Using Google Earth to Determine Bounding Coordinates for Cartographic Materials

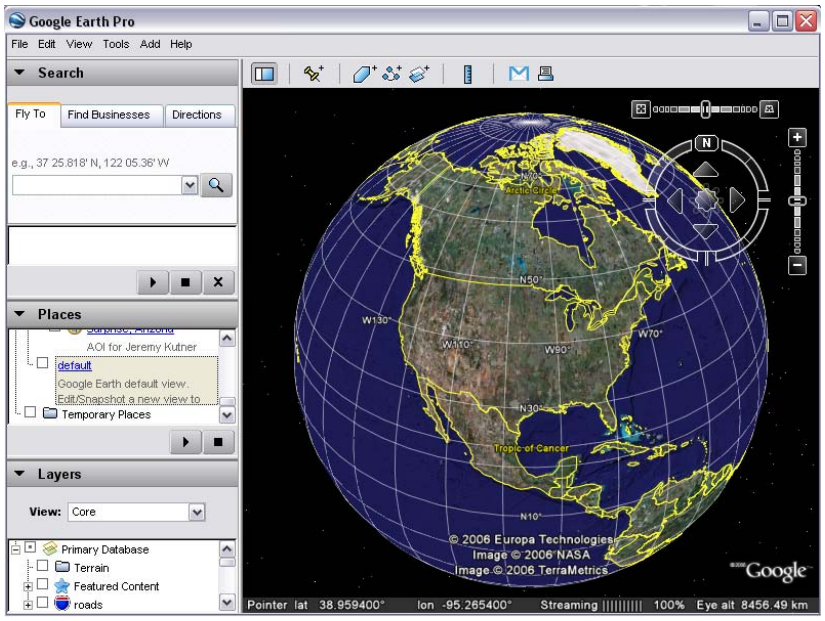
Setting Preferences for Google Earth

1. ***Install*** **Google Earth.**

2. ***Familiarize*** yourself with the **Google Earth User Guide** at http://earth.google.com/userguide/v4/ (a very quick introduction).

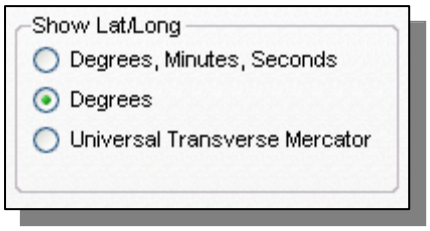
3. ***Start*** **Google Earth.**

4. On the **Main Menu**, ***go to*** **View>Grid** and ***activate*** the **Grid Overlay**, if it is not already active.



5. On the **Main Menu**, ***go to*** **Tools>Options**. ***Click on*** the **3D View Tab** if it is not already active.

6. Under the **Show Lat/Long item**, ***set your preference*** for displaying geographic coordinates. ***Click*** **OK** to apply the change.



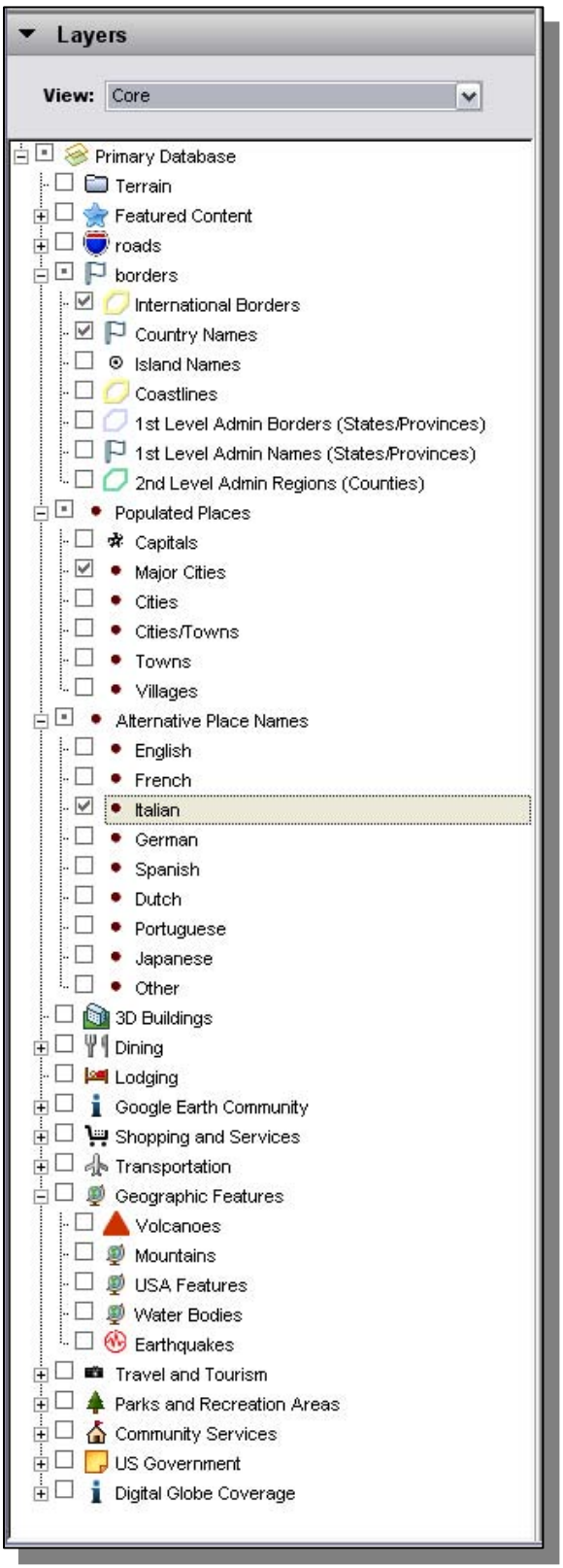
Degrees, Minutes & Seconds = 38°57'33.84"N, 95°15'55.44"W

Decimal Degrees = 38.959400°, -95.265400°

To convert latitude and longitude values from degree-minute-second (DMS) to decimal format, you can use this formula:

degrees + (minutes*1/60) + (seconds*1/3600)

Displaying Geographic Boundaries and Features



1. In the **Layers Side Panel**, ***Uncheck*** the **Primary Database** item to disable visibility of all layers.

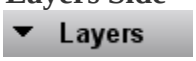
2. ***Expand*** the **borders** item by ***clicking*** on the **+ sign** to the left of the item.

3. ***Check*** the **checkboxes** of any **geographic boundaries** you wish to have displayed while working.

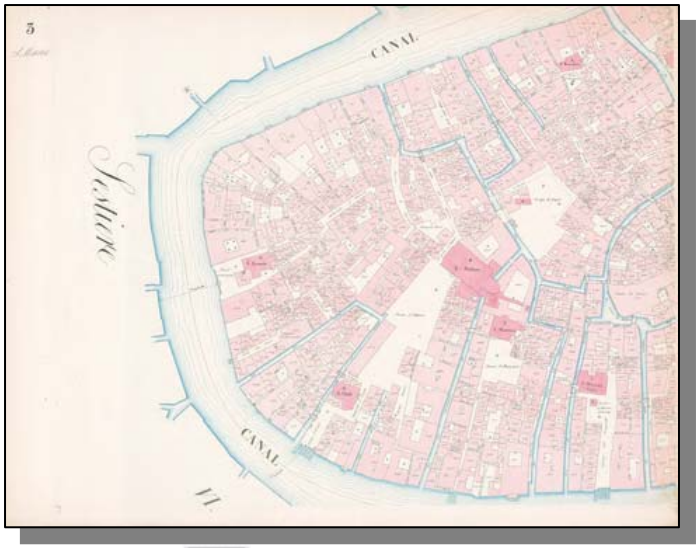
4. ***Expand*** the **Populated Places item** and ***check*** the **checkboxes** for the **feature classes** you wish to display.

5. If necessary, ***expand*** the **Alternative Place Names item** and ***select*** alternative display languages for features.

6. ***Activate*** the visibility of any other **geographic features** necessary for you work using the same methods

7. When finished, you can ***click*** on the **arrow** in the **Layers Side Panel Title Bar**  to reduce its visibility.

Searching for Places and Determining Bounding Coordinates.

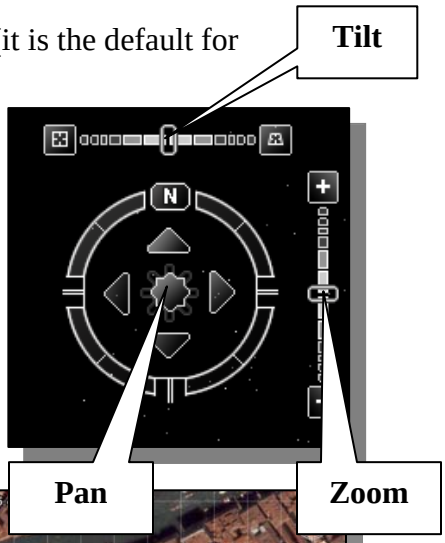


1. In the **Search Panel**, ***enter*** the **search term** **"Venice, Italy"** and ***click*** on the **Search Button** .



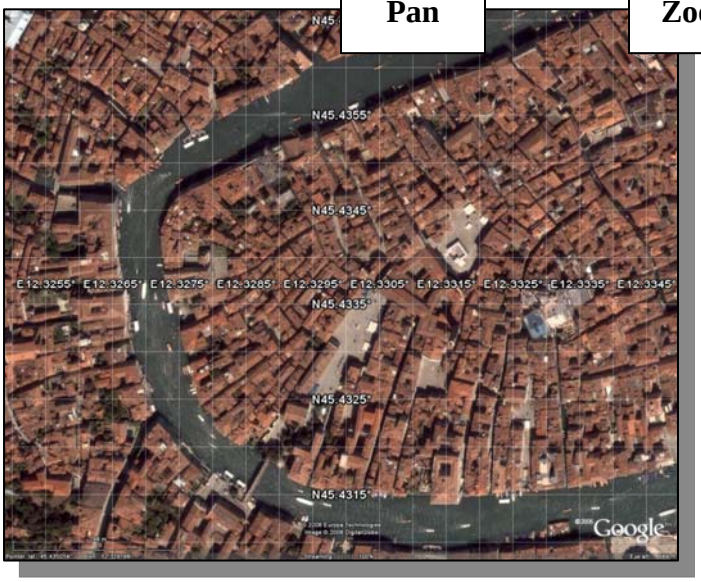
2. **Google Earth** will *"Fly"* to **Venice, Italy**.

3. ***Use*** the **Pan Tool**  (it is the default for your **Mouse Cursor**), to ***pan*** until you ***Locate*** the extent of the map of interest.



4. You can use the **Navigation Tools** (in the upper-right corner of the **Google Earth View Window**) to ***zoom in and out*** until you have a view that is satisfactory for determining coordinates.

5. Note that the **Lat/Long Grid** you enabled is *scale-dependent* and **graticules** are ***added*** and ***labeled*** as you ***zoom in and out*** of the view.



6. You should now be able to ***compare*** the **view in Google Earth** to the **extent of your map** and determine the **Bounding Coordinates** for the map.

7. Note that **Google Earth** displays the **Latitude/Longitude coordinates** for the position of your **Mouse Cursor** (to 6

decimal points) at the lower-left of the **View Window**.

Tips & Tricks

- If you are unable to find geographic features using the search tool, try enabling the Feature Names Layer for the class you are seeking and use the Navigation Tools to Zoom & Pan to the general area of the feature. Feature names available in the Layers Panel are not necessarily available to the Search Feature.

- You can use the Placemarks tool to create markers that will allow you to return to an area quickly from the Places Panel.