MAP-it

How to organise a MAP-it session.
The manual.

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The method: map-it.be

HOW TO ORGANISE A MAP-it SESSION? THE MANUAL.

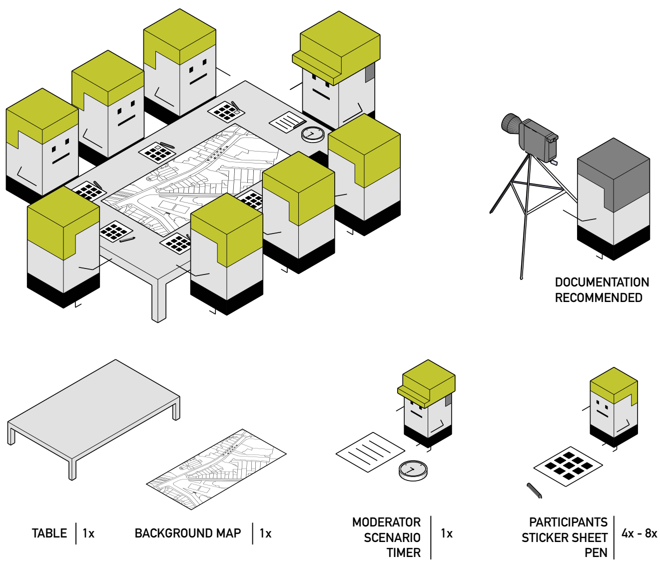

Figure 15: The elements of a MAP-it session

The following pages are intended to give you an insight in how to organise a MAP-it session. The low-tech and DIY[20] approach of MAP-it requires little resources. A MAP-it session can be organised in a relatively short time, using the tools that are available on http://www.map-it.be. However, as with most participatory projects that heavily depend on the involvement of people, some careful planning is required. This is especially the case if you want to work with people outside your organisation or network.

This manual follows the structure of the foldable map that can be found in the middle of the MAP-(k)it, which is attached to this publication. It depicts the process of organising a MAP-it session as a building of four floors, each containing objects, people and actions. MAP-it is a flexible system that can be adapted to a wide range of contexts. Not all of the presented mapping elements might be applicable to your project. Therefore, it is also possible to design new additions to MAP-it that are (more) suitable for your research project.

20 DIY stands for ‘Do It Yourself’.

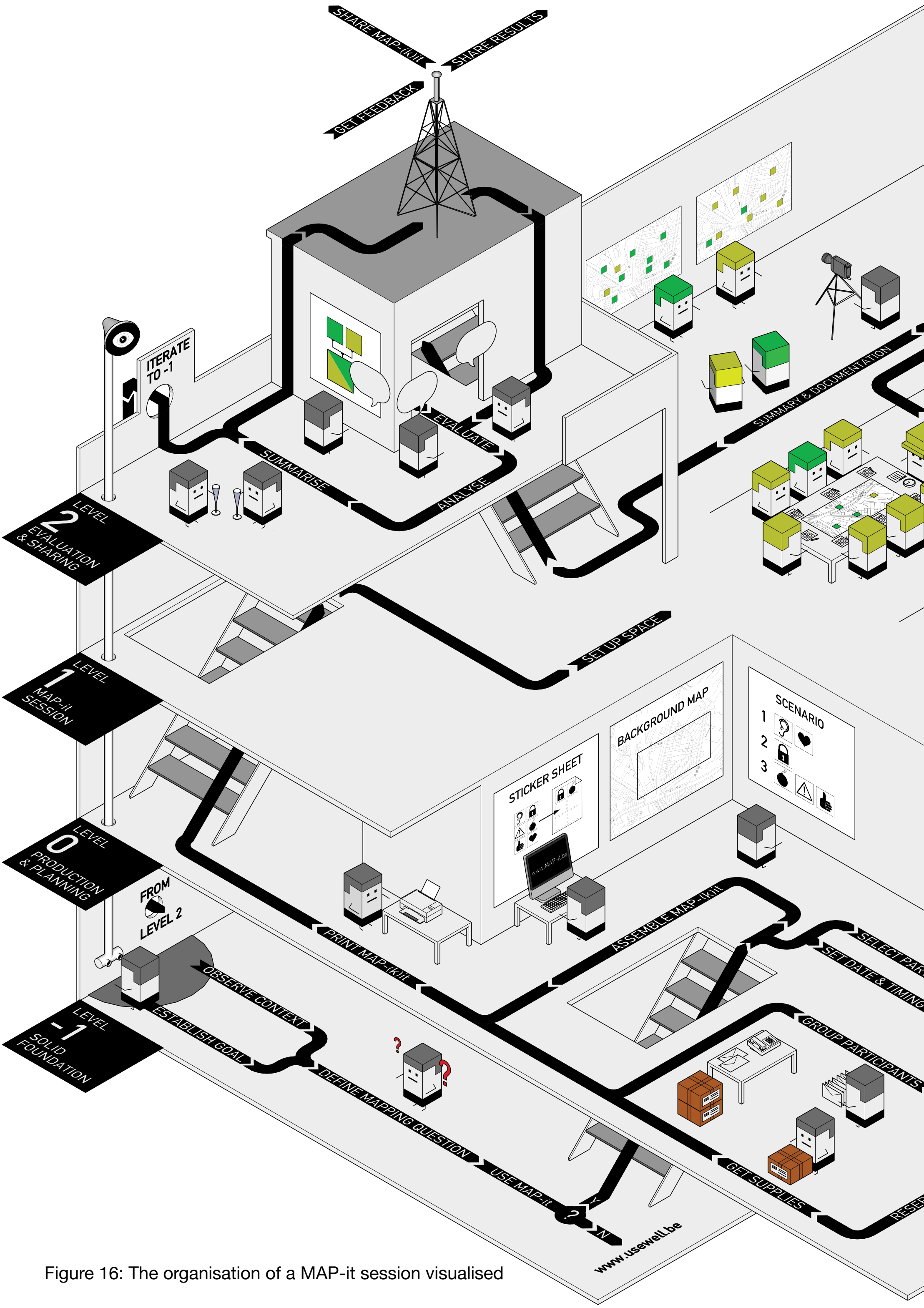

Figure 16: The organisation of a MAP-it session visualised

MAP-it

Welcome!
Context
Goal
Mapping Question
TABLE SWITCH
MAPPING
INTRODUCTION
WELCOME
ASSIGN GROUPS
MAKE INVITATION
DELIVERIES
GET REGISTRATIONS
INVITE PARTICIPANTS
INVITE MODERATORS
MODERATORS
PARTICIPANTS

LEVEL -1
A SOLID FOUNDATION

The clearer you define the context and goal of your research, the easier it is to pick (and construct) a suitable method. When choosing for MAP-it, we advise you to start from a specific research question, as is common with (other) research tools and methods. In the following paragraphs we will elaborate on defining a mapping research question as well as on the context and goal of your research.

Before putting together a MAP-(k)it, it is good to ask yourself whether this method is the best way to accomplish your (research) goals.[21] Mapping is most suitable for qualitative research that allows interpretation and collaborative construction of results. The main strength of MAP-it is that it uncovers a complex network of information and relations, often leading to more detailed data than you can gather by doing an in-depth interview.

CONTEXT AND GOAL

Before defining the research question, it is wise to step back for a moment and think about why you want to use MAP-it. What is the *context* of your research? What knowledge do you already have on the research topic? And what knowledge do your potential participants have? What is the *goal* of your research? Do you merely want to get information from the participants? Do you want to evaluate a previous process? Or do you also want to engage participants and create a new project?

Typically, the stage of defining your context and goal taps into specific, specialist knowledge that you (might) have on the topic. Specialist knowledge can be made accessible to the participants by drawing an icon of it or adding the term as a keyword to the sticker sheet, so that it can be used during a mapping. However, there are cases in which you want to avoid adding specialist knowledge to the MAP-(k)it, for example:

- when you want to see which topics participants come up with themselves;
- when there is too much specialist knowledge present in the group, making it too extensive or too difficult to visualise;
- when some of the participants have little or no knowledge on the topic and

21 For more information on and an overview of various design methods, see: http://www.usewell.be/. 'UseWell! roadmap for user-centered design', another project by research group Social Spaces, a.o. explores user-centered design methods. The project gives an overview of the known, most recent and innovative user-centered design tools used in academic institutes and companies in Belgium (Flanders) and The Netherlands and reports how these tools are used in a specific context.

the conversation would be unfairly balanced towards participants that do have knowledge of the topic.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The starting point of a MAP-it session is the research question. A well-defined question helps to specify the ingredients of your mapping session: the assemblage of the MAP-(k)it (i.e. a map, stickers and a scenario), the participants and the moderators. MAP-it might not help you to achieve all of your research goals, but it can be useful in those parts in which qualitative input is required. In that case, it might be necessary to adapt your research question and change it into a qualitative one.

Examples of mapping research questions are: *What will the future media lab look like*? *What does it mean to organise an international art and ecology workshop*? And *what can small and grass-roots initiatives do to tackle urban issues in the Brussels' European Quarter?* In the previous chapter, we described how – in three specific cases – MAP-it was used to answer these research questions. More open questions will result in a myriad of different answers, while very defined and specific questions will keep the results focused.

TIP

Think of ways in which your workshop can be interesting for the participants. What will they learn? Who will they meet? Make sure there is something in it for everybody.

LEVEL 0
PRODUCTION AND PLANNING

Your research question, context and goal serve as input for the planning and production phase. In the following part, we will take a closer look at some essential features of this phase of a MAP-it session, e.g. organising the workshop and the ingredients of a MAP-(k)it.

WORKSHOP DATE AND TIMING

Since everyone has a busy agenda, the workshop can best be planned well in advance. The time required for a MAP-it session depends on the scenario (See 'Scenario' on p. 43). For an in-depth mapping, a longer time slot could be necessary than – for example – for an exploratory one. In this case, consider splitting the mapping into a series of workshops. If you choose to do so, each workshop could address a sub-question and (if possible) you might want to invite different participants.[22]

The mapping workshop should not exceed three hours, as the participants' attention span will drop after a few hours.

THE INVITATION

It is possible to use a MAP-(k)it by yourself as a handy way to visualise a topic. However, the MAP-it system becomes much more compelling when you involve three people or more.[23] A practical amount of participants for a MAP-it session would be maximum twenty-four persons (divided into three or four groups).

Apart from the date, time, place and contact information, the invitation should feature a short introduction on the research context and the goal of the mapping.

A MAP-it session can be *closed*, meaning that you send out an invitation to a select number of people. Which participants you invite, largely depends on your research question, context and goal. For example, relevant participants could be the project's internal collaborators; other participants can be external specialists, coaches or (if applicable) product users. Participants in a mapping of a future project (that yet has to be developed), could be users and other stakeholders, designers and/or specialists. Another option is an *open* mapping session, in which you circulate an invitation via several networks and distribution channels that are relevant to your research goal. Both workshop types have advantages and disadvantages. In a closed workshop you can create a well-balanced mix of people, each with their own skills and characteristics.[24] In an open workshop you can encounter unexpected information and get a broad overview of the topic.

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22 An exemplary case is "Grass-roots actions for the European Quarter", described in the previous chapter.
23 This amount of people is based on studies of *focus groups,* a qualitative research method which has similar goals as MAP-it. In the book *Design Research* (Laurel, 2003, pp. 24-25)**,** Christopher Ireland explains that traditional focus groups have 10-12 participants and are "recommended primarily when you want to generate ideas and/or expand understanding without needing to reach consensus" where the similar mini-focus groups have 6-8 participants and "provide the opportunity for deeper discussion and questioning that is more specifically tailored to each person in the group".
24 In our mappings of media art organisations, we learned how FoAM approached the question of who to invite to their workshops. In some of the *Luminous Green* workshops the participants were invited based on their skills and knowledge, but also on their attitudes, personalities and social roles. Groups were selected carefully: FoAM specifically took into account that each person was teamed up with two other people with shared knowledge or interests. The workshop designers then looked at which roles were needed to form a dynamic group, for example having a mix of people who are influencers, others who are keen followers, connectors, or 'disruptors'. Although a substantial amount of time was spent on selecting the participants, this proved to be beneficial for the flow and the social dynamic of the workshop.

GROUPING PARTICIPANTS

If you have more than eight registrations, you might want to divide the people into several groups with each a map at their own table. Groups of six to eight persons, guided by a moderator, ensure an in-depth discussion in which everybody has the opportunity to express her/his ideas. Depending on the context, goal and research question of your project, you might want to choose a group of participants that is homogeneous, or create a heterogeneous, hybrid mix of participants with different skills and knowledge. Keep in mind that participants do not necessarily have to agree with each other, since constructive friction can lead to great ideas.

TIP

You might want to separate colleagues, friends and people that truly do not get along.

INVITING MODERATORS

A moderator ensures the mapping goes as planned. She/he briefs the participants and guides them through the mapping session. Preferably, a moderator has enough knowledge on the mapping topic to guide and summarise the conversation, but she/he is not necessarily a specialist. Ideally, this moderator already has some experience with the MAP-it process, for example through a previous experience as a participant or moderator.

You will need one moderator for each mapping table. Optionally, you can appoint an extra overall moderator who introduces the workshop, keeps track of time and summarises the results at the end. For more information on the moderators' tasks, see “LEVEL 1: The MAP-it session” (p. 54).

ORGANISING MATERIALS AND VENUE

The venue where the mapping workshop will take place should be large enough to provide room for the amount of participants you invited and for enough tables for each group of participants. In addition to that, the tables should be large enough to place a mapping background sheet of A0 size on and the individual mapping sticker sheets. Also, make sure that there is enough space between the separate tables so that the participants of different tables do not disturb each other.

The A1 or A0 size *background map*[25] can be printed in many copy- and printshops relatively quickly. Often an architectural plan print is of good enough quality.

Printing the MAP-it *sticker sheets* can be done in different ways. The most convenient way is to acquire pre-cut MAP-it sticker sheets with removable stickers of different sizes on one A4 sheet. You can find the ordering information on the MAP-it website (http://www.map-it.be). Alternatively, the MAP-it icons can be printed on a standard A4 removable sticker sheet and cut by hand.

CREATING A MAP-(k)it

A MAP-(k)it consists of a scenario, a mapping background, and one or more sticker sheets. On the MAP-it website you can download MAP-(k)its for several types of research questions. If the context and goal of your research are the same as those for which the online kits were created, you can download and use them as they are. Usually, this is not the case and you will need to customise the kits. You can also create a MAP-(k)it from scratch. The editing tool on the MAP-it website allows for modifying the kits. You can upload your own icons, as well as sharing them with other users under a 'Creative Commons Licence' [26].

When creating the MAP-(k)it for your workshop, keep in mind that you want your participants to share information on the map. This includes not just *any* type of information, but specific information that will help you to answer your research question. Part of the task of designing a MAP-(k)it is to define exactly which bits of information you need, and to represent them in a visual way via icons and labels. A good MAP-(k)it inquires participants in a way that is **easy to access** as well as **structured**, but still **open** enough for modification and expansion.

Easy to access. You are designing for participants that do not necessarily have (a lot of) experience with mapping and/or MAP-it. In any case, both the translation of the research question and the used terminology can not be too complex. It is important that everyone quickly understands which mapping task is currently at hand. This will make the work of the moderators and the contributions by the participants more easy.

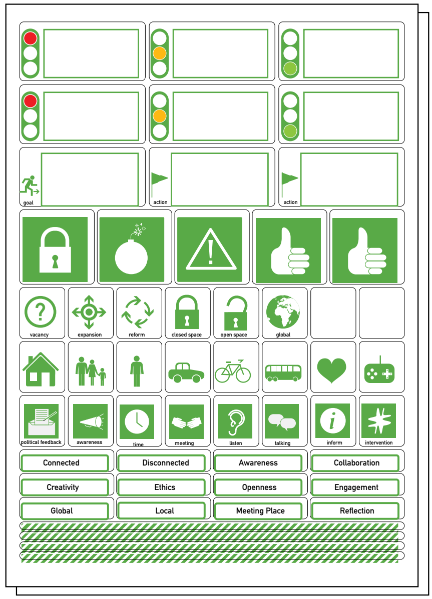
25 The A-series is part of the ISO international paper size standard. A0 is 841 × 1189 mm and A1 is 594 × 841 mm.
26 MAP-it is shared by a "Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported" licence, which means you can copy, transmit and distribute the work, adapt it and make commercial use of it, as long as you attribute the work to MAP-it and share it under the same licence. For more information on Creative Commons, see: http://www.creativecommons.org.

Figure 17: A MAP-(k)it

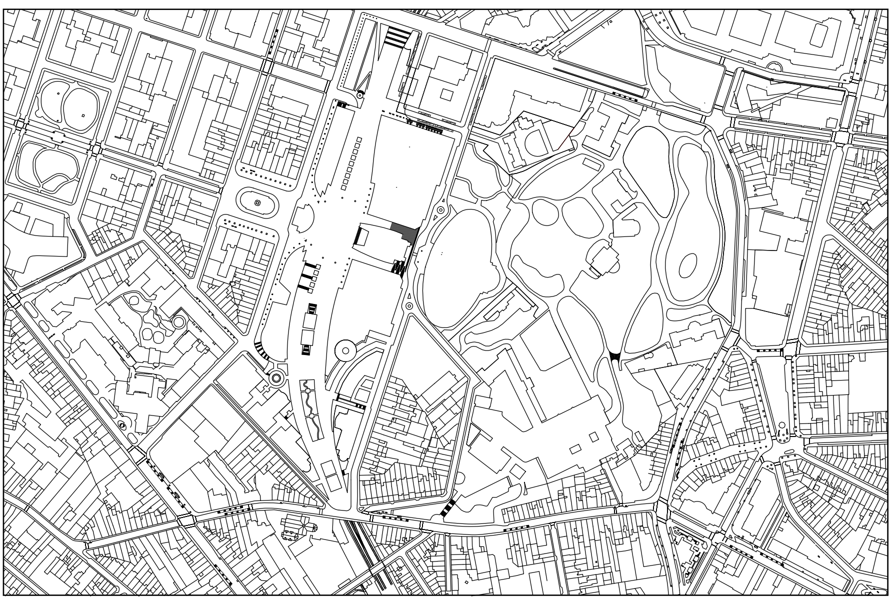
Scenario

1. Short round-table introduction of each participant, introduction of the mapping kit (10 minutes)
2. Each participant selects 3 Value-keyword stickers (5 minutes)
3. Group discussion on which 3 Value-keyword stickers to place on the map's compass (15 minutes)
4. Add Person stickers to the map (10 minutes)
5. Add Tool stickers to the map (10 minutes)
6. Add Spaces stickers to the map (10 minutes)
7. Make a quick summary of the map. Lock what you really like (10 minutes)
8. Choose a Presenter (2 minutes)
8. Presenter changes table and explains the map to the other group. (5 minutes)
9. Add Bombs to the map (unless it is 'locked') as well as likes (10 minutes)
10. Add Opportunities/Threats to the map, as many as you bombed. (10 minutes)
11. The Presenter presents the map to the groups. (15 minutes)
12. Wrapup (10 minutes)

Sticker sheets



Background map (not to scale)



Structured. When you confront the participants with a research question [27], they might be overwhelmed. With many aspects to consider, it might be hard to know where to start. Each of the three elements of a MAP-(k)it allows for dividing and structuring the research question into bite-sized parts. Firstly, (1) the **scenario** arranges mapping tasks in a logical order. Secondly, (2) the **background map** defines the context. And finally, (3) the **stickers** guide and structure the participants' input. The stickers are visual representations of concepts. When stickers relate to each other, they can be grouped in combinations or sets. You can pre-print stickers with (a compilation of) keywords or visuals. These are meant as a memory aid for the participants and allow them to discover new knowledge and perspectives.[28] Also, they might be intended as inspirational mood makers to spark the imagination and loosen up the conversation.

Open. It is essential to keep some stickers in the mapping kit empty, so participants can draw their own icons on them [29], write some text or make a quick sketch. In this way, the tool can be extended and customised by the participants during the mapping process. It might also occur that people use the mapping kit in a different way than intended.[30] It is important to design the stickers in such a way that they are as open for interpretation as possible. The meaning of a sticker will become clear in the verbal discussion and by its place within the context of the map. Additional text can be added to the stickers during the mapping session to exclude possible other interpretations and usages.

TIP

Keep in mind that the interpretation of visual elements may vary widely between participants from different cultural, religious and social backgrounds and between professional disciplines.

If you want to create a new mapping kit, it is relevant to gather some texts that are related to the subject. From these texts you can extract a list of keywords that might be important to the mapping session. Such a list could also be assembled in a meeting with colleagues or summed up by heart from your prior experiences with the subject. The next step is to structure this material: look for categories and groups. It is important to know that you can only openly *suggest* a vocabulary of terms, concepts and categories, which participants can then combine and complete to create their own ideas/visions. This vocabulary

27 For example: "What should a new-media lab look like?"
28 In the mapping session *Future of the Lab*, a list of design methods was introduced with approximately twenty methods in them. While this list was not complete, it stimulated the participants to add design methods to the map. Some participants were not familiar with all methods, which sparked a conversation.
29 During one mapping session a participant decided that the 'bomb' icon was too strong in his view and therefore drew an explosive sign, which looked less destructive.
30 At one occasion, the 'Wizard of Oz' sticker was 'misused' to indicate a person who would magically come up with new ideas, where in design methodology it is referred to as a way to evaluate an unimplemented system using a human to simulate the technology.

should never force the participants in a specific predetermined direction. When designing the MAP-(k)it, you can think of the mapping workshop as a dynamic process. Stickers will be placed, replaced or removed by the participants. The map is a place where thoughts and ideas will grow and develop in unpredictable ways.

TIP

Sometimes it is tempting to design several subcategories within a main category. For instance within *Persons*, you could further specify *Users, Specialists*, etc. We advise you to keep things as simple as possible and to only use the wider categories: these are easier to explain and give participants the freedom to reflect on the categories themselves.

We will discuss the three key ingredients of MAP-it more in detail: (1) the scenario, (2) the background map and (3) the mapping stickers.

1. SCENARIO

A good way to start the assemblage of the MAP-(k)it is to create the scenario, which orders the mapping tasks within a well-defined time-schedule. A scenario ensures that at the end of the workshop the research question is covered. An example:

Starting time 18:00
1. Short round-table introduction of each participant, introduction of the mapping kit (10’)
2. Each participant selects 3 *Value-keyword stickers* (5’)
3. Group discussion on which 3 *Value-keyword stickers* to place on the map’s *compass* (15’)
4. Add *Person stickers* to the map (10’)
5. Add *Tool stickers* to the map (10’)
6. Add *Spaces stickers* to the map (10’)
7. Make a quick summary of the map. *Lock* what you really like (10’)
8. Choose a *Presenter* (2’)
9. Presenter *changes table* and explains the map to the other group. (5’)
10. Add *Bombs* to the map (unless it is ‘locked’) as well as *likes* (10’)
11. Add *Opportunities/Threats* to the map, as many as you bombed (10’)
12. The Presenter *presents* the map to the groups (15’)
13. Wrap up (10’)
End time approximately 20:15

As illustrated in the above example scenario, the different parts of the mapping sessions are **strictly timed**. This timing can be monitored by the overall-moderator or by each separate table moderator. Limiting the amount of time for a specific task puts some pressure on the participants and the moderator to keep the discussion to the point. However, foresee some extra time for delays, because an interesting discussion might cause a group to run over the scheduled time.

TIP

A good way to spark a discussion is to put a restraint on the amount of projects or topics that can be placed on the map. Letting the participants choose the three most important keywords, forces the group into a discussion on what the most important values of the project are.

Mapping tasks can be arranged in such a way that they form a **logical progression**, moving from the general questions to the more specific ones. The mapping tasks should be **concrete and easy to understand** for all participants around the table. You might want to avoid using questions. Instead, describe the tasks as actions and note down the type of stickers that can be used.

In its simplest form, the scenario is written down on a piece of paper. You can also make a more visual representation in the form of a **digital presentation** or use **moderator cards**. Every slide or every card explains one mapping task. Note down the task, the time available and the icons that can be used.[31]

TIP

You can use an egg-timer to make clear that a new mapping task is at hand. In a digital presentation you can add a (notifying) sound between slides.

When the group of participants is large enough to be divided into smaller groups (a minimum of three people is recommended), one or more **table switches** (fig. 20) can be built into the scenario. During a table switch, a *presenter* is chosen among the participants of a group (the moderator is excluded). She/he is a participant with good verbal skills, excellent in summarising and explaining the map. The presenter takes the map to another table. At that table, the presenter explains the map and the other group gives feedback on the map. To do this, she/he can use *risk-stickers* like ‘bombs’ or ‘thumbs up’, or even add other icons and labels to the map. This process can be repeated until all of the groups have commented on all of the maps. Table switches take a bit more effort to organise, but – at the same time – the discussion can involve more people, which offers advantages to the project development. To be able to do a table switch, you can print the stickers for each group in a different colour. The use of different colours makes the comments of the different groups transparent and thus visualises the conversation between groups. The MAP-it website makes it possible to change uploaded graphics into the colours of your choice.

31 The cards and digital presentation can be downloaded from the MAP-it website and the organiser of the mapping session can change the order of the cards.

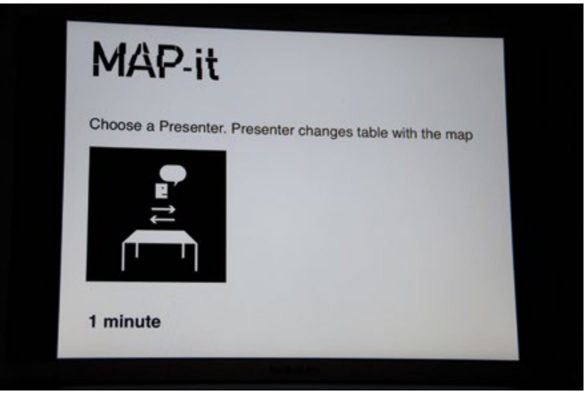


Figure 18: Showing mapping tasks with a projection

Figure 19: Showing mapping tasks with moderator cards

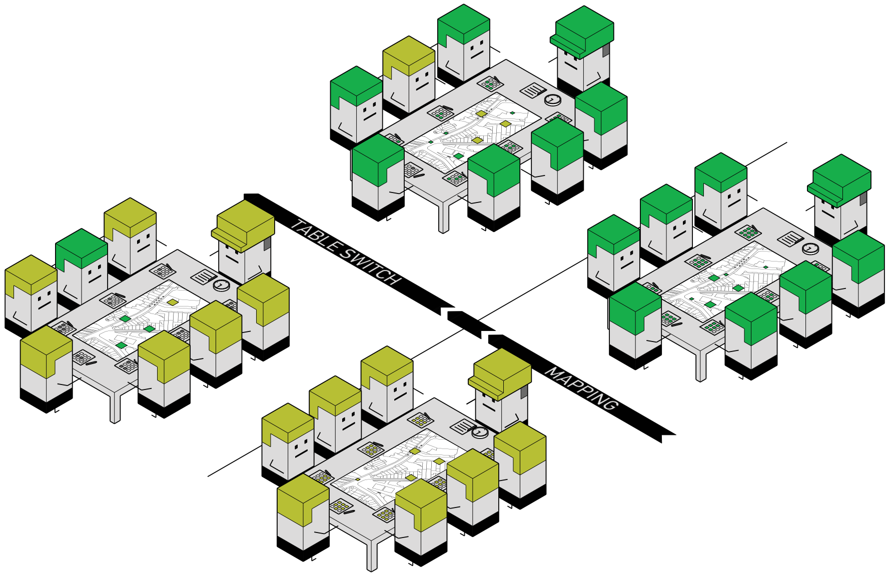


Figure 20: The process of table switching

2. BACKGROUND MAP

The background map is a large sheet of paper on which the participants can place their stickers. It symbolises the shared space of the group. This means that it has to be large enough for everybody to access it.

TIP

For a group of eight persons, a map size of approximately A1 or A0 is recommended. In a mapping session that lasts a long time you will need a larger piece of paper, as over time the map becomes more detailed as more stickers are added.

The background map usually visualises the **context** of your project. If the background map is open or abstract, the conversation of the participants might be less focused. Complex or specialised background maps might not be readable by all of your participants. The background can also be created and extended during the workshop itself. There are several types of maps that you can use, depending on your research question, goal and context. In the following paragraphs you will find some examples.

If you are imagining a new kind of organisation, you can use a **map** of a building in which the organisation could be housed. Such a blueprint map can change during the course of the mapping. For example, you can include graphics in the sticker set that illustrate walls or other infrastructural elements to adapt and extend the floor plan. Similarly, if you are analysing or re-imagining the public space of a certain zone, you can use the map or satellite imagery of the area. The map limits the discussion to that particular zone. Technical drawings of street plans might be available at your local government or downloaded in a vector format from Open Street Maps[32].

TIP

Make sure your maps are readable by all participants. For instance, if the maps are black and white line drawings, non-specialists might not be able to recognise what is a street is and what is a building.

The background map can be divided into **zones** with different functions. For example, at the beginning of the mapping workshop you can give participants some time for individual reflection on the topic. A personal space can be reserved in the border area of the map for noting personal experiences and thoughts. This gives participants a safe-zone before starting the group negotiation, in which mapping stickers are placed on a central common zone. When mapping onto a city map or a building blueprint, a space might be reserved to place non-location-specific topics like values and other keywords (fig. 23). Furthermore, you can also print an illustration or photograph of an **object** on the background map. This object can be a specific product that you are analysing or imagining new functions for.

32 On http://www.openstreetmap.org you can download maps in SVG format, which allows for large size printing and graphic modifications.

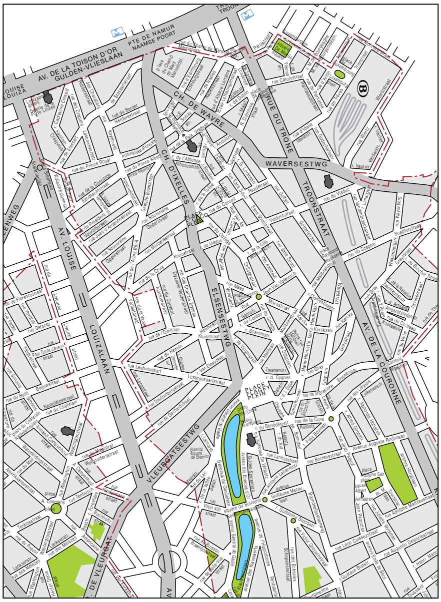


Figure 21: A city map

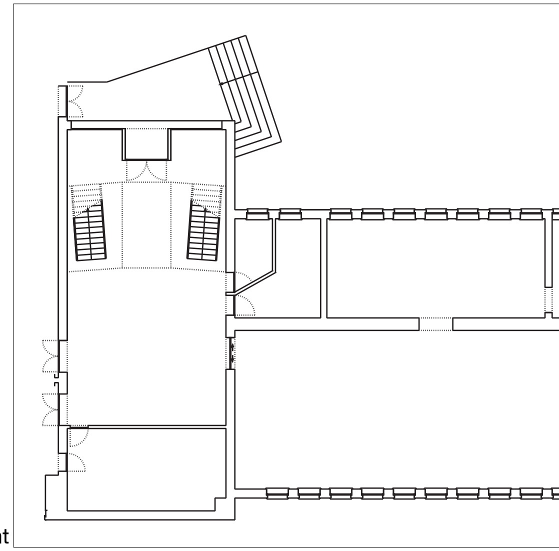
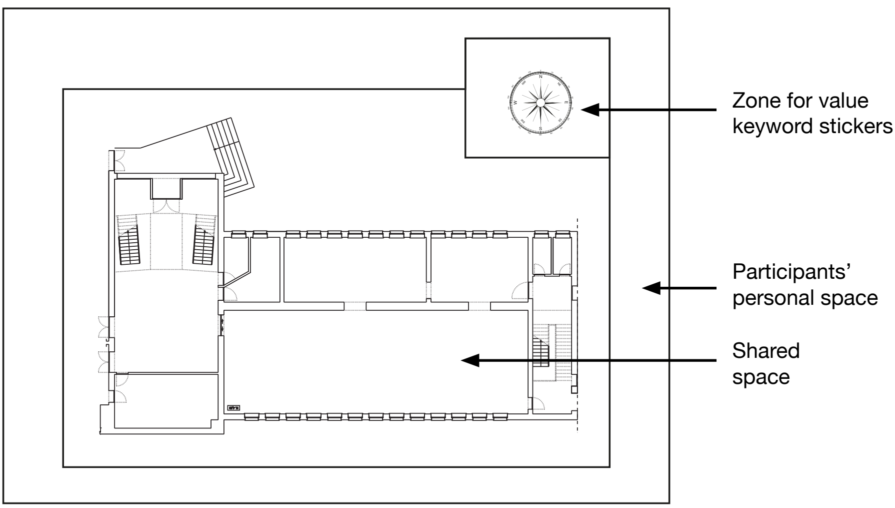


Figure 22: A building blueprint

Figure 23: A background map divided into zones



When mapping complex projects, several sheets of **tracing paper** can be used to divide the project in different phases. The sheets can separate the types of content in order to gain more visual clarity. For example, when mapping a complex business project, you might want to separate visionary elements from factual information, like financial data. When one layer is finished, a second transparent layer (of tracing paper) is placed on top of it. When using a light box, you can place as many as six layers of tracing paper on top of each other and still read the first one. You can name layers, or let the participants define them. A project might be analysed as having a ‘conceptual phase’, a ‘design phase’, a ‘production phase’, etc. Those phases can also be given a time indication, for example by visualising that the preparation phase lasted for three months.

3. MAPPING STICKERS

During a mapping workshop, participants place and reposition stickers on a background map. The placement of these stickers results from, or leads to, a verbal discussion. People in the group may want to add new stickers to an existing collection of stickers, move stickers to another position on the map and so on.

Each participant receives one or more sheets of stickers. Those stickers are of varying sizes and contain different icons. During a typical workshop, a participant will use as much as thirty different stickers. Some stickers will be used more than once and some of the available stickers will not be used at all.

Just as the background map and the scenario can be customised, you should design a sticker sheet according to the context and the goal of the research. There is a large collection of mapping stickers available on the MAP-it website, shared under a “Creative Commons Licence”. You can also create stickers of your own and upload them to the site.

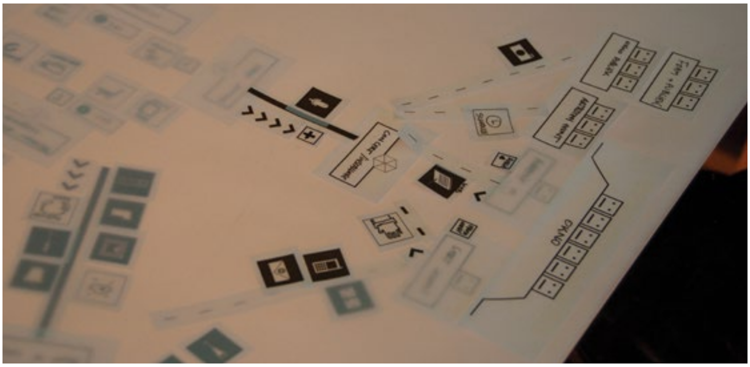
The process of choosing the stickers is facilitated by the editing tool on the MAP-it website. With this tool, stickers can be dragged and dropped onto a digital mapping sheet after which a printable PDF-document can be generated. If you are experienced with a vector-editing tool like *Inkscape* or *Adobe Illustrator*, you can use that too.

For the mapping stickers we propose five general categories – **people**, **things**, **keywords**, **relations** and **risks** – which we will exemplify further in this chapter. These categories offer a framework to think about a subject in a simple and tangible way and can be further sub-categorised to suit your needs. If your categories are getting too complicated, specialised or numerous, you might be on the wrong track.

Figure 24: Mapping with a lightsource

MAP-it lightbox table as presented at the E-culture Fair, Dortmund (GE), 2010
(Table by Xavier Coenen)

A basic setup with a lamp, 2 pedestals and a plate of plexiglass



Layers of tracing paper placed on top of a light source
(for another example, see: fig. 13, p. 29)

A. PEOPLE STICKERS

Each project is likely to involve people and organisations. In some projects, positioning people on a map might be an important element to answer your research question. In this case, you might want to consider mapping their roles and functions in the project, or the connections they have to other people and to 'things'.

Each relevant stakeholder can be visualised on the map using a **people** sticker. This sticker can be further clarified by writing down a specific name or a general type, specialisation or function. For example, participants might know that they need respondents for their research project or they might already know the specific names of respondents they want to work with. A similar sticker exists to indicate **groups**, such as organisations, companies and institutions.

In some cases it might be interesting to map peoples' (changing) functions and roles within a project. For example, someone could start in a project as a manager, but in a later phase also work on the online communication. This role change can be illustrated by using a **hat** sticker that can be added next to the people sticker.

B. THING STICKERS

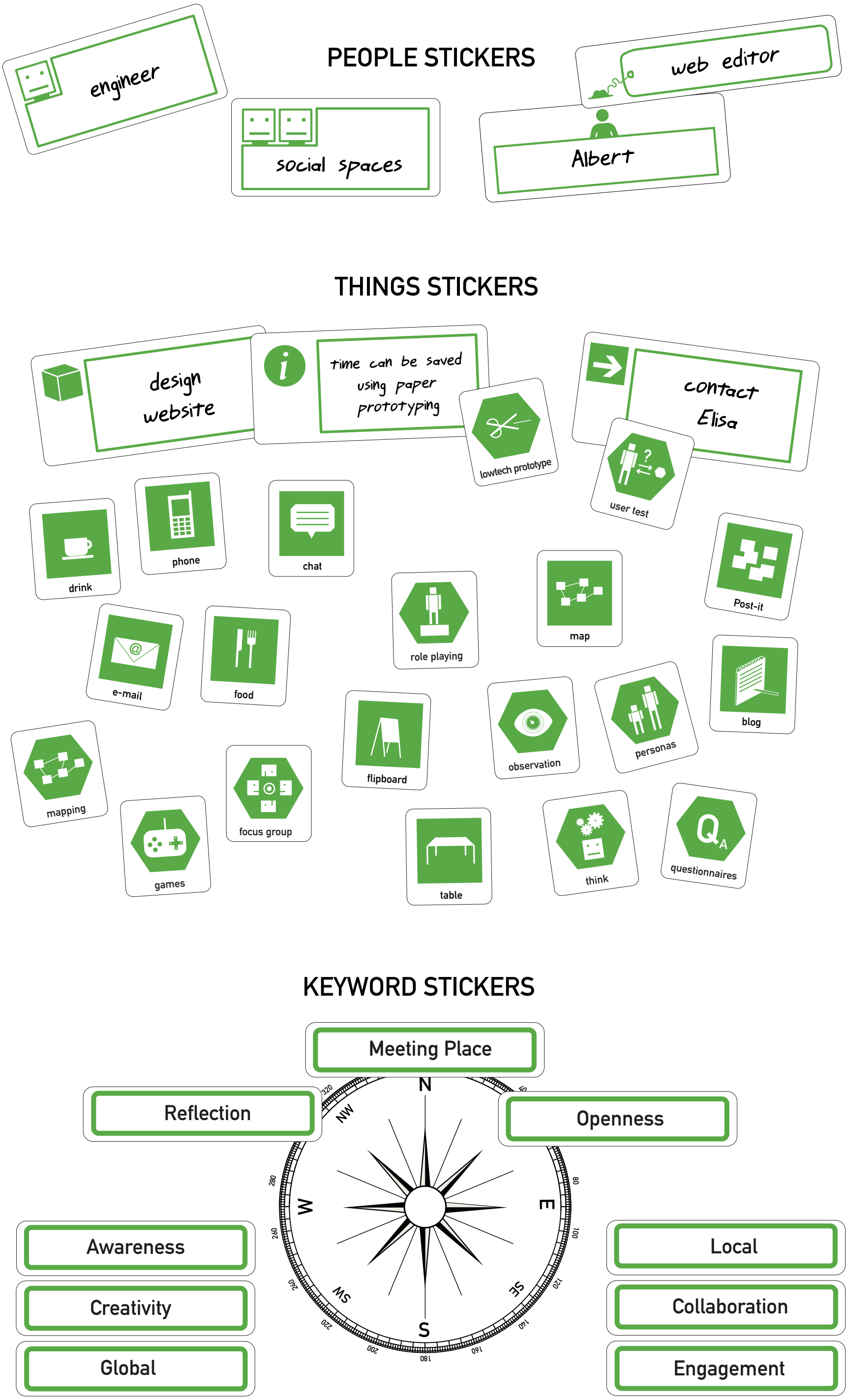
Things are various types of physical or abstract things that can be observed, exchanged, modified or created by people. Examples are projects, information, observations, concepts, tools, materials, methods, actions and so on. Below you will find a wide range of examples.

C. KEYWORD STICKERS

Sometimes concepts are too abstract or too general to visualise by a sticker. In this case you can create keyword-stickers that only feature words. You can distil a list of terms and categories based on the context and goal of your research (see chapter “LEVEL -1: A Solid foundation” on p. 36). Then you can probably select some keywords from it.

Keyword stickers can be used to define a goal or direction at the start of the mapping workshop. For instance, you can use the keywords to indicate that your product should be “sustainable” and “open” and then use the rest of the workshop to define how you will accomplish that. This type of goal-setting narrows down the scope of the discussion and may lead to results in a more time-efficient way. The keywords can be used in combination with an illustration of a **compass**. This metaphorical guide people can lead people during the course of a mapping.

Figure 25: People, thing and keyword stickers



D. RELATION STICKERS

Relation stickers visualise the relations between persons, things and keywords. Participants can use various **line** types to indicate the strength of the connection. You can use **arrows** to indicate a direction of flow, for instance to point out the direction of information exchange.

E. RISK STICKERS

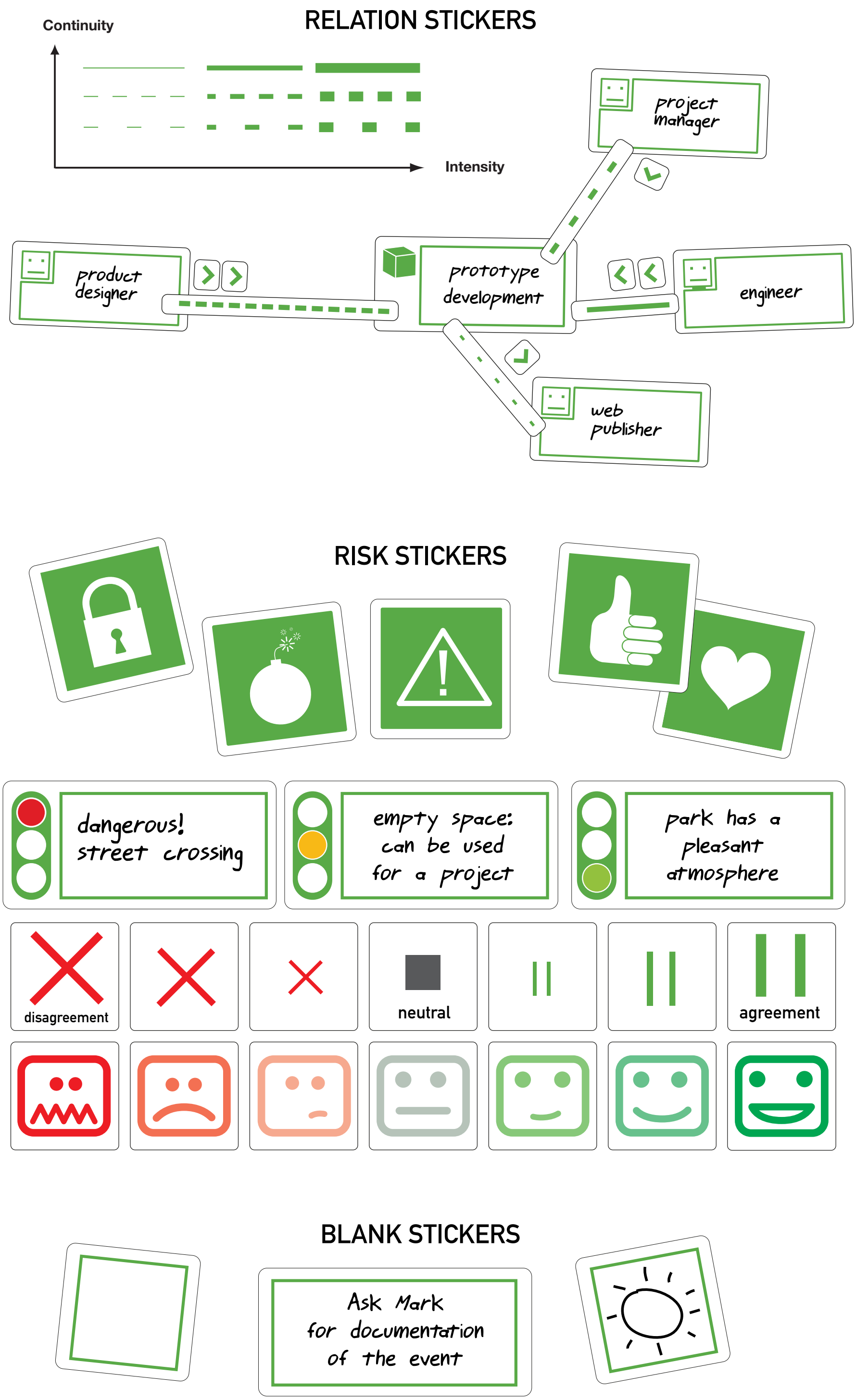
In a workshop setting, people are sometimes too focused on achieving consensus and agreement, which can affect the results of the mapping. Risk icons allow participants to express agreement or disagreement with a particular set-up, idea or other part of the map. The goal of these risk-stickers is to evoke *constructive friction:* a type of friction that playfully discloses the points of difference. This offers an opportunity for a mutual process of interpretation. Risk icons aim to generate more lively discussions within a group or between different groups of participants.

Bombs express disagreement with a particular part of the map. **Locks** express that you want to keep certain elements you mapped because they form an essential feature of your map. When a part of the map is locked, it cannot be bombed later. A **like** is a way for other groups to express agreement with a part of the map. A **warning sign** expresses that there is some danger to be detected. This icon can be used to draw attention to something, such as an opportunity for improvement, indicating a point of focus. A **heart** could be used to express your love for a particular item on the map. For example, if a mapping session generated five ideas for projects, a heart could express that you choose one of these five projects to develop further. **Traffic lights** are used to indicate the participants' evaluations of places on the map: green stands for what people like, orange for what they see as an opportunity or a threat, and red for what is disliked. These kinds of observations are a good way to start a mapping workshop when evaluating a space or an object. **Smilies** were created to allow emotional expression. **Cooperation** stickers are used to indicate if people agree or disagree on particular aspects of a project.

F. BLANK STICKERS

It is recommended to integrate some blank stickers in the sticker sheet. In this way, the participants are granted the freedom to write their own text, draw their own icons, or make a sketch. A blank sticker can feature a simple border, printed in a different colour for each group to indicate which group placed which sticker on the background map. For more information, see the paragraph on MAP-it being 'open' on p. 42.

Figure 26: Relation, risk and empty stickers



LEVEL 1
THE MAP-it SESSION

SETTING UP THE WORKSHOP ROOM

Before the participants arrive, you will need to prepare the room in which the mapping session will take place. The amount of tables you set up, depends on the amount of groups of participants. Place a background map on every table, as well as the sticker sheets for each participant. Every table gets its own colour of sticker sheets. Provide each participant with a pen and (if desirable) a paper version of the scenario. Give the moderator(s) a timer. Other items to set up might include refreshments, a projector, a sound system and recording equipment.

TIP

If you do not know all of the attending participants, you might want to place a table at the entrance. In this way, someone can welcome the arriving people and check their names on a list. This is also a good moment to assign people to their group.

WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND START-UP

At the planned starting time, either the overal moderator or the organiser starts the workshop with an introduction. During the introduction, the research context, the mapping question and the goal are explained. The organiser or overall moderator also gives a brief overview of the MAP-it method. This introduction should not exceed twenty minutes.

When all participants are seated at their assigned tables, the table moderators explain the mapping scenario and the corresponding elements of the mapping kit. It is not necessary to explain the full MAP-(k)it at the beginning of the workshop since some participants might not be able to recall it later on. It is better to guide the participants step by step during the workshop.

TIP

For inspiration on a short presentation on the MAP-it method, see: http://www.map-it.be

THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR(S)

The moderator keeps track of the scenario and timing, keeps the participants focused and explains the icons of the mapping kit.

Figure 27: Presenter explaining his groups’ map to other groups

Timing. The moderator keeps track of the scenario's time-schedule as indicated in the scenario using a timer. It is important that the moderator deals with this scenario in a flexible way. The time allocated to a particular scenario action can be experienced as too short, leaving the answers to some questions incomplete. However, it is also good to keep in mind that the map will never be fully complete: it will always be open to additions.

Focus. The moderator has the task of guiding the participants' conversations and focusing them. Sometimes it might be necessary to summarise certain ideas or to explore certain topics further.

Explaining the use of the mapping kit. At the beginning of each of the mapping tasks, the moderator explains which stickers can be used. The moderator also makes sure that the verbal discussion is visualised by the mapping elements. She/he can stimulate participants to place stickers on the map.

The moderator's position. It is important that the moderator does not express her/his own opinions too strongly, or use her/his position to push ideas through. The moderator's vision and knowledge on the matter might best be used to formulate relevant questions.

TIP

It might happen that participants address a question that will appear in the scenario at a later stage. In that case the moderator can make a note of that particular topic to recall it at the appropriate time.

SUMMARY AND DOCUMENTATION

In order to analyse the results properly, you will need to document your mapping workshop as well as is possible. Ask the moderators to take notes of the conversations. It may be useful to appoint someone for photographing and filming. Be sure to archive the maps that were made at the end of the workshop. The documentation can be used for an in-depth analysis of the results or a transcript.

At the end of the mapping workshop it is useful to summarise the main conclusion of each group. Therefore, in the end, the groups might want to spend some time on deciding what the most important elements of their map are. The presenter can then briefly present these findings to the other groups.

Finally, the overall moderator or the workshop organiser can conclude the workshop by giving a final talk. A typical question that participants might ask is what will happen with the result of the workshop. Additionally, some participants might want to stay involved in the research or subscribe for news on the subject.

LEVEL 2
EVALUATION AND SHARING

AN EVALUATION REPORT OR MEETING

The results of a mapping workshop can best be summarised in an evaluation report. The goal of such an evaluation largely depends on the context and aim of your research. Are all of your questions answered? Would you consider a follow-up mapping session? Do you want to realise a project that came up during the workshop? Etc.

In such an evaluation, you critically look at the documentation (notes, maps, photo's, videos, audio transcript, etc.) and analyse the results. Furthermore, you can also make up a plan on how to proceed with your project in the future and how to disseminate the results. Ideas on how to improve the mapping kit for future use, can also be included in this report.

EXTRACTING DATA FOR ANALYSIS

To analyse the results of a mapping you can list all elements that were used during the mapping session. Each sticker can be coded with a letter or with a combination of letters. For example:

Legend	**Map content**
Tg: Traffic light Green	To: The lake is nice, but there is not much to do.
To: Traffic light Orange	Opportunities to install water sport facilities.
Tr: Traffic light Red	Tr: There is litter next to the basketball field
A: Action	A: Write a letter to influence the new plans for the park.
…	…

A possible way of coding the elements is to choose a starting point and to move clockwise, or you can separate the map into zones.

TIP

Afterwards, the data can be grouped by using the *sort* function in spreadsheet software.

SUMMARY MAPS

In most cases, the maps that result from a MAP-it session are not easily understood by non-participants. Also, if your mapping workshops consisted of various mapping groups, you will have several maps as outcomes. In both cases you might want to create a summary map that presents and interprets the most important concepts and unifies the various maps into one.Summarising the most important concepts requires some analytical thinking and a collaborative process. You can gather a core group of stakeholders consisting of the organisers, moderators and a designer. This group can decide on the general concept and content of the map. It can be helpful to write a text to organise the elements into a consistent story. Next, the different elements are brought together in a summary map, which can take any visual form. A summary map does not necessarily contain the same visual elements as the maps used in the workshop: certain types of information can be colour-coded and important texts can be enlarged.[33]

The advantage of a summary map is that you can use it as a background map for a follow-up mapping session. In this way, the results become the input for the next workshop, which the new participants can reject or work further on.

SHARING

Participants share a lot of knowledge and ideas during a MAP-it session. Therefore, it is good practice to share the documentation of the workshop with them. This information might be useful for their own projects or they might want to share their experience with other people. A simple way to share the results is by distributing a **high resolution picture of the maps**. The MAP-it website (http://www.map-it.be) allows you to publish a **report** of your mapping workshop online. It inspires others to see which projects MAP-it has been used for. To allow a genuine exchange and sharing of practices, it is important to discuss the successful aspects of the project as well as the negative responses. **Pictures** and **videos** of the mapping process can be published on the MAP-it website, your own website or on a social media network. If several maps were created during your workshop, they can be translated in a **summary map** which visualises the most important results. Sharing this summary map is a very effective way to communicate your results and allows others to give comments, for instance by using MAP-it stickers. MAP-it was created in a network of artistic and design researchers who shared their knowledge and creations. You can do your part and make your **MAP-(k)its** public on the MAP-it website under a Creative Commons licence.

ITERATIONS

MAP-it might have inspired you to start, continue or evaluate your research. You can start the process over at LEVEL -0, with a critical reflection on the context and the goal and a choice of which method is most suitable.

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33 In the summary maps of ‘MAP-it European Quarter’ (see chapter 6.3 on pp. 30-31), several colours were used. Each colour indicated a different mapping session. In this way it became clear in which session an idea was formulated, and if the participants agreed with a particular idea of a previous workshop.

Figure 28: Condensing results of several groups into a summary map
(This example is from the case ‘MAP-it European Quarter’ on pp. 30-31)

Good luck, have fun and share your experiences on http://www.map-it.be