

How to get a good response on stackexchange

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Introduction

I'm Ian Turton, I work for Astun Technology providing coding, support and training for a range of open source programs:

- GeoServer
- QGis
- MapServer
- Python for GIS
- PostGIS

In my spare time I'm a moderator at gis.stackexchange.com and a regular contributor to GeoTools and GeoServer.

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Part III

HI! I'M TROY MCCLURE

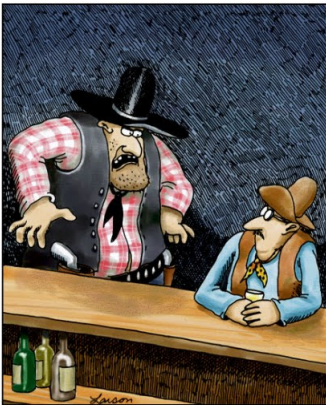


You may remember me from such FOSS4G rants as:

- FOSS4G 2015: Earning you Support instead of Buying it (video)
- FOSS4G 2019: The Secret life of open source developers (video)

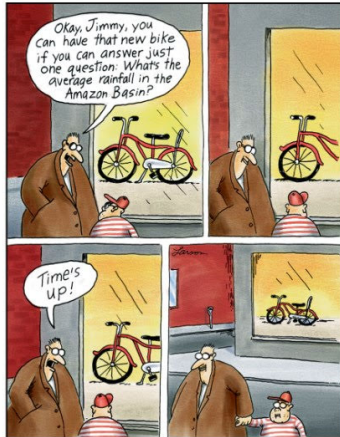
What is stackexchange?

- A site where you can ask (and answer) questions.



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"I asked you a question, buddy. ... What's the square root of 5,248?"



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Cutting corners to meet arbitrary management deadlines



Essential

Copying and Pasting from Stack Overflow

O'REILLY®

The Practical Developer
@ThePracticalDev



Geographic Information Systems

All Questions

Ask Question

19,281 questions

Newest

Active

Bountied

Unanswered

More ▾

Filter

83 votes

How to Start Web Mapping?

31 answers

62k views

I want to start working on a web map at work to map some of our statistics by city. I have an idea, but I'm not exactly sure where to start. Are there any definitive resources that provide step ...

web-mapping

references

Community wiki [Brian L](#)

7 votes

Use QGIS expressions to create geometries: difference between geometry generator and geometry by expression

✓ 1 answer

2k views

QGIS has a powerful expression machine that can be used (between other things) to create new geometries, based on existing layers. Basically, there are two options: Geometry generator and Geome...

qgis

expression

geometry-generator

[Babel](#) 42k asked Mar 31, 2021 at 8:55

105 votes

Identifying Coordinate System of Shapefile when Unknown?

16 answers

67k views

I have a Shapefile but its coordinate system is Unknown, and there is no *.prj file. How can I identify it now?

coordinate-system

shapefile

tools

extensions

identify

[com](#) 3,606 asked Mar 28, 2011 at 17:48

569 votes

Measuring accuracy of latitude and longitude?

✓ 7 answers

495k views

I have latitude and longitude as 19.0649070739746 and 73.1308670043945 respectively. In this case both coordinates are 13 decimal places long, but sometimes I also get coordinates which are 6 ...

latitude-longitude

accuracy

gis-principle

precision

[Saurabh](#) 5,817 asked Apr 18, 2011 at 7:16

I don't use stackexchange, should I care?

- The tricks to asking a good question also apply to any situation where you need to make a bug report.
- Or report an issue to your help desk or support team.



“All happy families users are alike; each unhappy family user is unhappy in its own way.”

— Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

- You are stuck, you are in a hurry and this stupid @#!\$% program won't do what you want it to
- Take a deep breath and remember:
 - No one owes you an answer (unless you are paying for support)
 - We do this for fun, if you are rude or unhelpful it isn't fun any more and we will stop
 - If you “break” the rules then your question will be closed
 - You need to try to make your question “right” the first time as most people will not revisit it

A few things to avoid at all costs

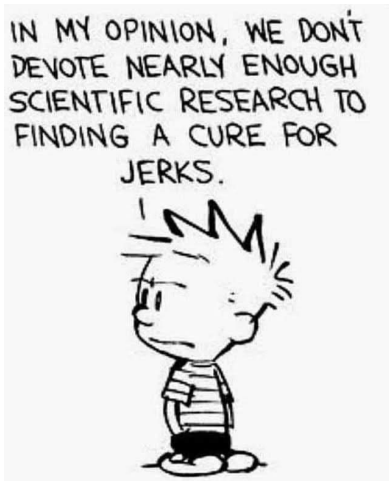
Spam

- Your post will be deleted
- Your account will be deleted
- No one will buy your product or use your app.



Trolling, provoking other users

- There is a Code of Conduct - respect the other users
- You will get banned
- No one will want to answer your questions

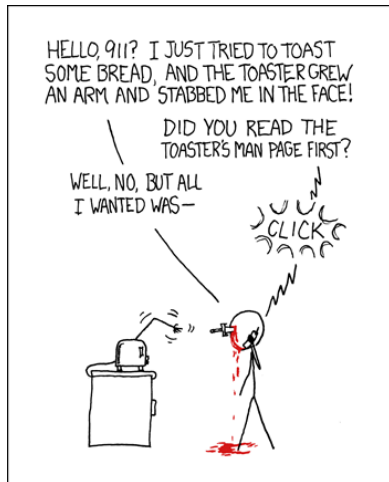


Paste in pictures of text

- It is hard to read on a phone
- Google and other robots can't read it
- I can't cut and paste it into my editor to test your code
- Your question will be closed

Read the fine manual

- Check to see if any one has asked your question before
- Google or the site search bar will help here
- Your question will probably be closed if it is a duplicate
- Read the local rules and guide lines in the tour (you get a badge for this)



Reposting a closed question

- when your question is closed this is a sign that the community would like you to fix it
- So if you just repost it an hour later then we'll close that too.
- When you edit your question it will automatically be considered for reopening
- If we think it's a duplicate and you don't add something to make this clear



Getting a (good) answer

Ask a focused question

“Focus on questions about an actual problem you have faced. Include details about what you have tried and exactly what you are trying to do.”

“Not all questions work well in our format. Avoid questions that are primarily opinion-based, or that are likely to generate discussion rather than answers.”

But not too focused

- we may well need to see why you are asking a particular thing
"I have various shape files (.tab, .mif, .shx, .kml) and would like to parse crs from them."
- Why?
- What is your end goal?
- Some questions are just so off the wall that we can't start answering them

Use tags to help people locate (or ignore) your question

“All questions are tagged with their subject areas. Each can have up to 5 tags, since a question might be related to several subjects.”

- when you are searching you can click on a tag to find all questions related to it.
- Regular users may highlight (or hide) questions based on the tag(s) that are attached to them.

Gain reputation

- If people find your question useful they will upvote it,
- if they don't then they will down vote it
- You can also gain reputation by answering questions - try it you are probably an expert on something.
- You can also gain badges (there is even one for reading the help page)
- We're more likely to help people who have contributed to the site

Tell me what you are trying to do

"I am trying to calculate areas of some polygons using the Geometry -> \$area function in the Field Calculator of QGIS 3.22.3, but every time I click OK to complete the task it is crashing. I have no idea as to why this is the case. Can anyone help?"

- How are you calculating that?
- What projection is your data in?
- What operating system?
- Which data?
- Can I reproduce this on my machine?

Show me what went wrong and what you expected

"I'm currently in a project where I need to identify whether the road exist in an intersection or not. However there are 700 roads which is a hassle if I do it manually. Is it possible to identify whether the road intersects or not through QGIS commands?"

- do you care about bridges? or do you want any intersection?
- What format is your data in?
- what tool(s) are you using?
- A screen shot can really help

Show me what GeoServer (or MapServer) thinks is going on

“Can you please help with removing this error ... after adding a new community module I restarted geoserver and I cannot load geoserver home page. I have added mbtiles for correct version of geoserver (2.10.1). I also try start geoserver service manually but not works.”

Error message:

HTTP ERROR: 503

Problem accessing /geoserver/web/. Reason:

Service Unavailable

- The log file will show what is going on
- Turn up the logging level if necessary
- We only need to see the bit with the actual error in (try to do it again and just show us that bit)

The relevant part

```
Caused by: org.springframework.beans.factory.NoSuchBeanDefinitionException  
    at org.springframework.beans.factory.support.DefaultListableBeanFactor  
    at org.springframework.beans.factory.support.AbstractBeanFactory.getMe  
    at org.springframework.beans.factory.support.AbstractBeanFactory.doGet  
    at org.springframework.beans.factory.support.AbstractBeanFactory.getBe  
    at org.springframework.beans.factory.support.BeanDefinitionValueResolv
```

For java look for **Caused by:** most of the lines above will have been GUI issues caused by the actual issue.

Don't ask the same question again

I am trying to overlay a timeseries shapefile over a geographic basemap, but the coordinate systems are not the same. I have set the project CRS to EPSG:4326, hence making the basemap in lat/long.

- We have several hundred copies of this question
 - Don't **set** the projection of your data to something new, **reproject** your data instead!
- Use the search bar or google or other search engine to check if there are questions that solve your problem

What have you tried and why didn't that fix your issue

"I have read many posts but I didn't solve my problem. I don't find this GeoServer layer in my map."

- Which posts?
- What did they say?
- What went wrong in each case?
- Otherwise we will probably suggest the same solutions again.

So you got an answer (or didn't)

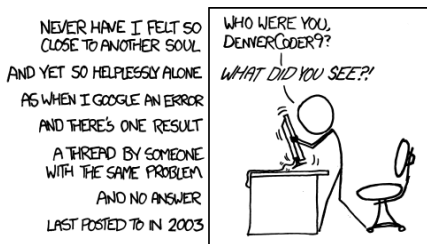
If the answer worked for you Accept it

- By accepting the right answer you signal to future users that this is a good answer
- If you find a good answer to someone else's question then upvote it, this tells future users that it is a good answer
- Remember stackexchange is all about reputation



No answers, so I fixed it myself

- Then answer (and accept) your own question
- This is perfectly “legal”
- You get double points for it
- If you find yourself solving a tricky problem and want to make a note of it to find later, ask and answer a question



Conclusions

Summary

- Be polite, we are all volunteers
- Search before you ask
- Respect the rules
- Vote early and vote often
- Answer other peoples questions, earn your support

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