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

Update: June 2017 – 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.
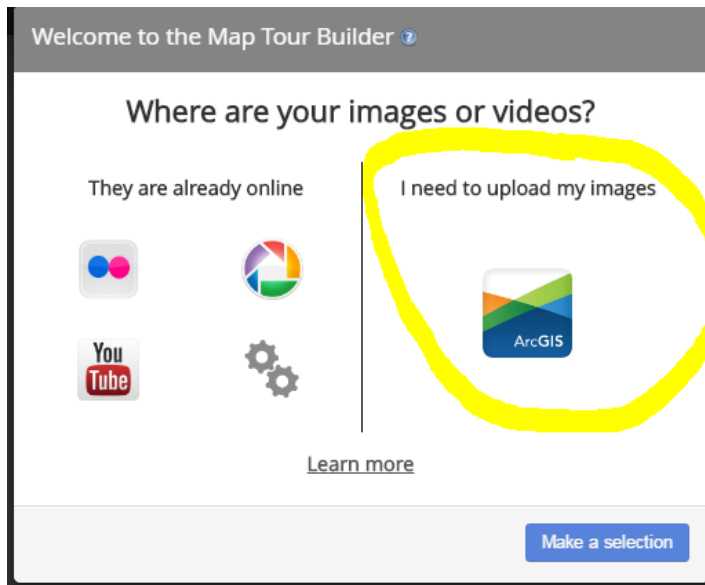
You will not see these images in My Content or in the item itself. The images are stored internally in the story map, and cannot be accessed in any way except by viewing the story map and the images cannot be used in any other maps. If you would like to use images in multiple story maps or ArcGIS Online 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:
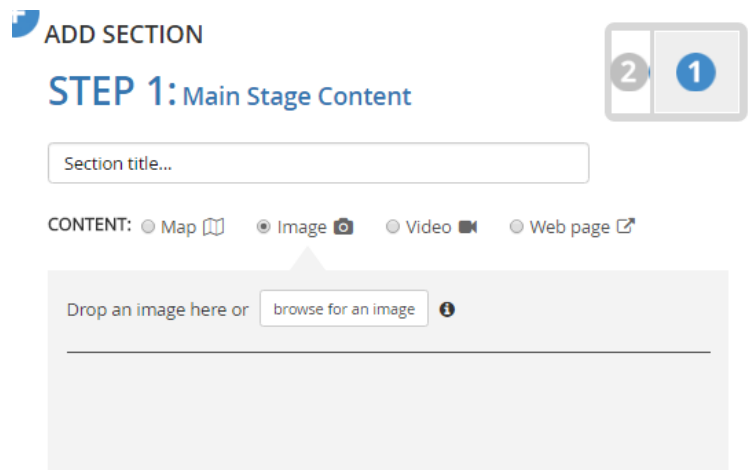
2. Flickr

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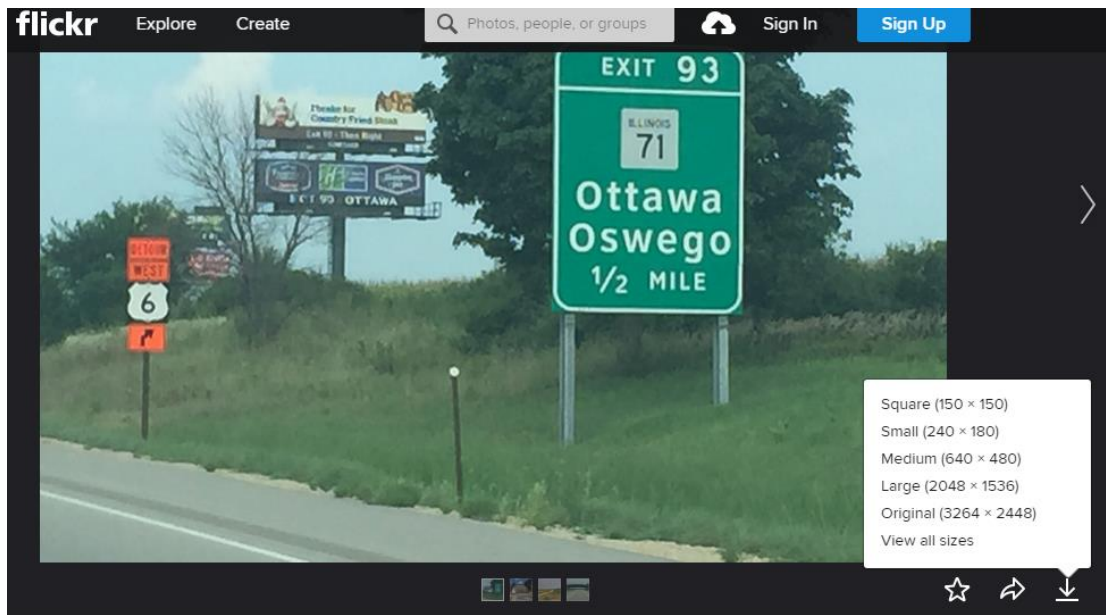
Disadvantage: With Flickr that you cannot create a new album and upload photos into that new album. You must upload photos first and then organize them into albums. Do the following:

Upload > Upload Photos > Create a new album:
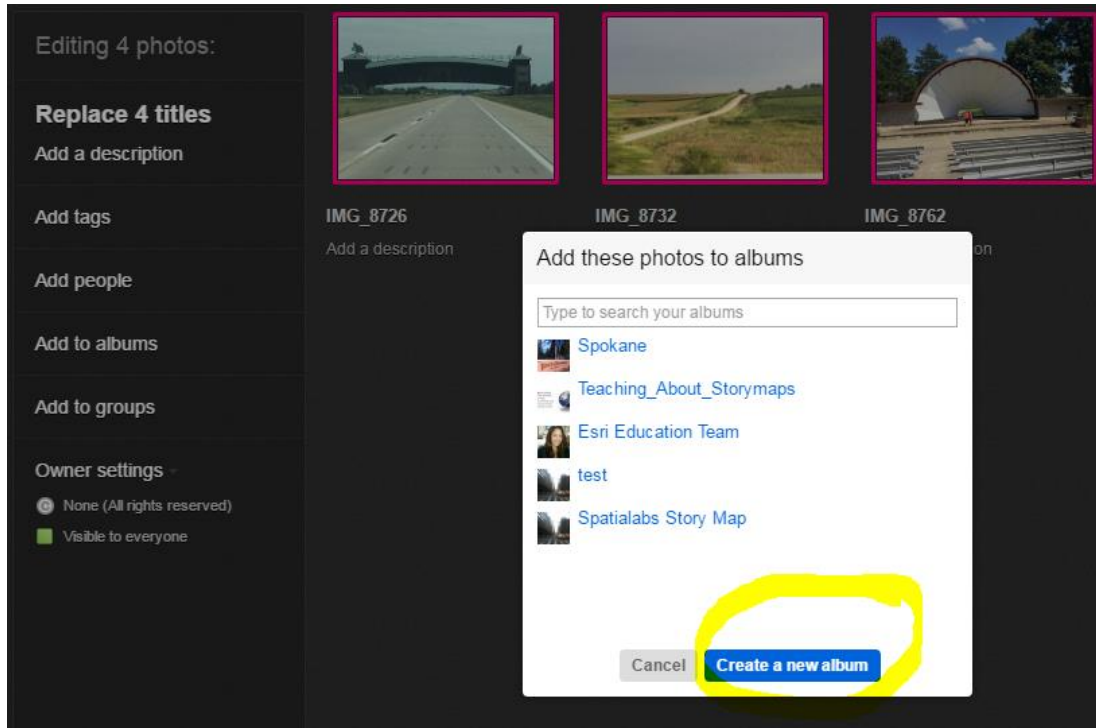
Then in upper right – Upload.

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:
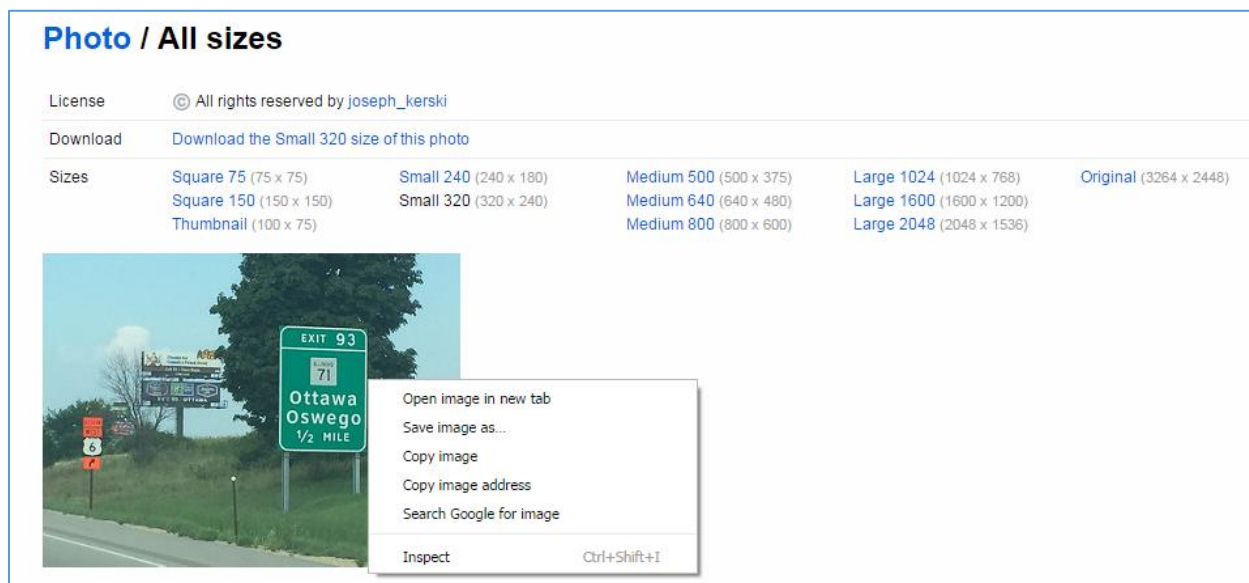
This URL can be used in ArcGIS Online.

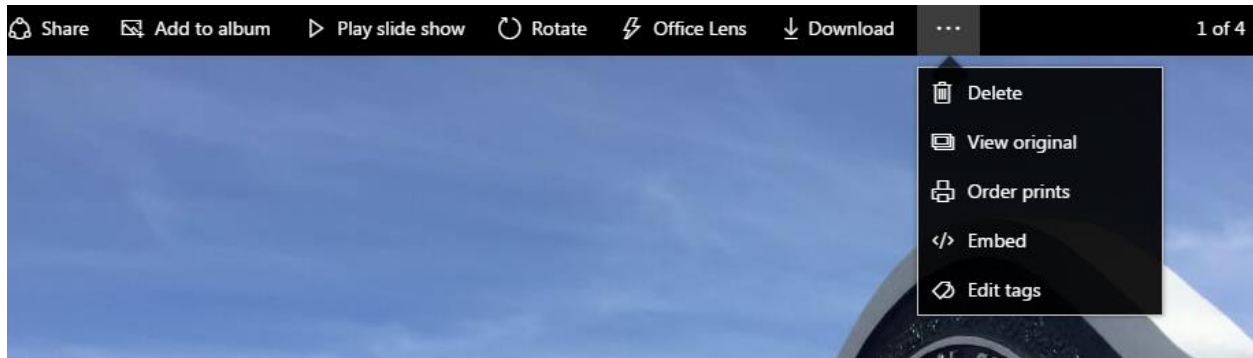In addition, this album can be seen when using the Story Map Builder mode:

Selecting the album yields the following:

3. Microsoft One Drive

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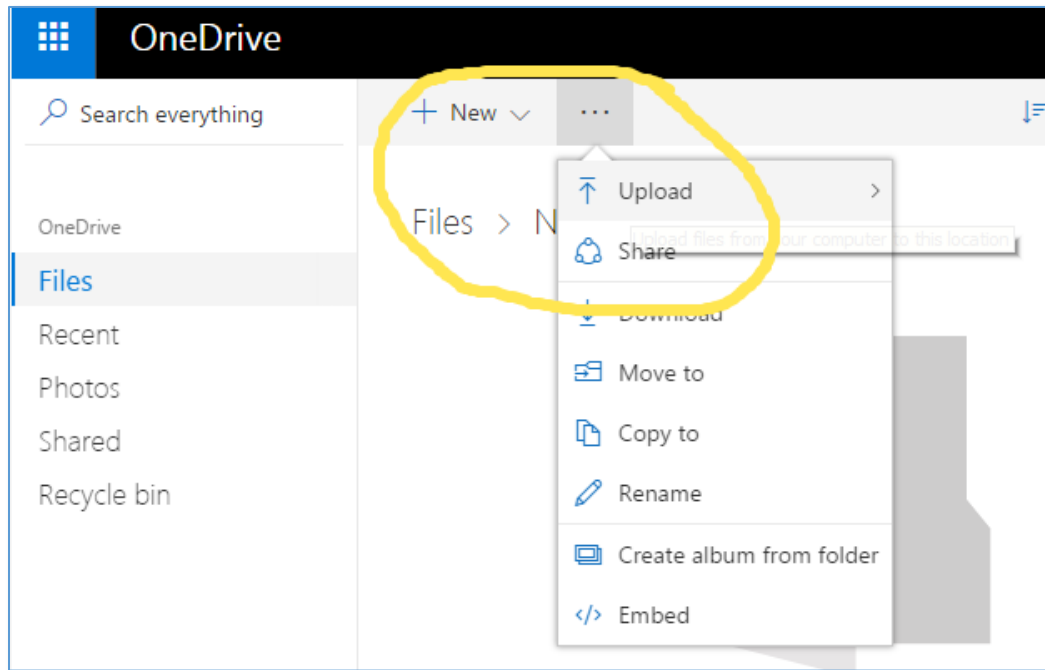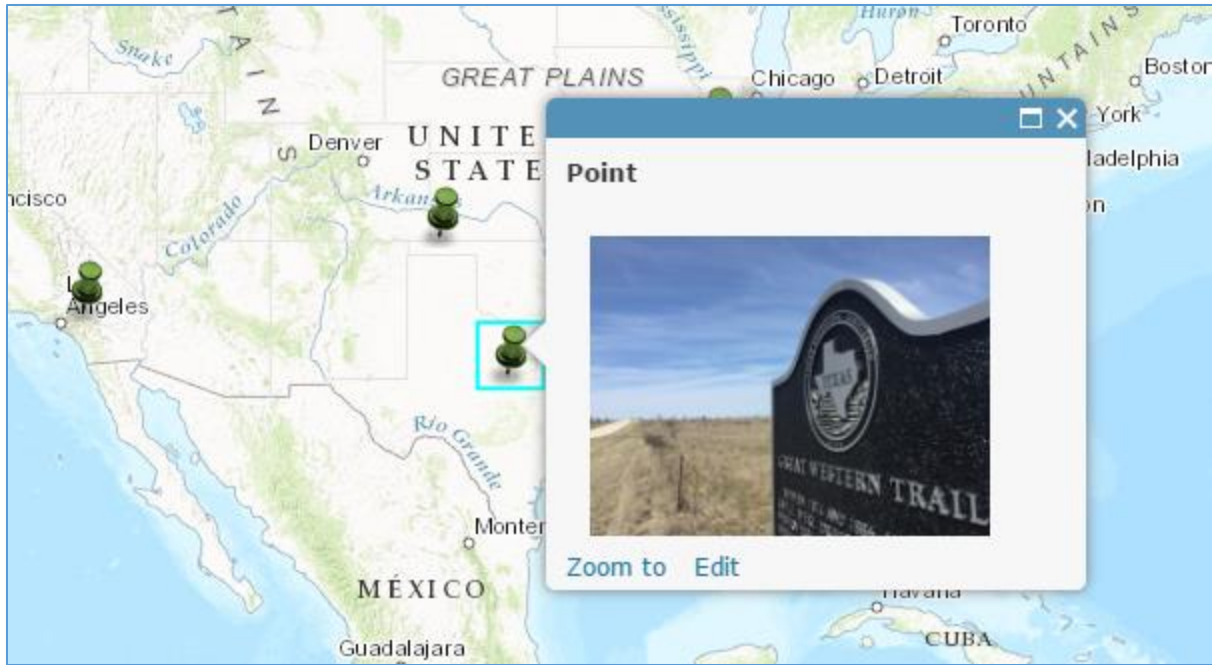

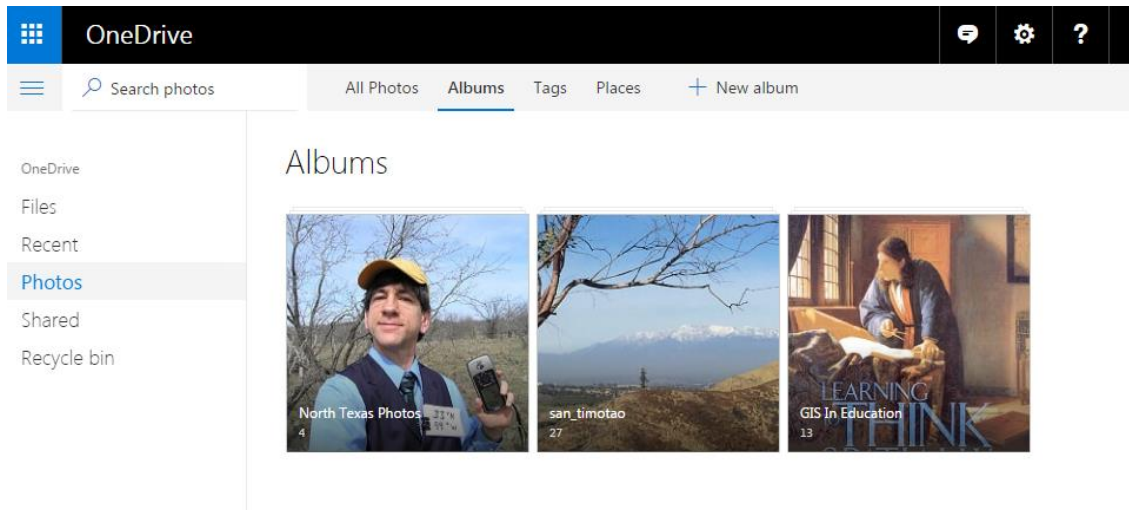Click on a photo > . . . View original > (as shown below):

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:
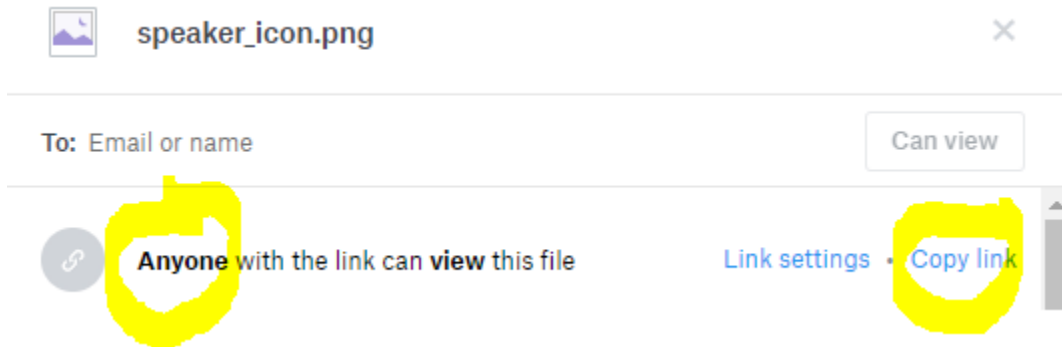

4. Dropbox

You may see reference and help guides to "Dropbox Public Folders". Ignore these as the public folder option was were "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:
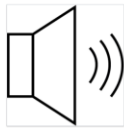
 The URL is:

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.
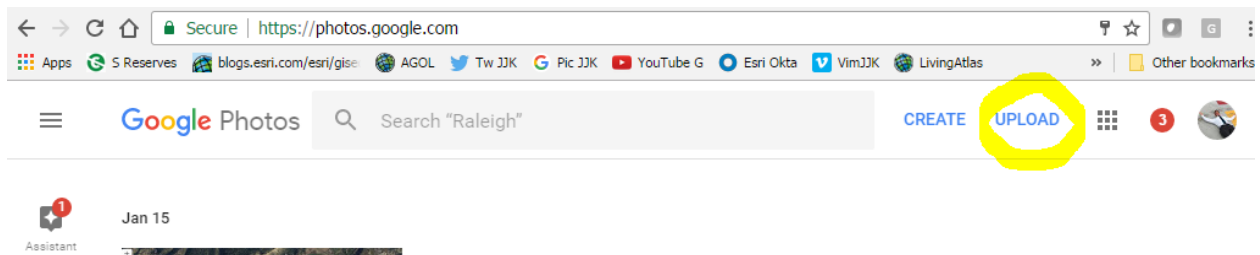
Thus, the URL above needs to be changed to:

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:

Now, you will see that album listed when you are in the Story Map builder, as follows:
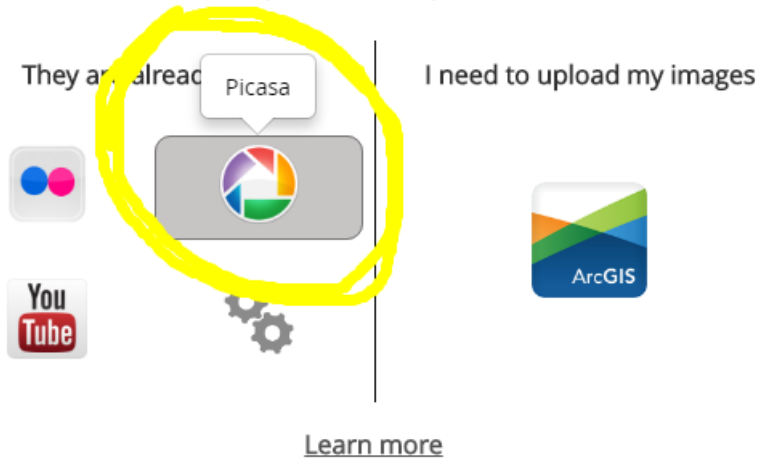
These photos will also work from the Google Plus/Picasa import function in Map Tours:

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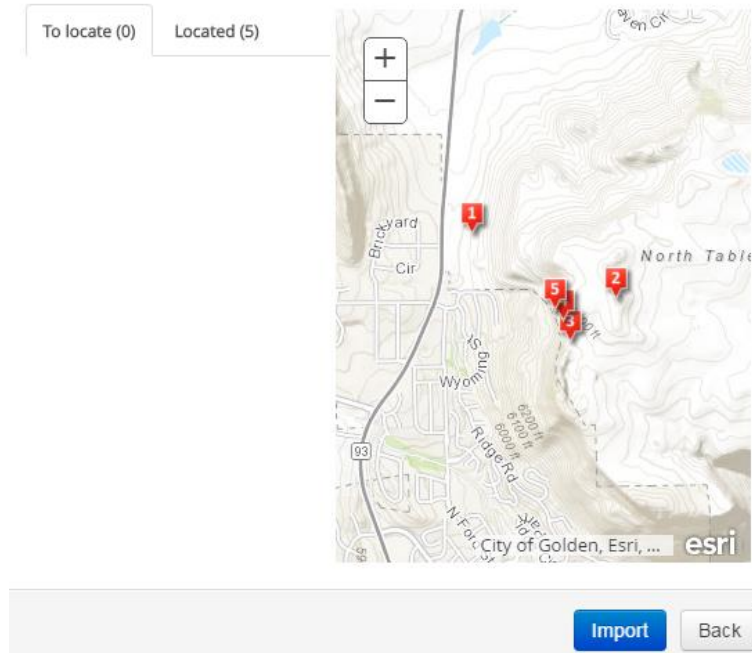

All of the images from that album will import, and if they are geotagged, they will map to their correct location:

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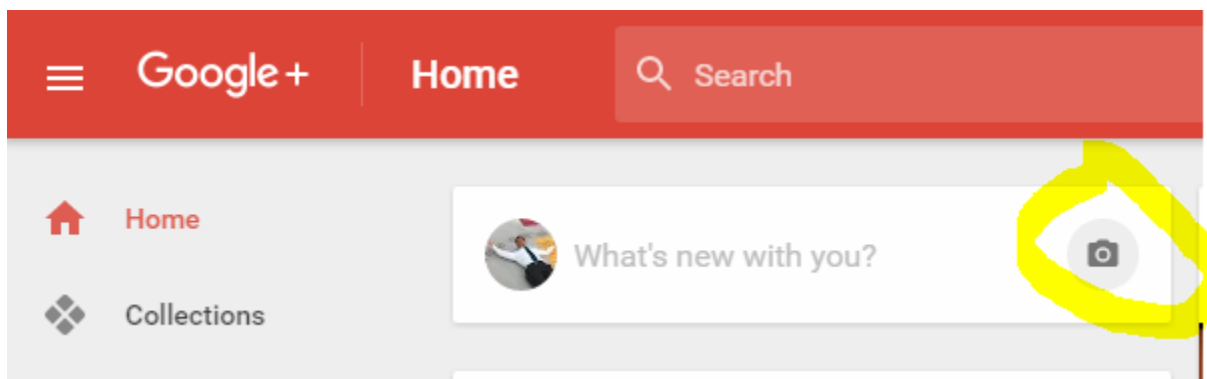
First, run Step 1 above; that is, upload your photos to Google Photos.

Then:

Step 2: Go to Google Plus via the grid in the upper right:
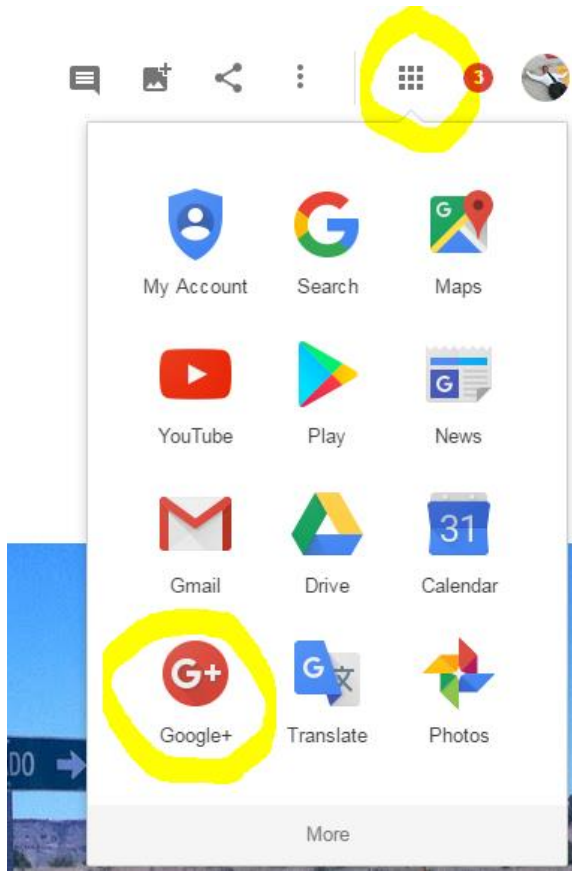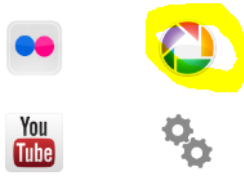
Click on camera icon – as follows:

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

Select album with today's date > as follows:
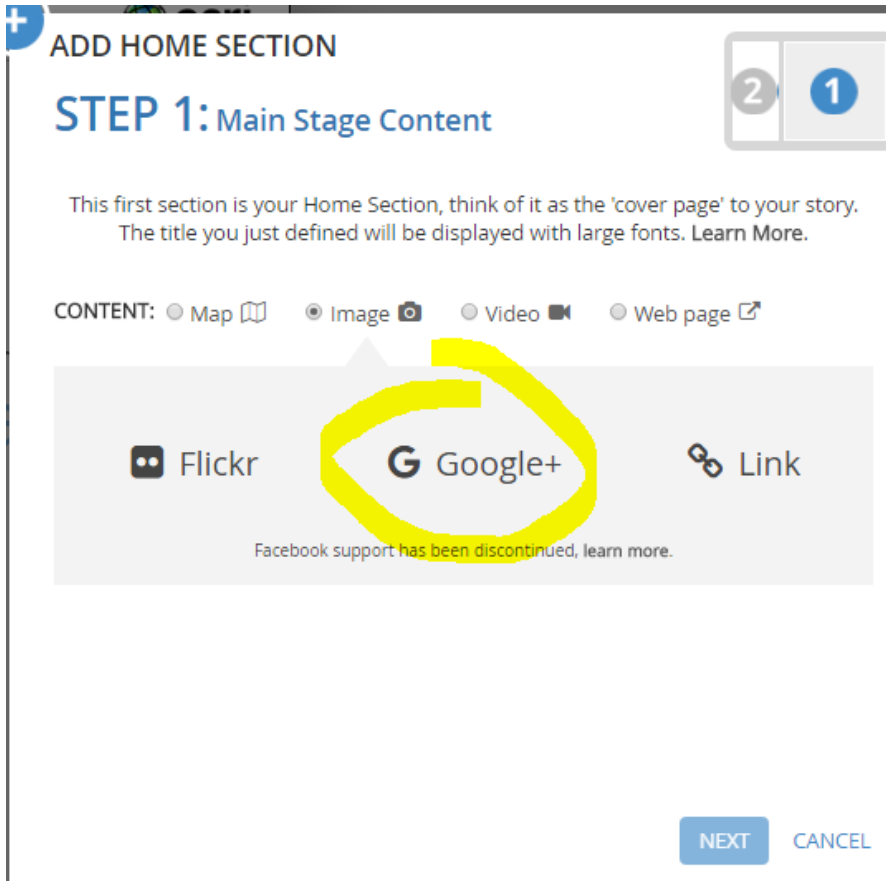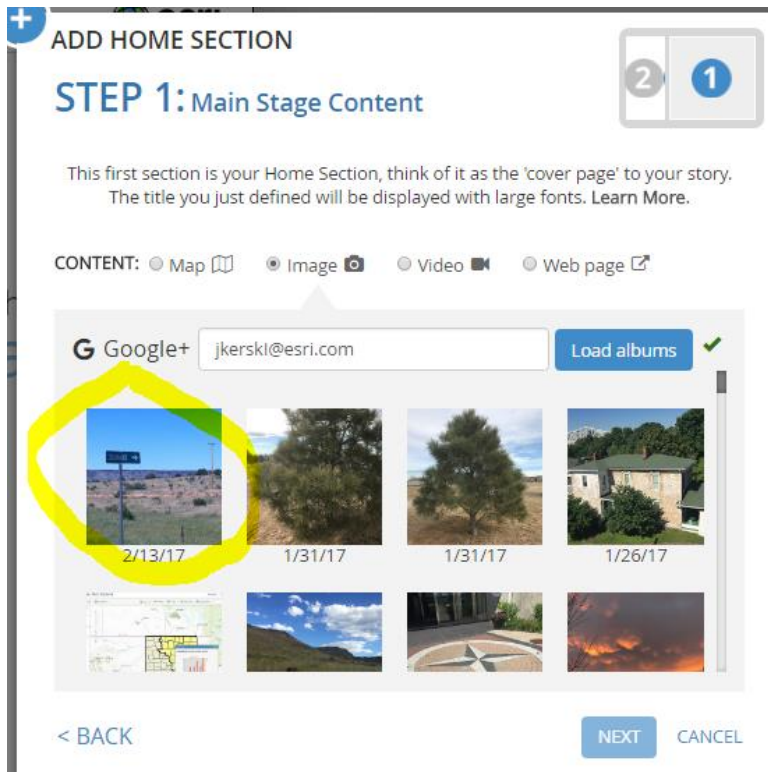

Results:
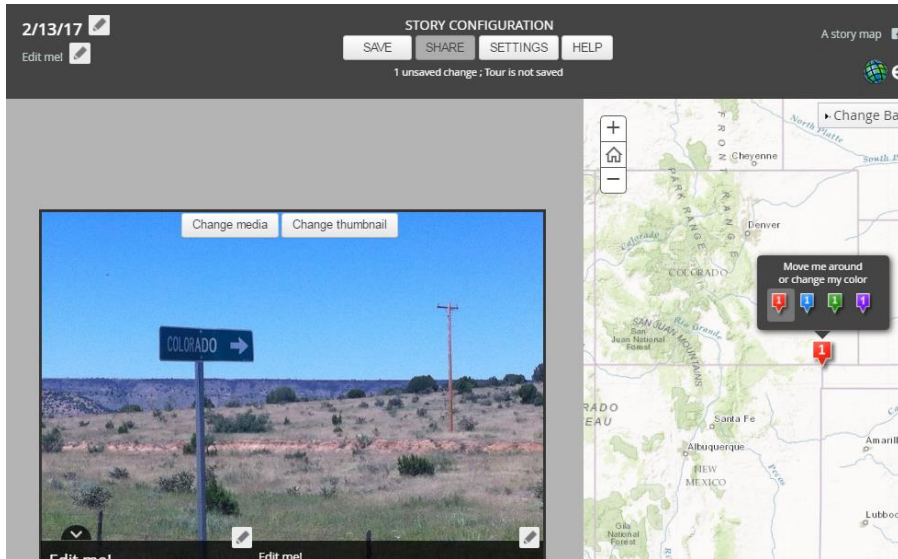
Map Journal example: Use Google + link, as shown below:

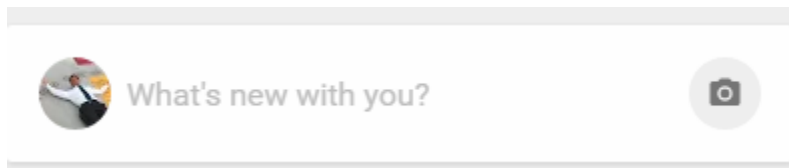Select your photo album, as shown below:

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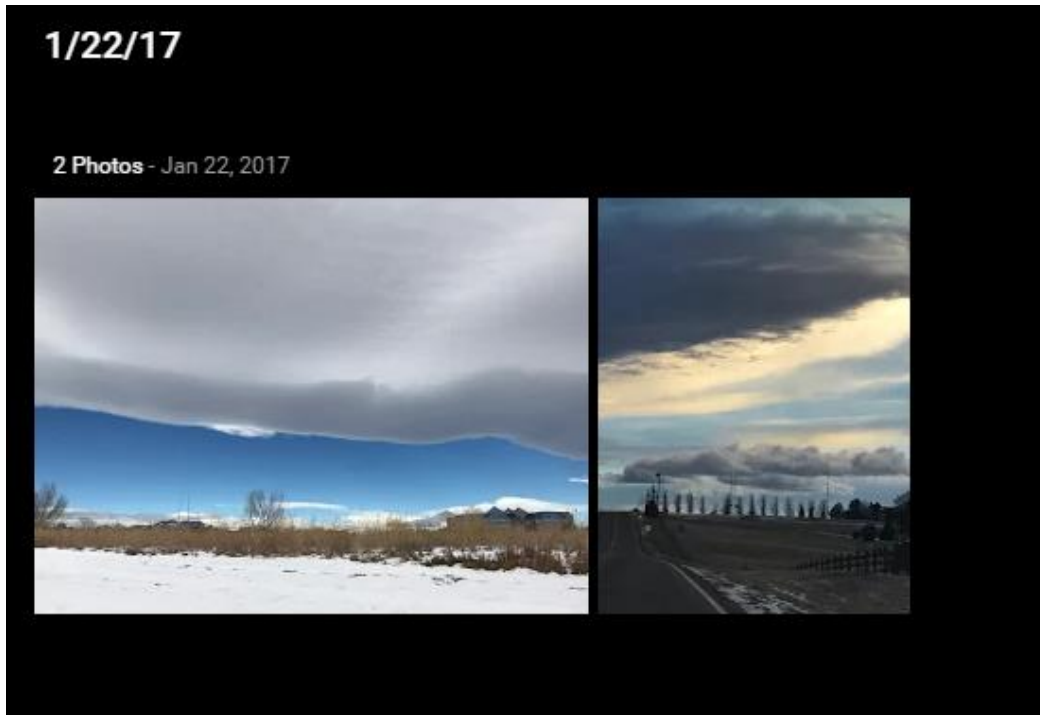
To use Google Plus photos, first access your Google Plus account.

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 + :
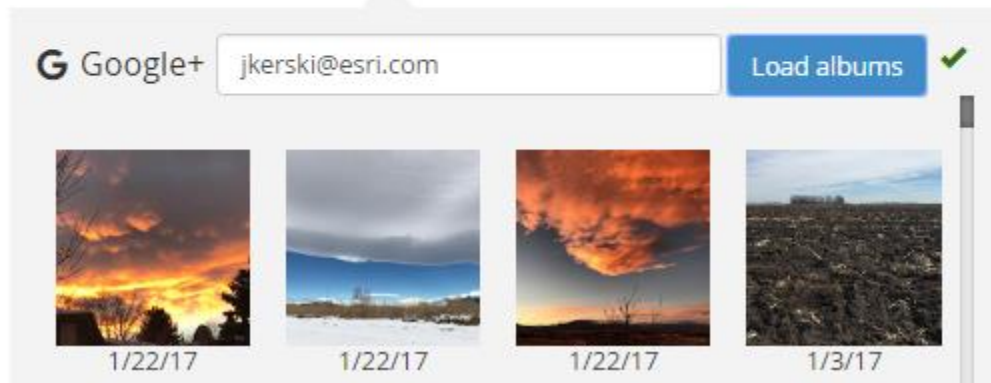
For more:

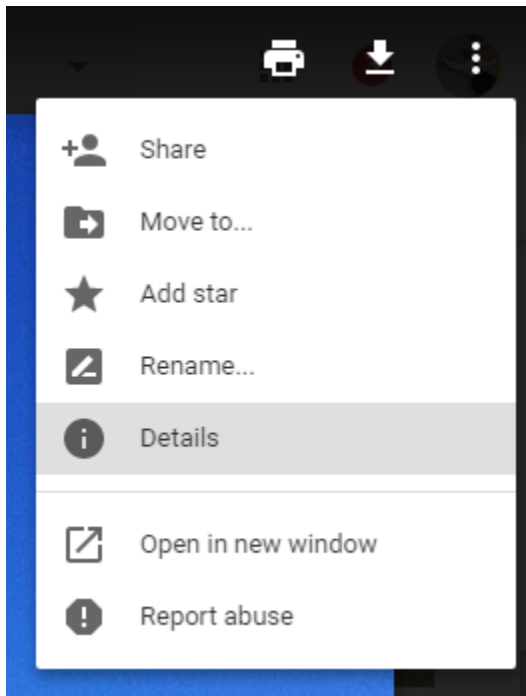**https://geonet.esri.com/people/OEvans-esristaff/blog/2016/09/02/using-google-to-host-images-for-story-maps**
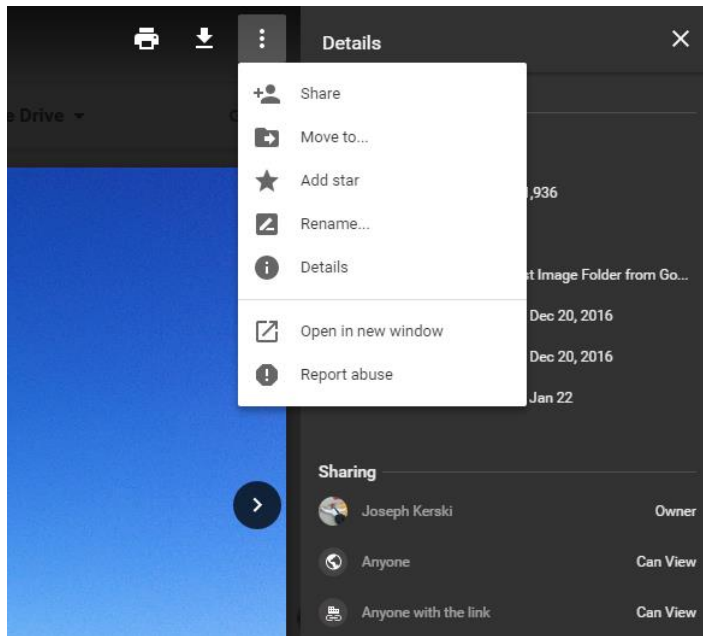
7. Google Drive

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:

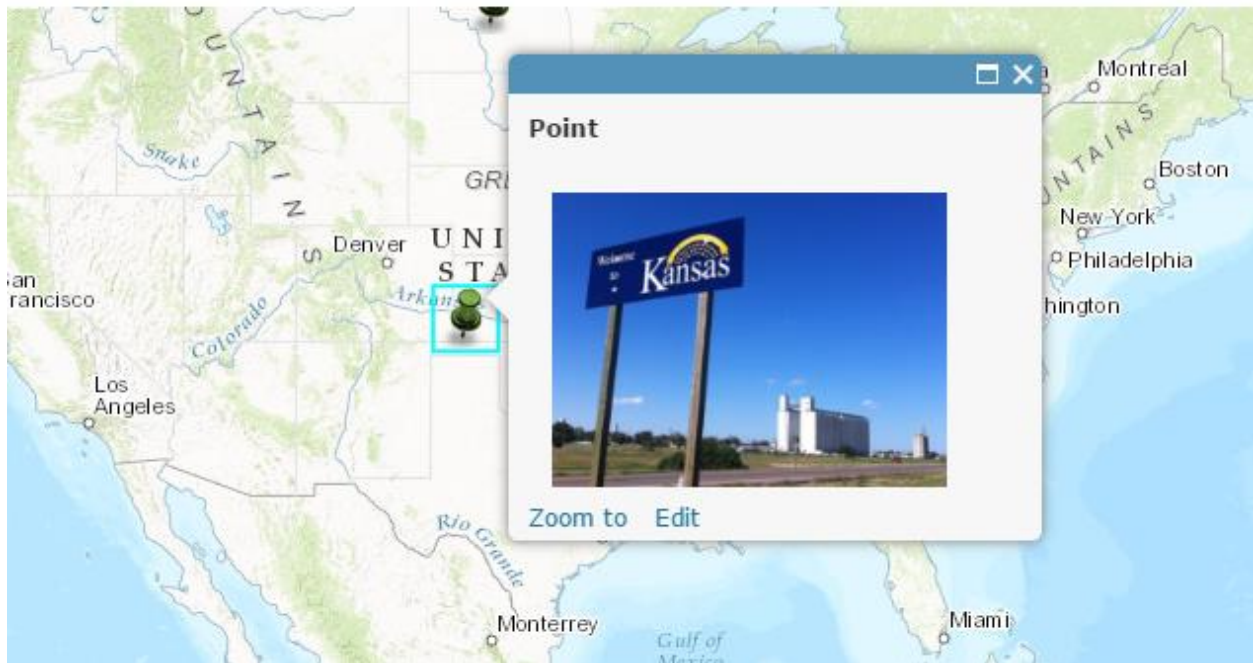https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B0KA1_EOsvoudGp6S1FCdk14dzQ

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

https://lh6.googleusercontent.com/Fp6CD57oo4HB4L99gspLCY_ojsYvD7GpsIXXkUk9Cswrb1ibV0KCAnCZ
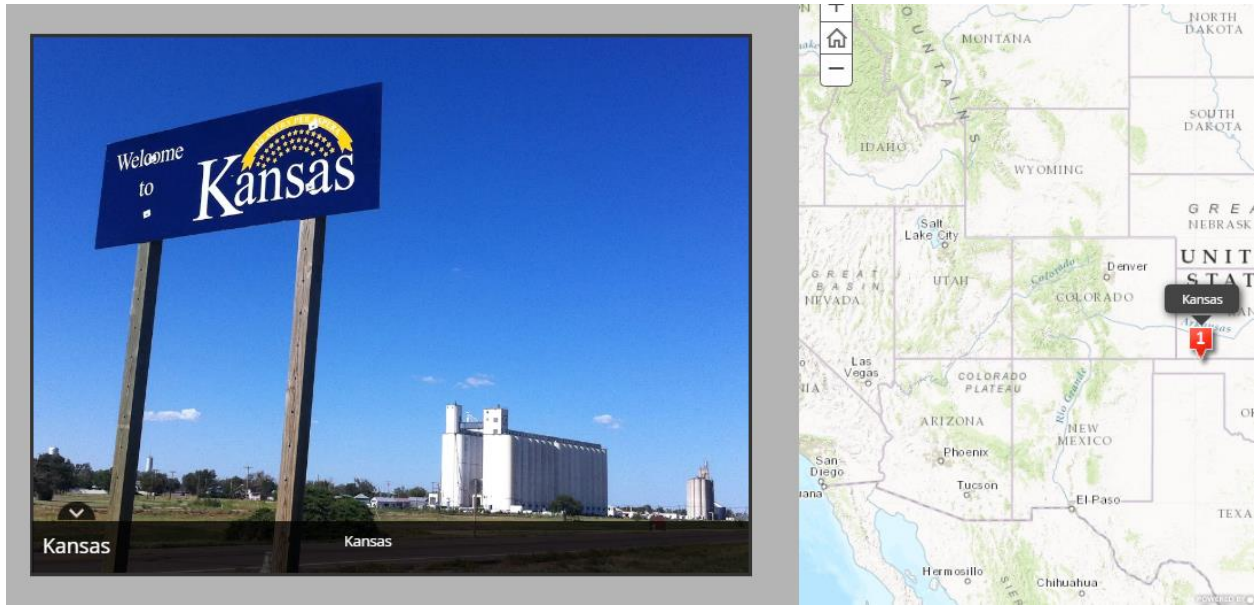Glh8wOoM5XAWlurPX9bqtqE=w1022-h830-rw

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The photo in a map note:

The same photo in story map:

8. Twitter

To use Twitter photos in ArcGIS Online is straightforward and when teaching a course, provides a fast way to use its content.
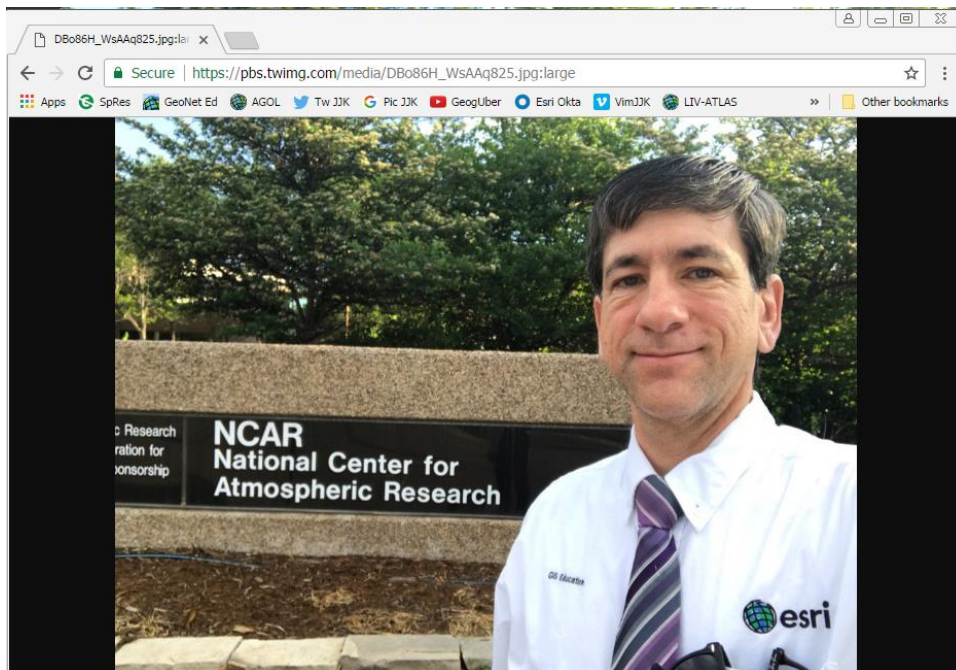
Let's say I am teaching a GIS workshop at NCAR and I want to use the photo I just took outside the building and tweeted:
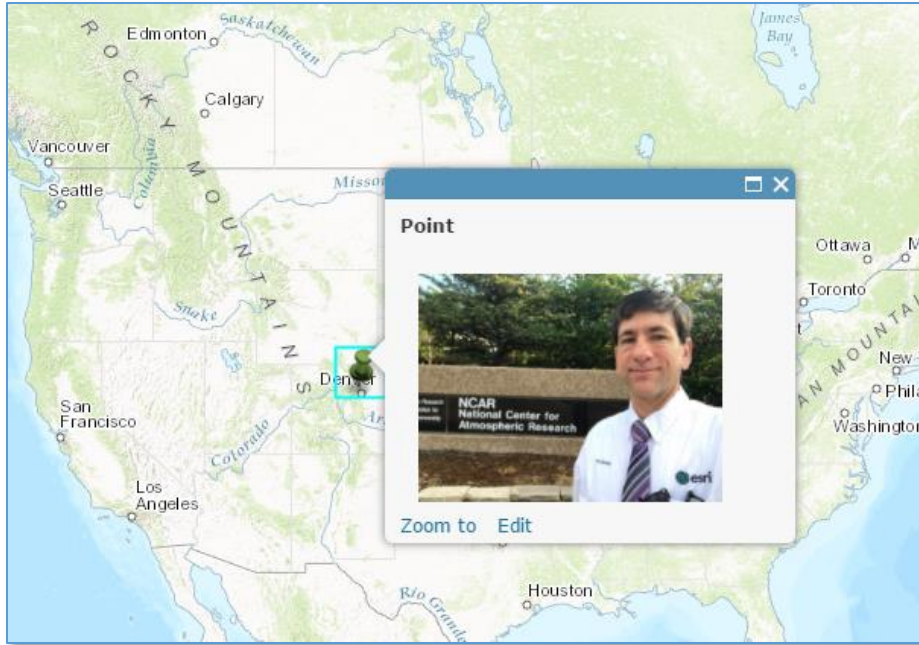
If I right-click on the image and "get image address, it yields this:

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:
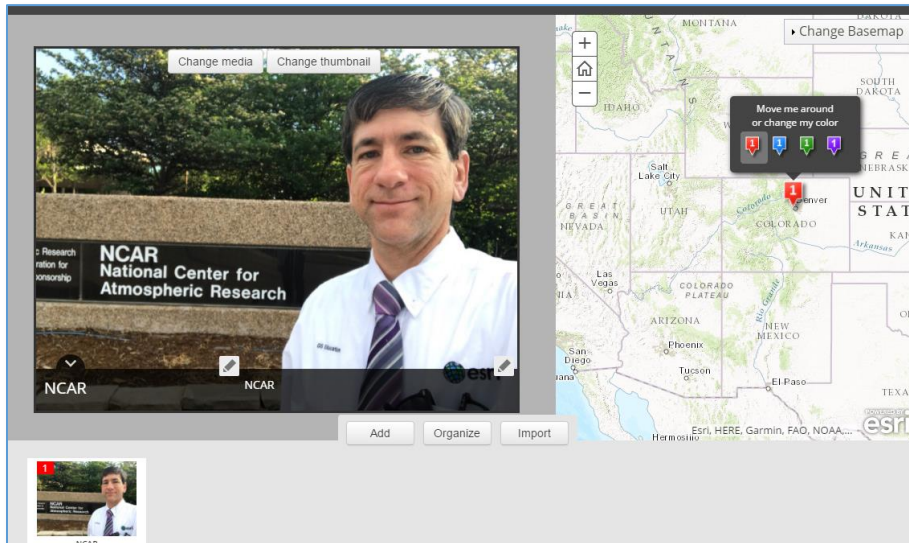
9. Instagram

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

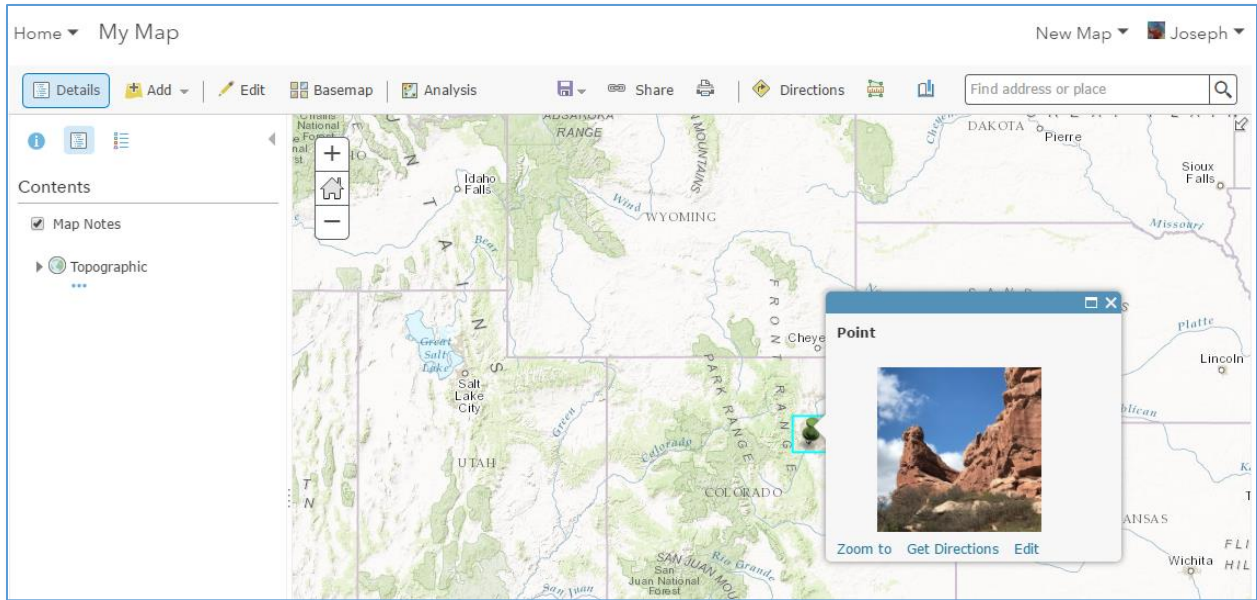If I right-click on that post, and "View Page Source", about 1/3 of the way down the page is the link to the actual photograph, shown below:

```
41
42      <link rel="canonical" href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BTyxLpGFfEJ/" />
43      <meta content="24 Likes, 1 Comments - Joseph Kerski (@josephkerski) on Instagram: "Hiking at South Valley Park.  Colorado. With @aubreyasbury15""
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.
With @aubreyasbury15"" />
48      <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_365682390701
8604544_n.jpg

This works in an ArcGIS Online map:

This also works in a story map:

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