/forum/#!topic/photos/c7BAhJUjtS0>. You can use Google Photos, but you need to go through Google Plus to do so.

Step 1. Go to <http://photos.google.com> and select UPLOAD:



The photos will be placed in an album with today's date. You can also Add to Album and add to an existing named album.

At this point, you could also: Choose Shared Album > New Shared Album > Name the album.

Click on desired photo > Copy Image Address. At this point, this is the image address that will work in ArcGIS Online in **map notes (but not in story maps)**.

For example, [this is an address](#) of a photo that will work.

To use the photos in Story Maps, you have 2 choices: Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, below.

(Alternative 1) Run a tool in a web browser that converts the folder to something that is truly public. Why? When you upload to Google Photos, the photos are not truly public in the same way that the old Picasaweb photos were. They are only viewable if you are inside the Google Plus social media cloud, but not viewable to the general public and hence not viewable in a story map. In order to make them viewable in a story map, run the following tool by a photographer in DE (Deutschland – Germany):

<http://www.svenbluege.de/picasa/v1.1/>

Sign in to your Google Photos account where you have photos in albums. Once there, you will see a list of your albums. To make “public” one of your albums, to the left of the album, select Make Public:

Make Private	protected	North Table Mountain	Link	117840654721911970316	6378622880000360657
Make Protected					
Make Public					

Now, you will see that album listed when you are in the Story Map builder, as follows:

In this part of the story, you can add an image or a video.

ArcGIS

Flickr

Google+

Unsplash

Link to

jkerski@esri.com

You can add photos uploaded to **Picasa** or **Google+** to your story. [Learn more](#) about using images stored in your Google account in your stories.

jkerski@esri.com's albums



North Table Mountain



1/22/17



1/22/17

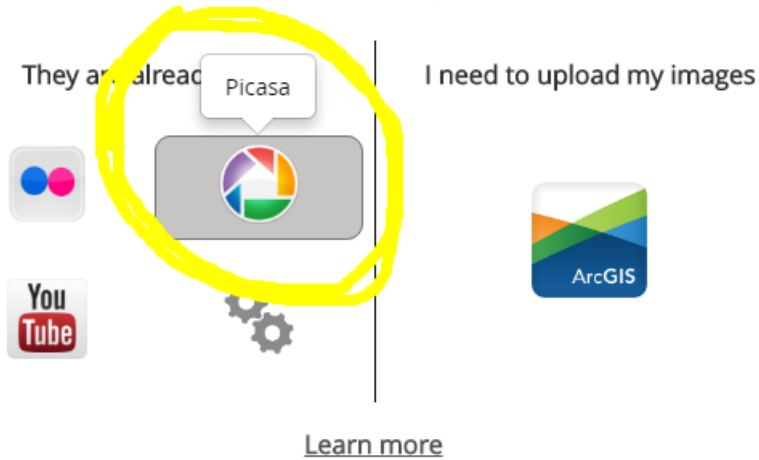


1/22/17

These photos will also work from the Google Plus/Picasa import function in Map Tours:

Welcome to the Map Tour Builder [?](#)

Where are your images or videos?



[Make a selection](#)

Select Picasaweb/Google Plus > Enter your ID, and find the album that you need:

Picasa import

Enter your email address or your Picasa id. Your pictures must be shared publicly. The import will be limited to the first 99 pictures.

[Look up](#)

Select a public album

[How to find a Picasa id](#)

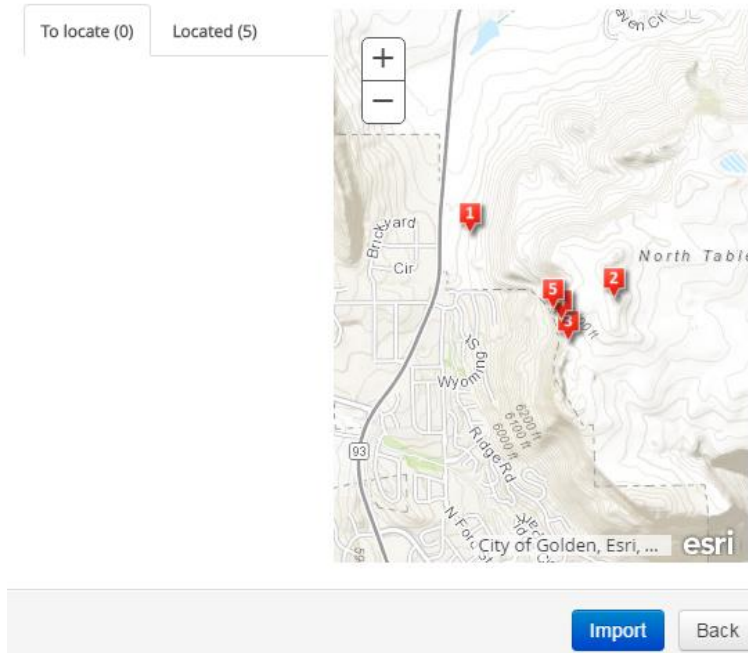
[Import](#)

[Back](#)

All of the images from that album will import, and if they are geotagged, they will map to their correct location:

Select and locate your images/videos

Click or tap the pictures you want to import to locate them. [Why aren't my images/videos geolocated?](#)

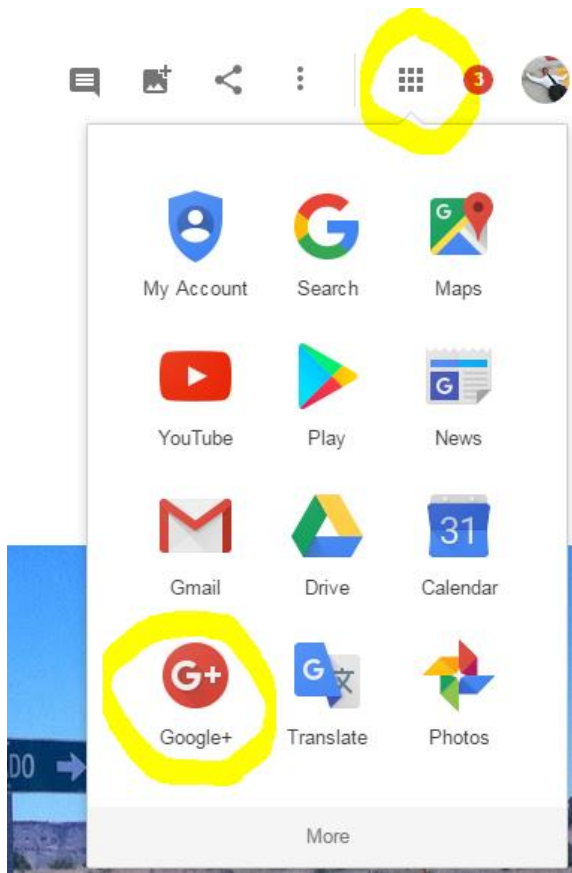


(Alternative 2) If you do not wish to run the tool by the photographer, you can still use Google Photos in Story Maps, but you must do the following:

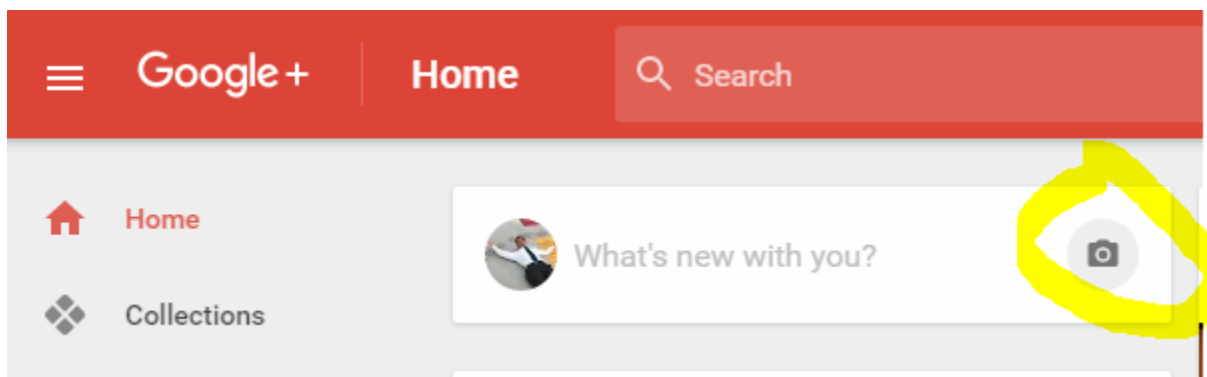
First, run Step 1 above; that is, upload your photos to Google Photos.

Then:

Step 2: Go to Google Plus via the grid in the upper right:



Click on camera icon – as follows:

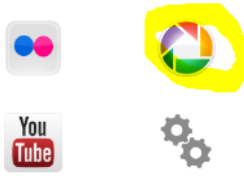


Select your photo(s). Build a story map and use Picasa/Google Plus. For example, Map Tour:

Welcome to the Map Tour Builder [?](#)

Where are your images or videos?

They are already online



I need to upload my images



[Learn more](#)

[Make a selection](#)

Select album with today's date > as follows:

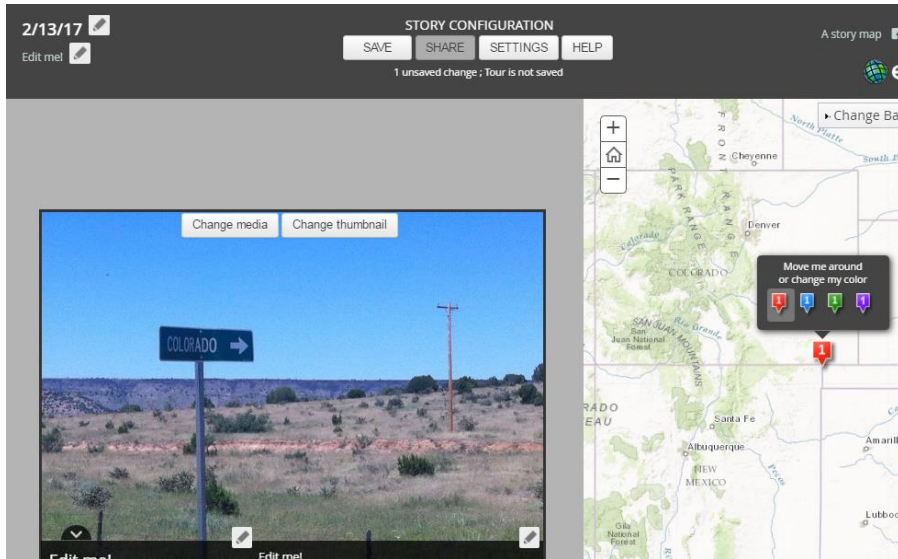
Picasa import

Enter your email address or your Picasa id. Your pictures must be shared publicly. The import will be limited to the first 99 pictures.

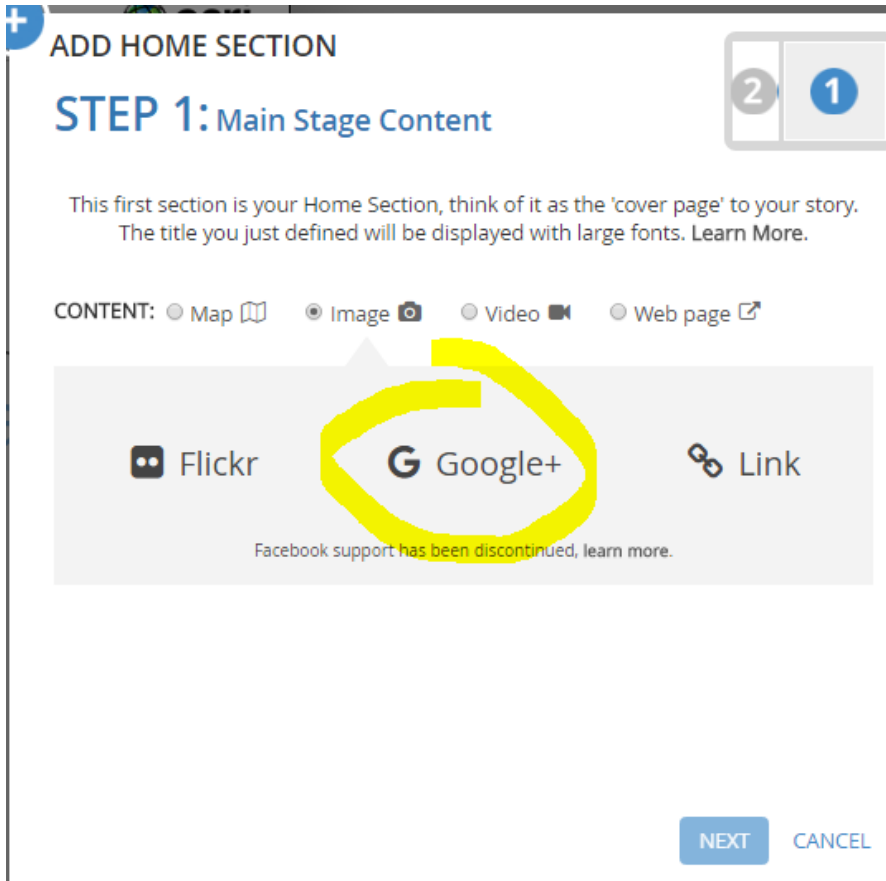
Select a public album

[How to find a Picasa id](#)

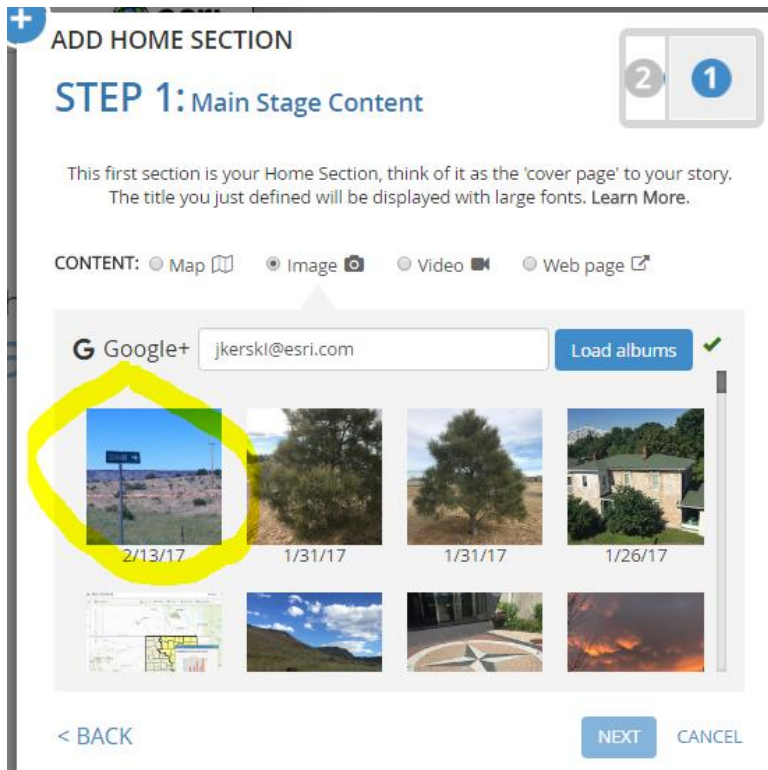
Results:



Map Journal example: Use Google + link, as shown below:



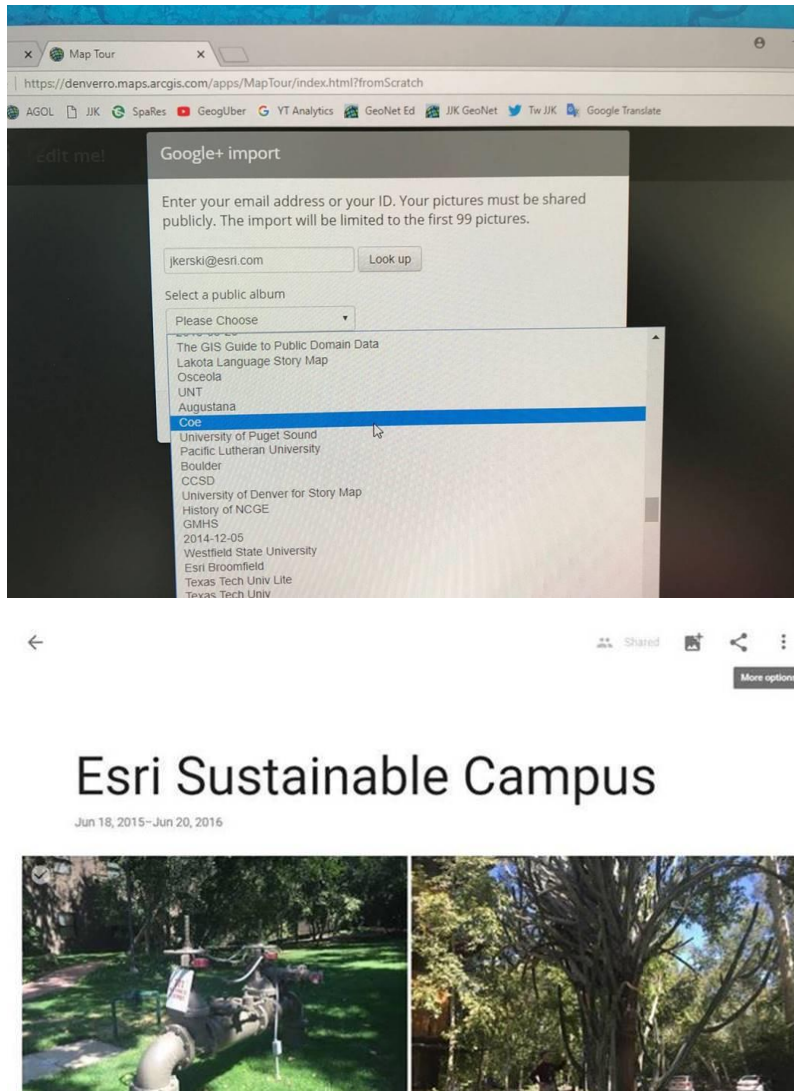
Select your photo album, as shown below:



I had a recent teaching experience where my tried-and-true-workflow of using Google Plus photos (I use it in part because so many universities and schools use the Google platform) would not work as of about a week ago. The reason why is: If I **or** course participants are LOGGED INTO any sort of Google anything - Google mail Google docs YouTube etc.... due to the way the story maps and google APIs intersect, the story map via Google Plus can't find a user account's photographs. It says **user not found**. I tested it while logged off of everything Google related and it found my folder I just fine as it always did before. See screens below for my "Esri sustainable campus" story map.

The bottom line though is that Google plus is one of the worst places to have photos for story maps because of the way they messed it up after Picasaweb's demise. Flickr, which is what I switched to in the middle of the workshop (and thankfully I had some content there), works much better. I did write [an essay on Geonet about the pros and cons of each of the photo archiving platforms](#) Including Google Flickr Dropbox etc. if you'd like more info.

Another solution is to avoid ANY photo archiving platform and just load your photos into ArcGIS Online during the process of making a story map. That is often the best solution of all.

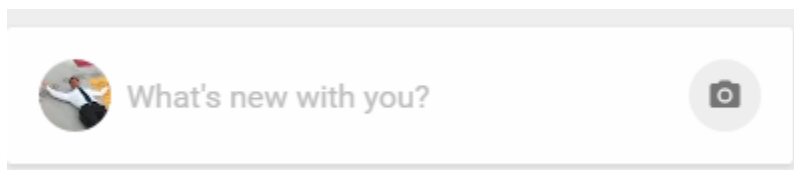


6. Google Plus

Like Google Photos, Google Plus presents challenges to use photo albums, but is a good solution for a few photos that you want to quickly access.

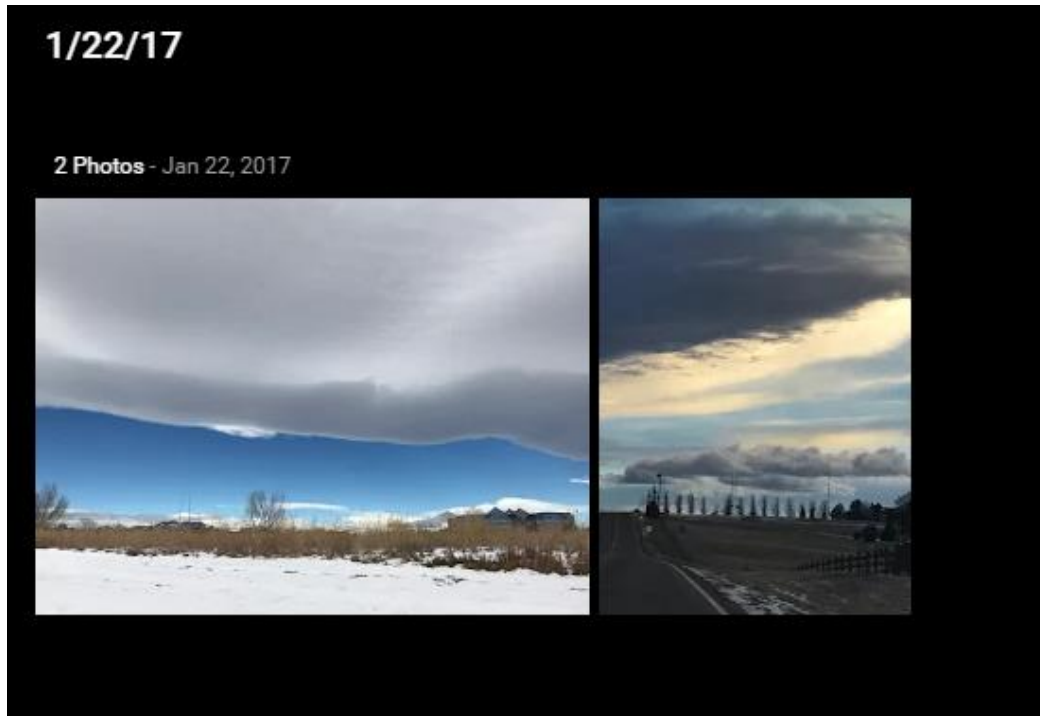
To use Google Plus photos, first access your Google Plus account.

Select the camera icon:



Upload photos > Make sure it is Shared with Public > View album. The album will have today's date and sadly cannot be changed.

In album view (below) > right click on image and Copy Image Address. This URL will work.



These photos can be manually added to a story map AND they will also appear as albums (with dates for the album titles) when you choose Google + :

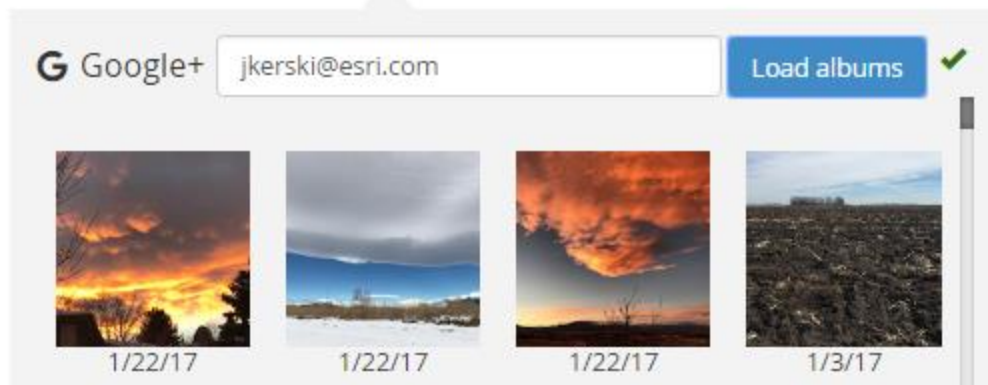
ADD HOME SECTION

STEP 1: Main Stage Content



This first section is your Home Section, think of it as the 'cover page' to your story. The title you just defined will be displayed with large fonts. [Learn More.](#)

CONTENT: Map  Image  Video  Web page 



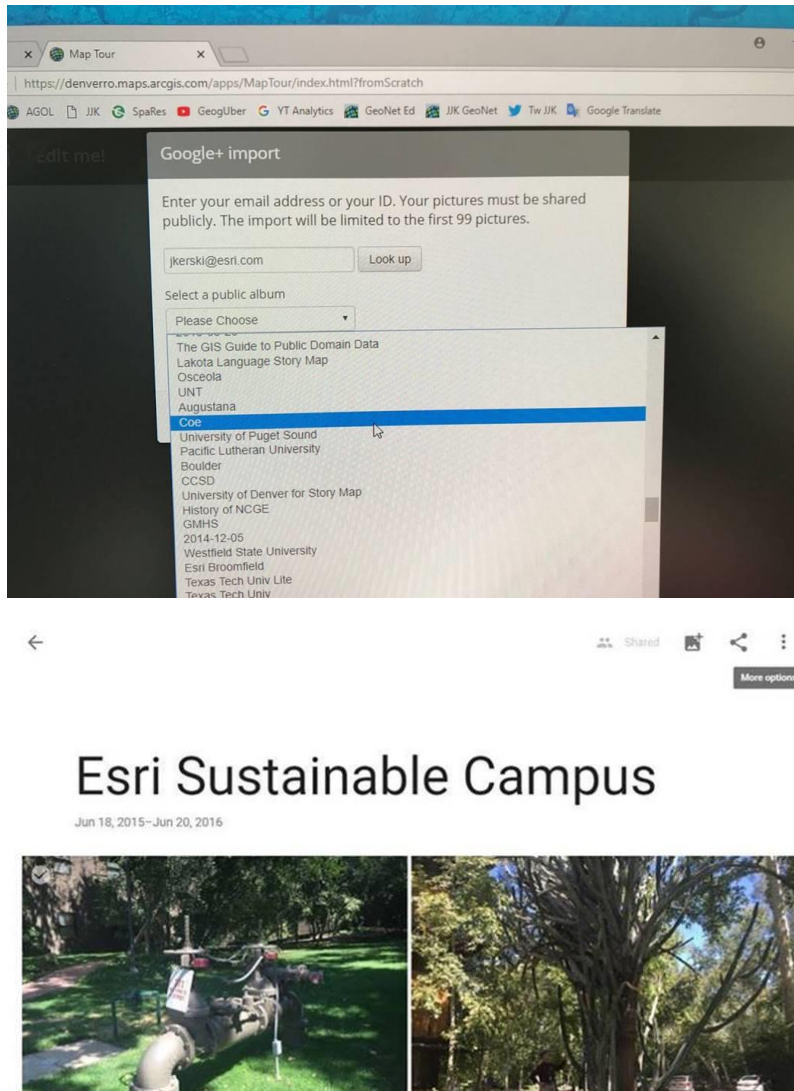
For more:

<https://geonet.esri.com/people/OEvans-esristaff/blog/2016/09/02/using-google-to-host-images-for-story-maps>

I had a recent teaching experience where my tried-and-true-workflow of using Google Plus photos (I use it in part because so many universities and schools use the Google platform) would not work as of about a week ago. The reason why is: If I **or** course participants are LOGGED INTO any sort of Google anything - Google mail Google docs YouTube etc.... due to the way the story maps and google APIs intersect, the story map via Google Plus can't find a user account's photographs. It says **user not found**. I tested it while logged off of everything Google related and it found my folder I just fine as it always did before. See screens below for my "Esri sustainable campus" story map.

The bottom line though is that Google plus is one of the worst places to have photos for story maps because of the way they messed it up after Picasaweb's demise. Flickr, which is what I switched to in the middle of the workshop (and thankfully I had some content there), works much better. I did write [an essay on Geonet about the pros and cons of each of the photo archiving platforms](#) Including Google Flickr Dropbox etc. if you'd like more info.

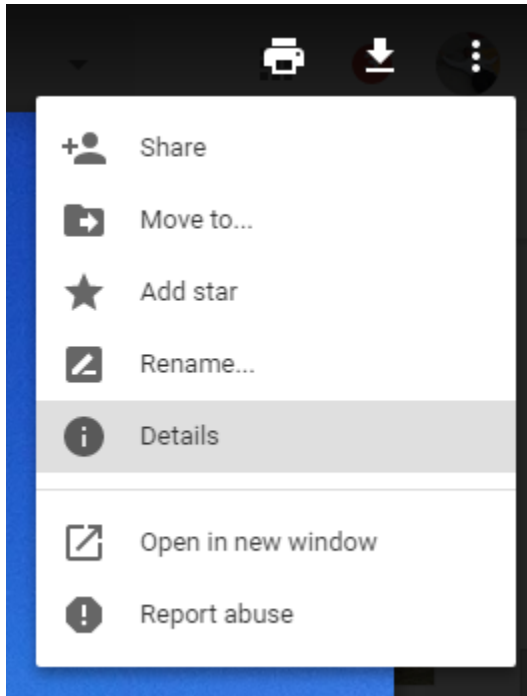
Another solution is to avoid ANY photo archiving platform and just load your photos into ArcGIS Online during the process of making a story map. That is often the best solution of all.



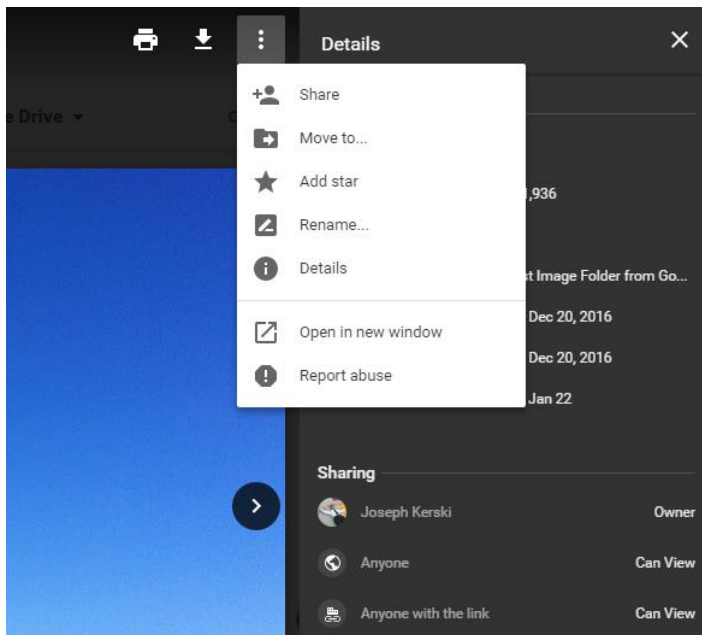
7. Google Drive

To use Google Drive photos in ArcGIS Online:

1. Upload photo to Google Drive. Share photo with the public.
2. Open the photo in a web browser. Click on 3 vertical dots to upper right of the photo > Details:



3. In Details pane > ... vertical dots again > Open in new window



The URL that opens in the new window is the one you need.

The URL needs to begin with "lh6.googleusercontent.com" and not "drive.google.com".

For example, this photo URL will not work in ArcGIS Online:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B0KA1_EOsvoudGp6S1FCdk14dzQ

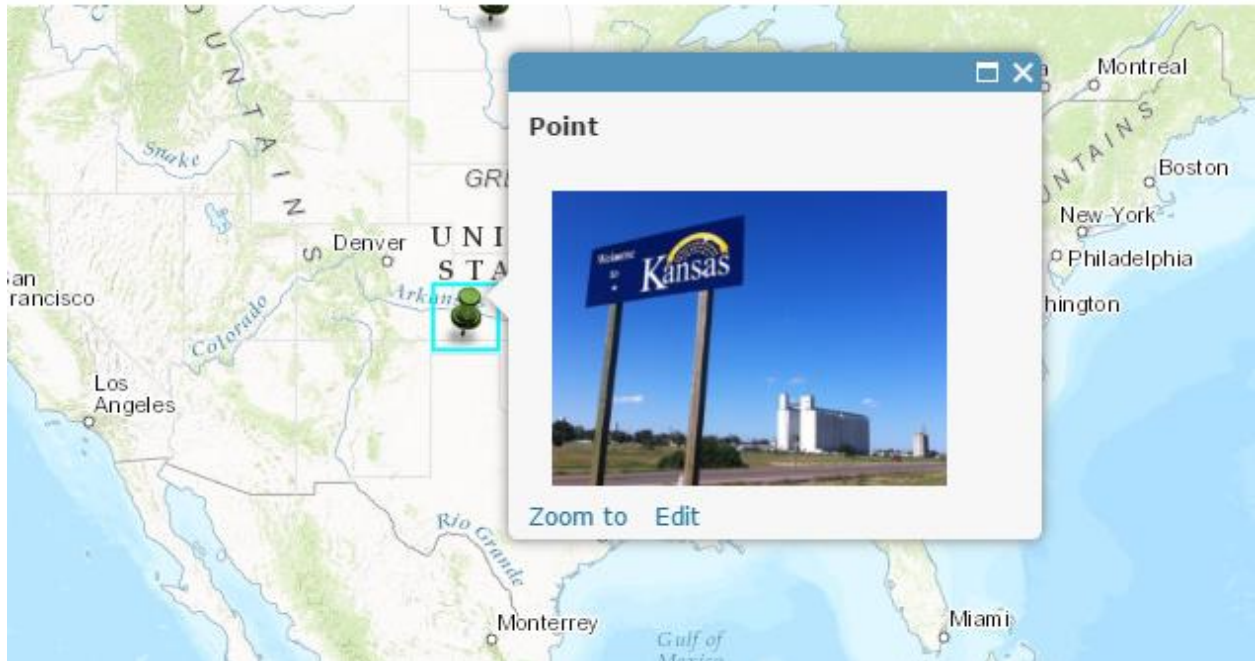


But this URL of the same photo **will** work:

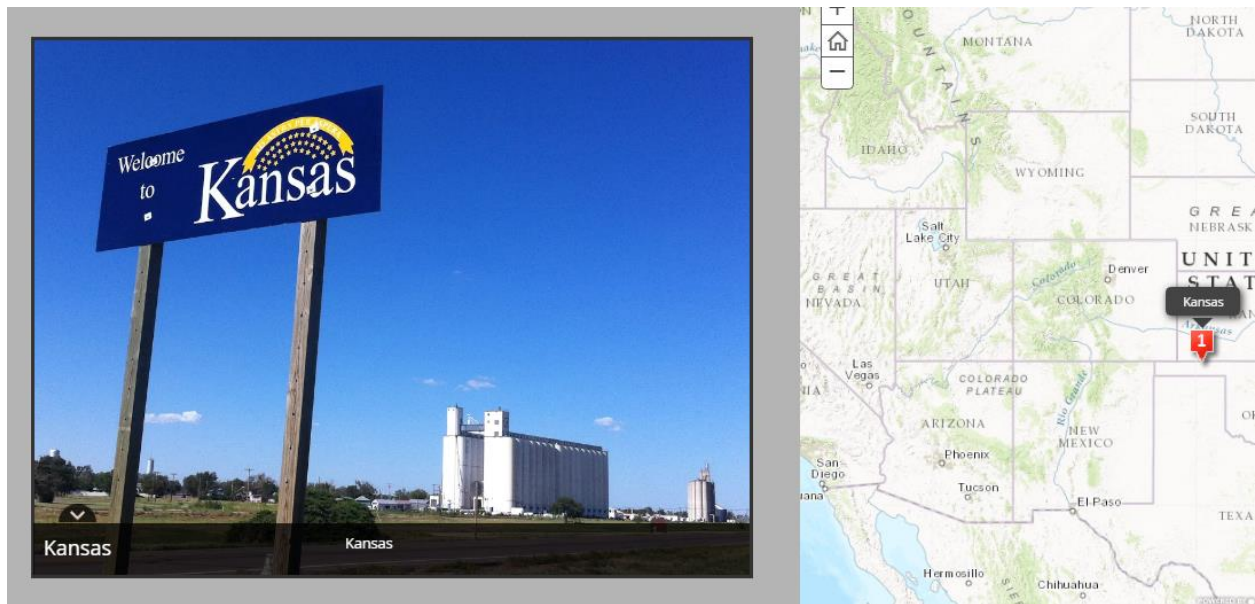
https://lh6.googleusercontent.com/Fp6CD57oo4HB4L99gspLCY_ojsYvD7GpslXXkUk9Cswrb1ibV0KCAncZGlh8wOoM5XAWIurPX9bqtqE=w1022-h830-rw



The photo in a map note:



The same photo in story map:

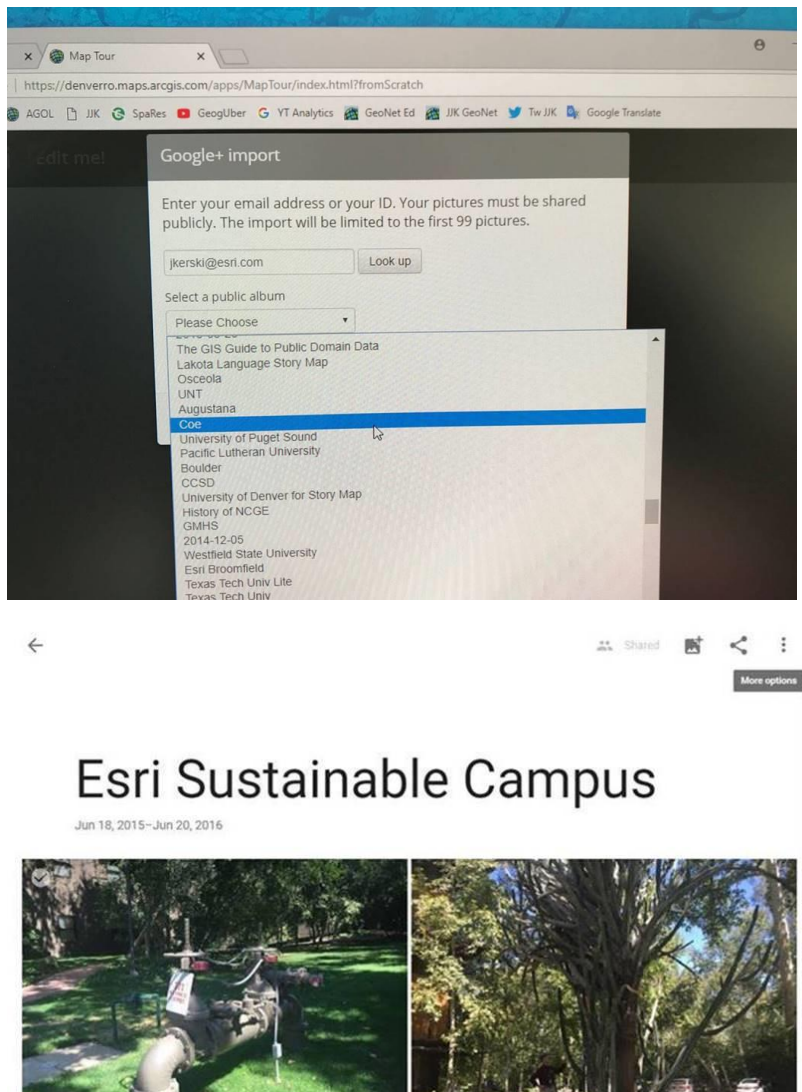


I had a recent teaching experience where my tried-and-true-workflow of using Google Plus photos (I use it in part because so many universities and schools use the Google platform) would not work as of about a week ago. The reason why is: If I **or** course participants are LOGGED INTO any sort of Google anything - Google mail Google docs YouTube etc.... due to the way the story maps and google APIs

intersect, the story map via Google Plus can't find a user account's photographs. It says **user not found**. I tested it while logged off of everything Google related and it found my folder I just fine as it always did before. See screens below for my "Esri sustainable campus" story map.

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Another solution is to avoid ANY photo archiving platform and just load your photos into ArcGIS Online during the process of making a story map. That is often the best solution of all.



8. Twitter

To use Twitter photos in ArcGIS Online is straightforward and when teaching a course, provides a fast way to use its content.

Let's say I am teaching a GIS workshop at NCAR and I want to use the photo I just took outside the building and tweeted:



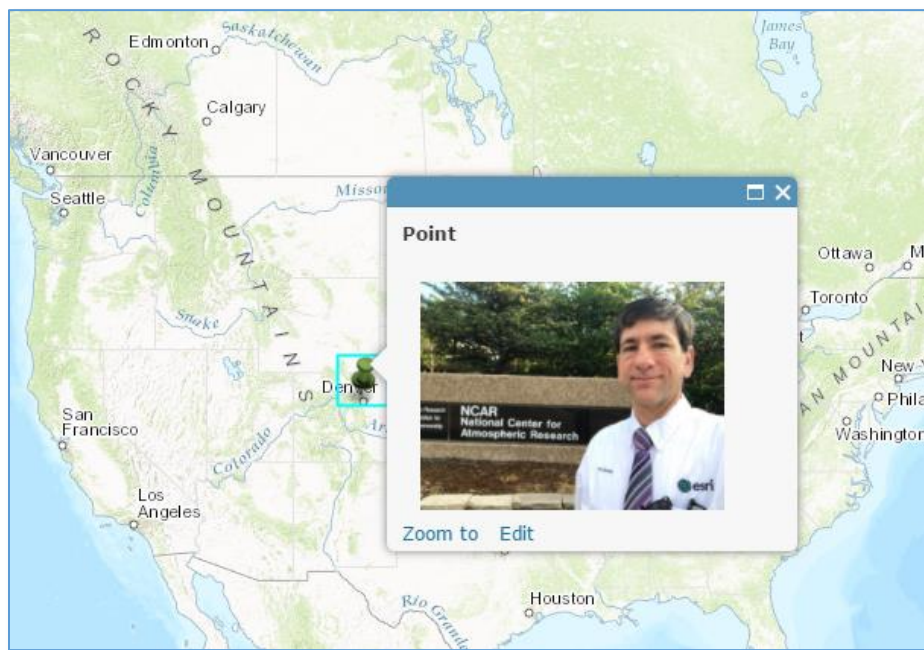
If I right-click on the image and “get image address, it yields this:

https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DBo86H_WsAAq825.jpg:large

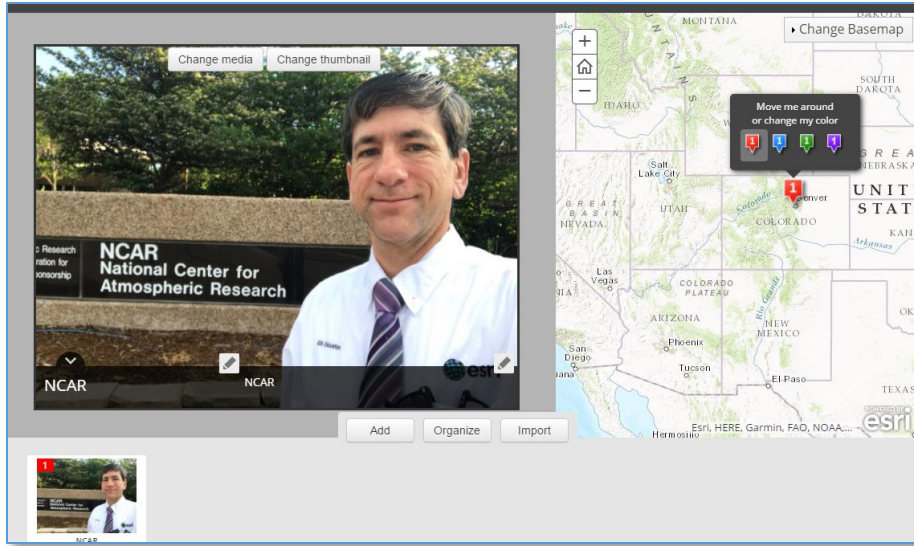
which I can open in my browser just fine:



This same URL can be used in ArcGIS Online maps:



And in Story Maps:



9. Instagram

Using Instagram photos in ArcGIS Online offers the same advantages as Twitter: It is straightforward and when teaching a course, provides a fast way to use its content. An advantage of Instagram is that it is easier to use multiple photos, rather than one-at-a-time.

For example, here is an Instagram post that I shared:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BTyxLpGFfEJ/?taken-by=josephkerski>



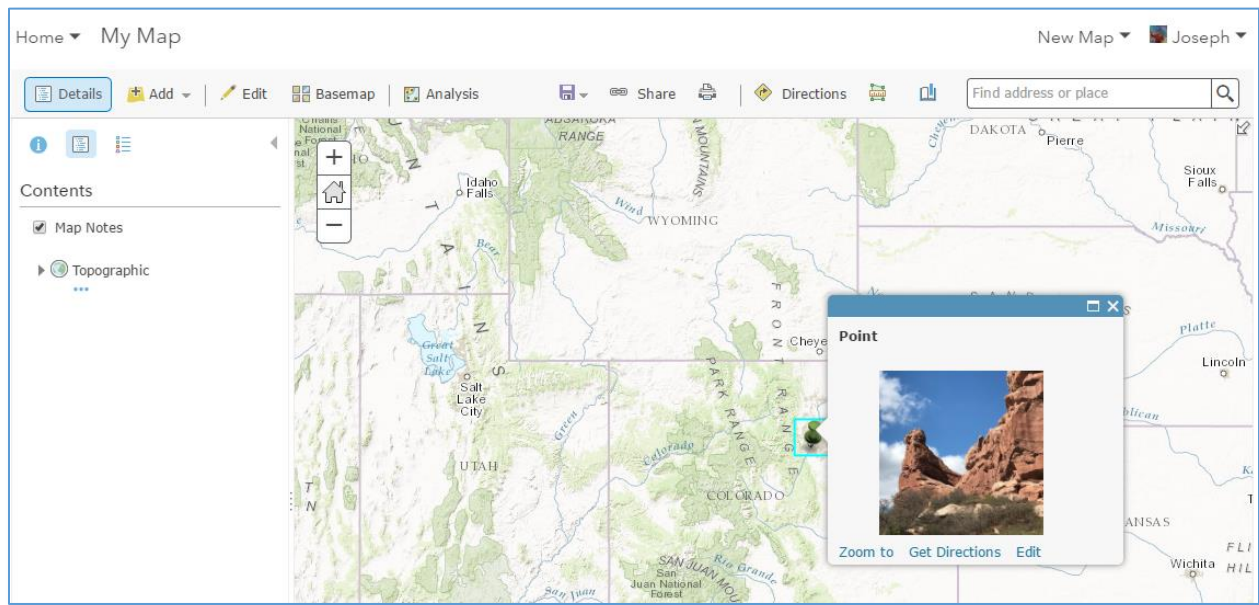
If I right-click on that post, and “View Page Source”, about 1/3 of the way down the page is the link to the actual photograph, shown below:

```
41 <link rel="canonical" href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BTyxLpGffeJ/" />
42 <meta content="24 Likes, 1 Comments - Joseph Kerski (@josephkerski) on Instagram: "Hiking at South Valley Park. Colorado. With @aubreyasbury15""
43 name="description" />
44 <meta property="og:site_name" content="Instagram" />
45 <meta property="og:title" content="Instagram post by Joseph Kerski • May 7, 2017 at 1:44pm UTC" />
46 <meta property="og:image" content="https://scontent.cdninstagram.com/t51.2885-15/e15/18299377_704360689751097_3656823907018604544_n.jpg" />
47 <meta property="og:description" content="24 Likes, 1 Comments - Joseph Kerski (@josephkerski) on Instagram: "Hiking at South Valley Park. Colorado.
48 With @aubreyasbury15"" />
<meta property="fb:app_id" content="124024574287414" />
```

This is the link in the above image for the photograph:

https://scontent.cdninstagram.com/t51.2885-15/e15/18299377_704360689751097_3656823907018604544_n.jpg

This works in an ArcGIS Online map:



This also works in a story map:

