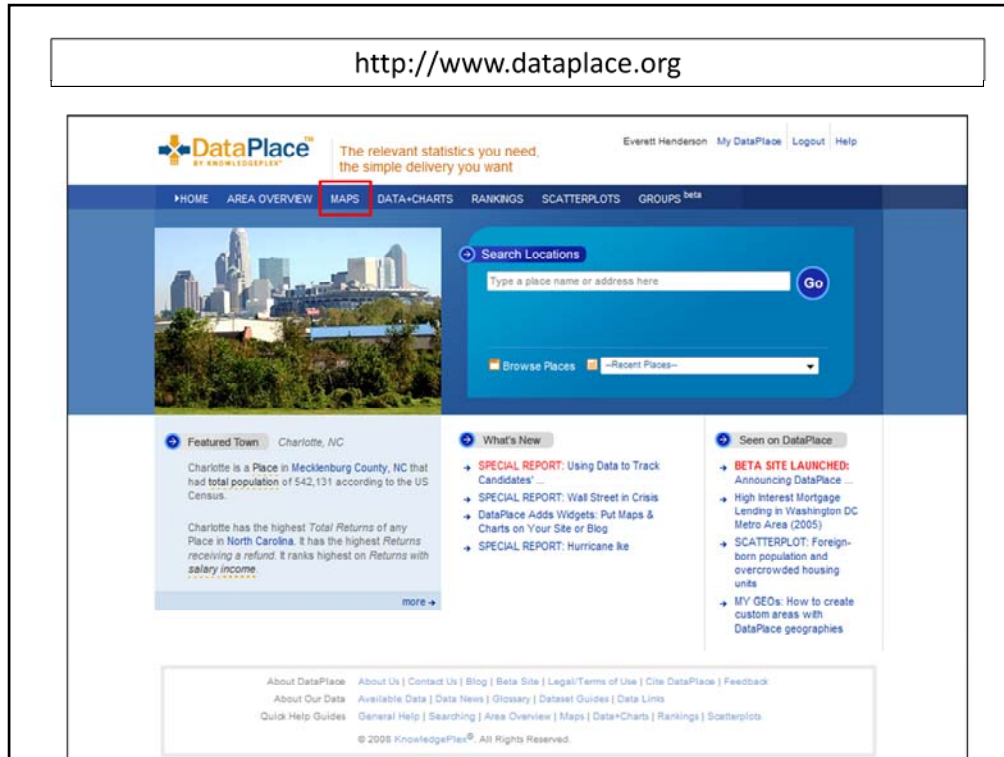# Using the DataPlace Website

Everett Henderson

DataPlace is a free website that, among other things, allows users to access demographic data from a variety of sources and make maps of this data through a very user-friendly interface. Maps can be made at whatever level of geographic aggregation the user chooses (state, county, city, census tract, etc.), but data may not always be available at smaller levels of aggregation, such as census tracts/neighborhoods.

This presentation will run through a quick demonstration of DataPlace's demographic data and mapping functionality.

The DataPlace homepage (shown in the accompanying PowerPoint slide) is located at www.dataplace.org. After bringing up the homepage, please click on the *Maps* link (highlighted in red on slide).
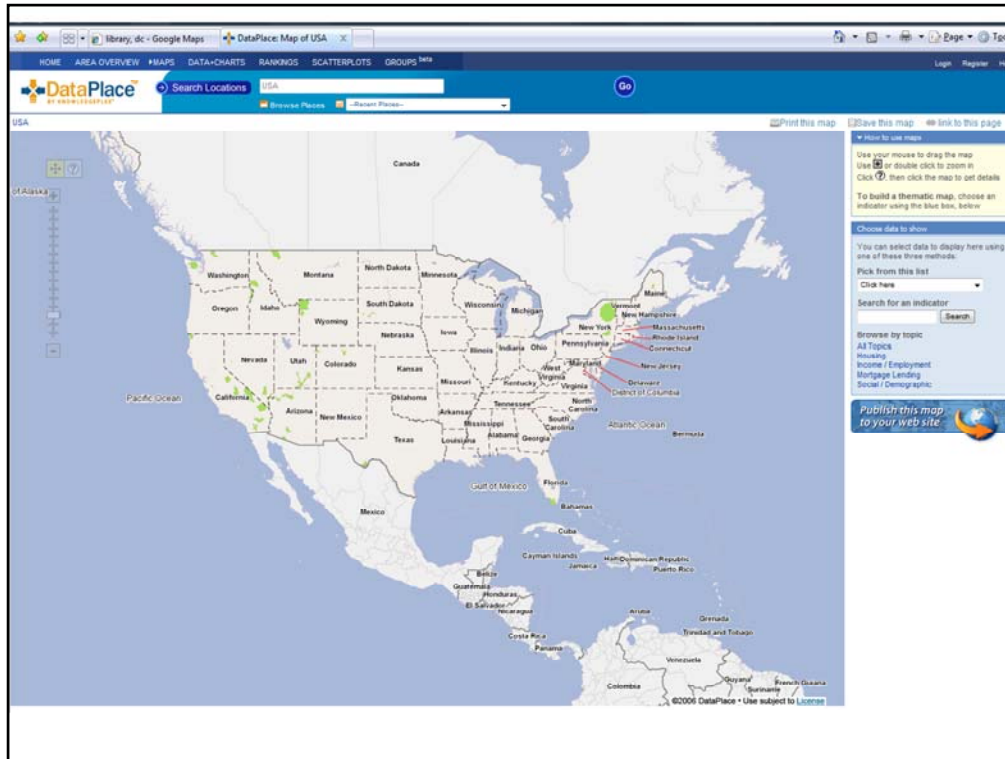
Clicking on the *Maps* link on the previous page brings us to a map of the continental United States. In order to drill down to a more specific level of geography, the user must enter a location in the text field above the map. For this demonstration, I chose to use the Petworth Neighborhood Library (located at 4200 Kansas Ave NW; Washington, DC), one of the outlets of the District of Columbia Public Library system.
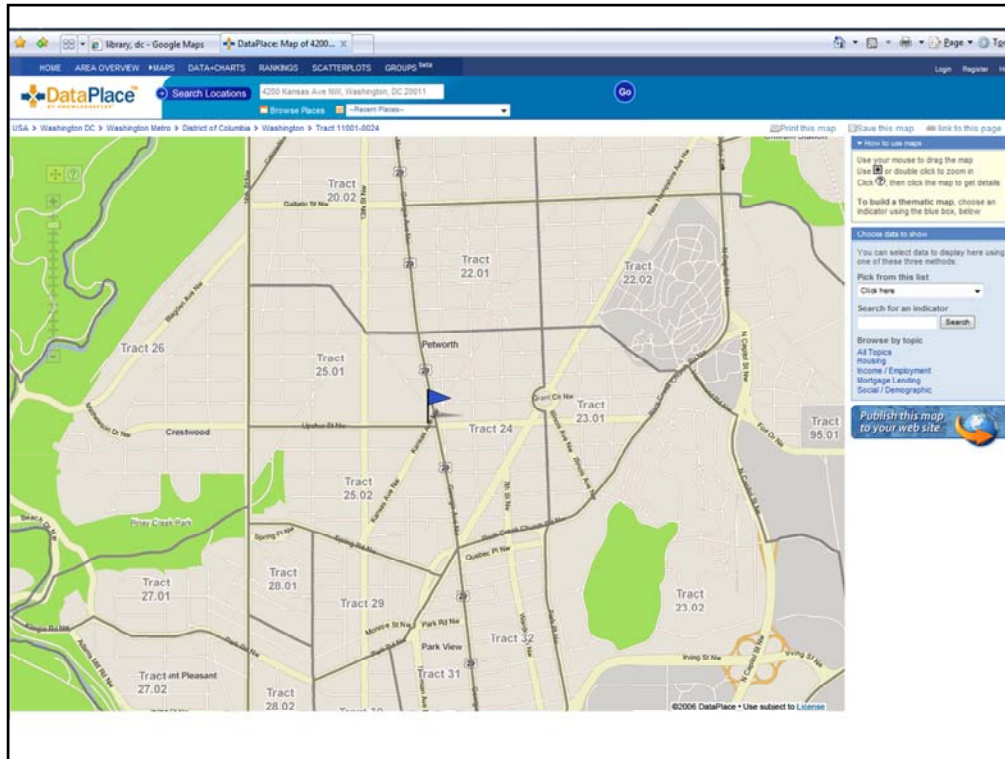
After entering a valid address, DataPlace finds the location and marks it, similar to Google Maps, Map Quest and other online mapping applications.

Note that you don't have to enter an exact address in order to make a map using DataPlace. If you wanted to look at a county, you'd just enter the name of the county in the box (for example: Arlington county, Virginia) and DataPlace would find it . The same can be done for cities, metropolitan areas and states.

Click on the *Area Overview* link above the map to move on to the next part of the demonstration.

The *Area Overview* page gives a short description of the location you chose. It is also a convenient method of looking at all of the variables that are available for mapping, along with the year that the variable was collected in. The bar under the Topics heading (highlighted in red) lists all of the categories that the variables are divided into: Overview (basically lists general variables), Social/Demographic, Income/Employment, Housing, Mortgage Lending and Federal Expenditures.

The Data Sources section in the right sidebar is highlighted as well. This is a list of all the data sources that are being used in the current *Area Overview* category; the list changes depending on which area overview category you have selected.

By hovering the mouse cursor over the statistics (the actual numbers) on the area overview page, you can get a preview of what that variable would look like if it were used to make a map of your selected location. By hovering the cursor over the histogram, you get a larger histogram that explains how your area ranks relative to other analogous levels of geography in the United States.

When you click on the numbers on the Area Overview page, DataPlace automatically makes a GIS map of that variable in the location you have chosen.
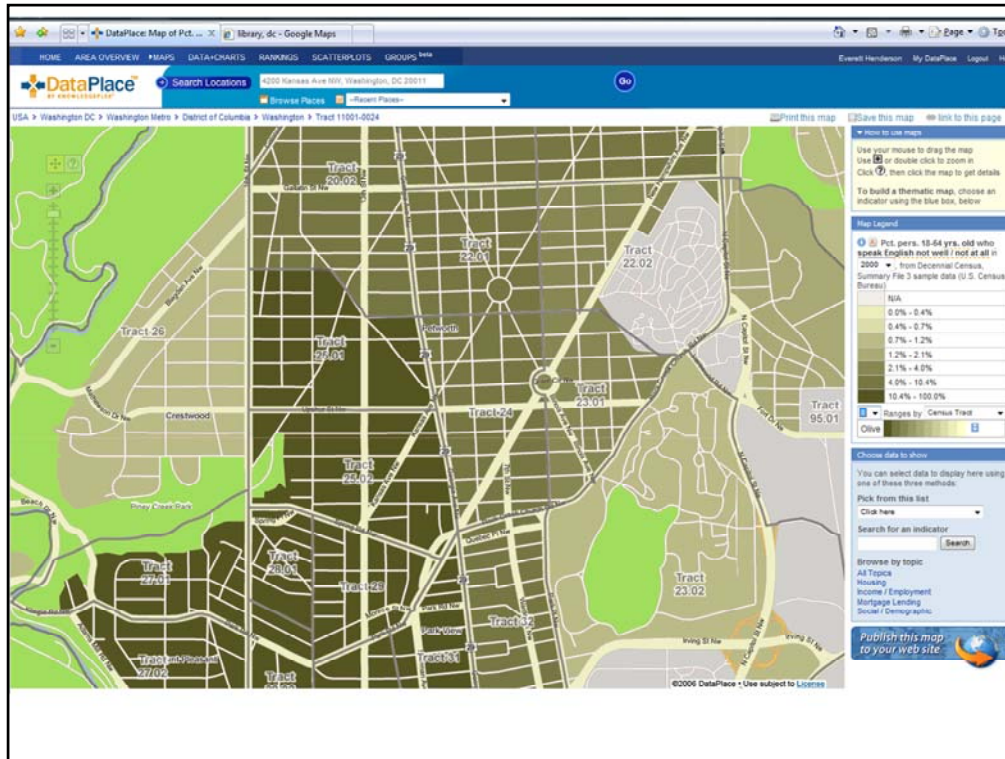
For this example, we chose to display the percentage of working age adults (18-64) in these Census tracts who either didn't speak English well or didn't speak it at all. Again, this variable was chosen directly from the *Area Overview* interface.

Note that the map display can be changed by adjusting the settings in the *Map Legend* on the right-hand side of the webpage. You can change the color, the number of ranges for the variable and the level of geographic aggregation through this menu.
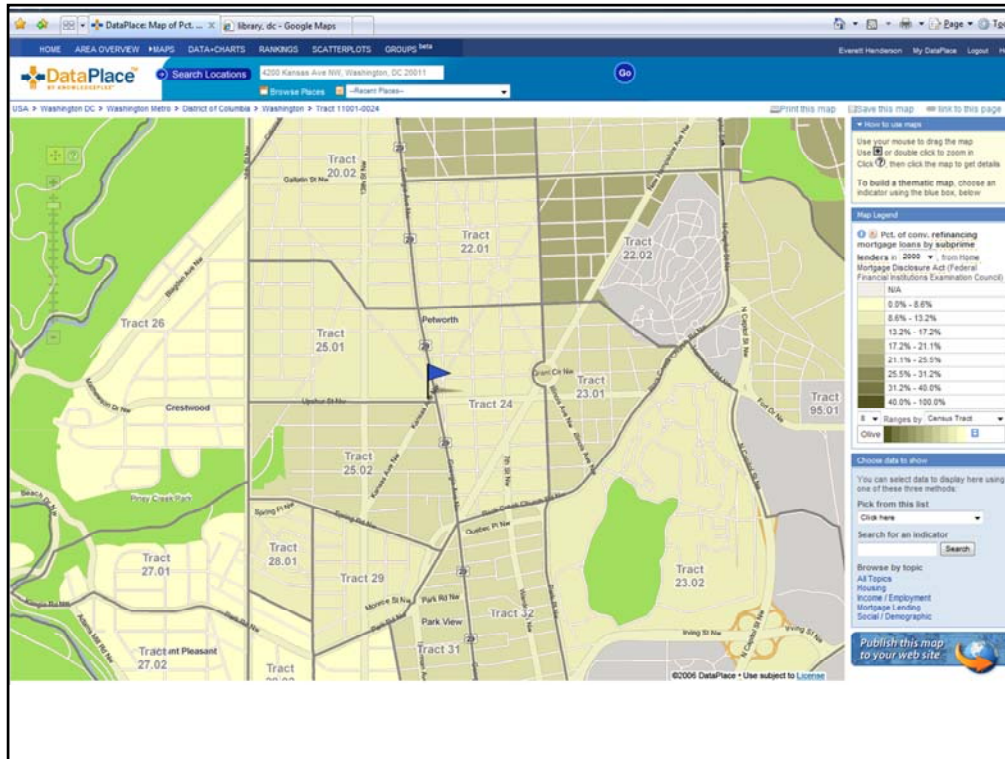
In this next example, we examine the percentage of conventional refinancing mortgage loans made by subprime lenders in the area, which is a proxy for the prevalence of subprime loans in a community.

In order to get to this screen, I simply clicked on *Area Overview* in the previous map and chose another variable; the website holds your location in memory so you don't have to enter it in every time you want to display a new variable.
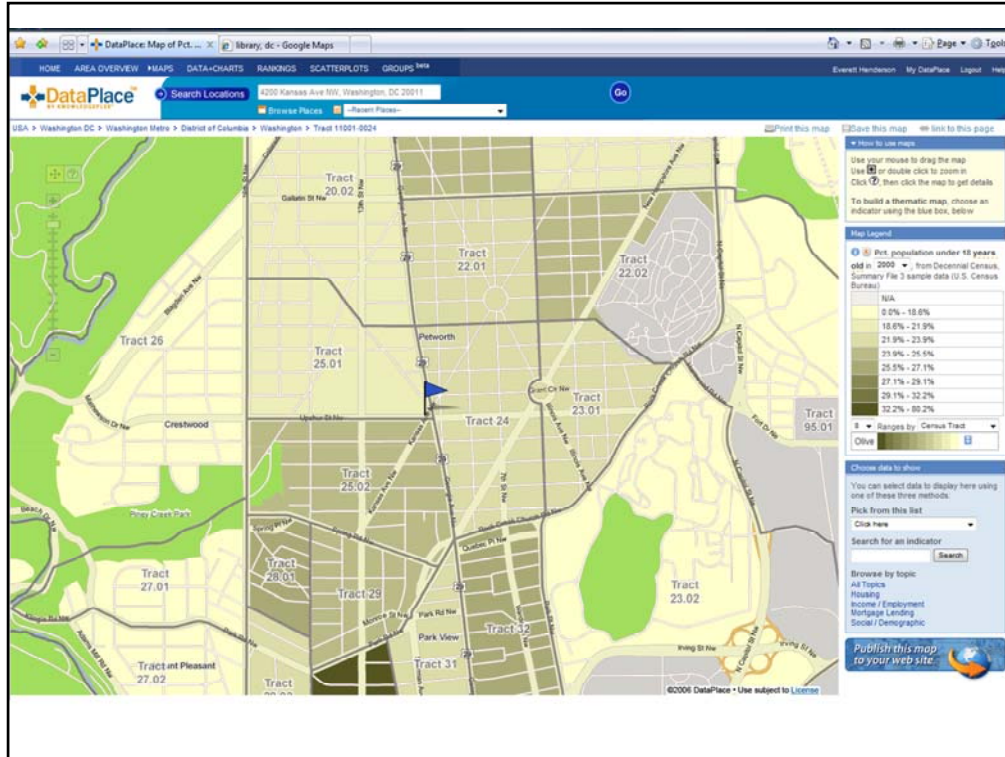
Here, we display the percentage of the population in the area that is under 18 years old. Again, this was done by clicking on *Area Overview* while viewing the map on the previous slide; then I simply clicked on the value of the variable I wanted to display.
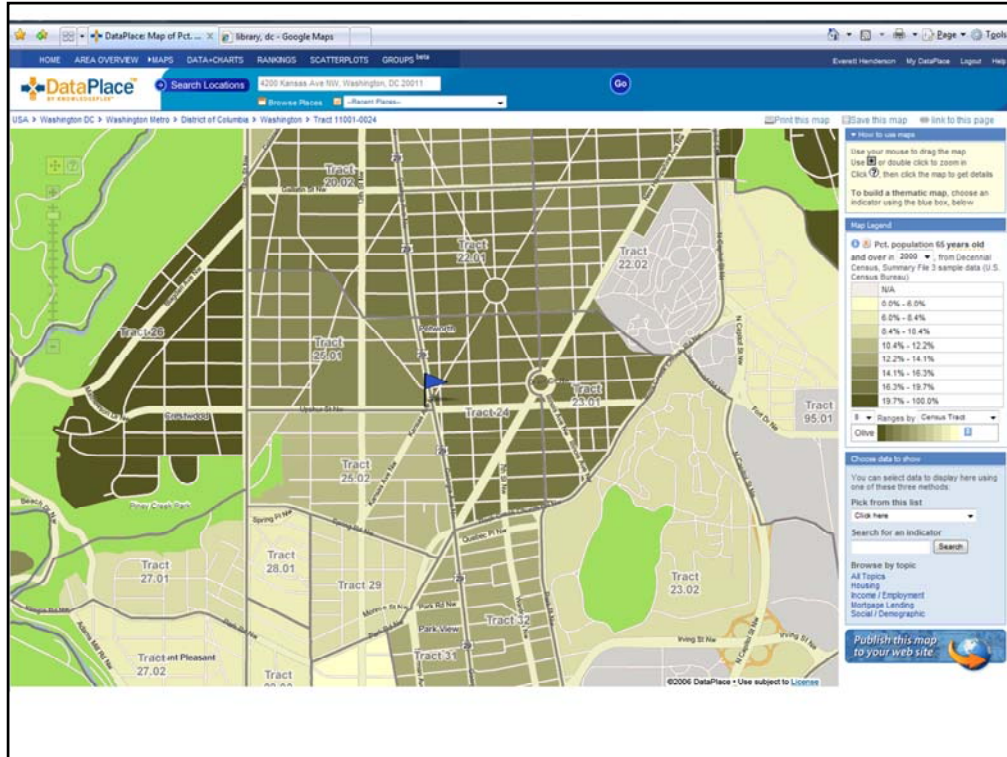
Here, we look at the other end of the age spectrum and map the percentage of the population that is aged 65 and older.
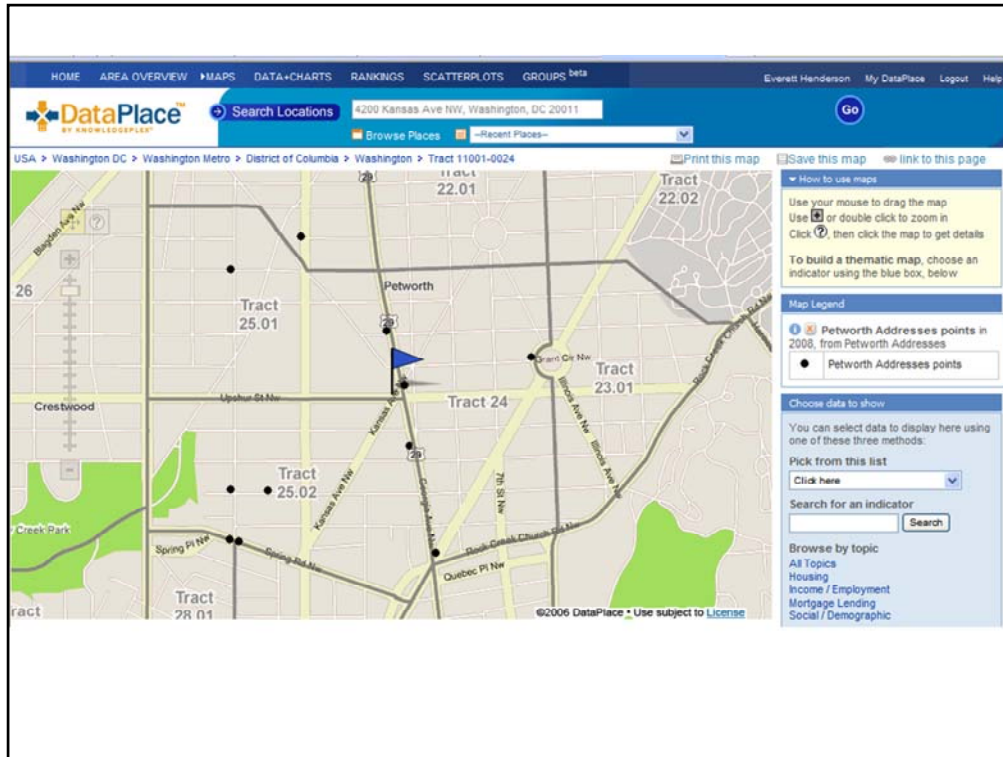
It is also possible to do address matching in DataPlace. Given a valid address, the address matching utility can pinpoint its exact location. Addresses can be submitted to the site in batch by putting them in an Excel spreadsheet and uploading that spreadsheet to DataPlace. This feature can be used to do things like map the addresses of cardholders to get a better idea of their distribution within the legal service area. DataPlace plans on adding features that will allow users to display the address-matched locations overlaid on demographic data so that users can get a better grasp of what their clientele looks like, as well as plan outreach in areas that have low library attendance rates.

The slide above displays the locations of sample addresses that I uploaded to DataPlace; they appear as black dots on the map.

Other Features

- Register on Dataplace so you can save maps for future reference

- New data sources are always being added

- PLS data will be integrated into Dataplace soon