This is Branding your Story Maps, and I'm Alison, a Javascript developer on the StoryMaps team.

This presentation is about making the visual style of your Story Maps fit with your existing brand style guidelines.
There are a lot of considerations that go into an organization's branding style guide, from colors, logos, and fonts, to taglines and trademarks, to photo style, to the voice and point of view of your text copy.

Today we're going to talk about how you incorporate the first few -- particularly colors and logos -- into your Story Maps.
We are going to talk today about customizations you can do without downloading and self-hosting our apps. This means you can keep your app hosted on arcgis online or portal, and do everything either through the builder or through ago-assistant.

Here's a chart of the possible customization levels in our five most popular apps. Green means you can definitely do this without downloading, and orange has some caveats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customization</th>
<th>Tour</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Shortlist</th>
<th>Cascade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change text colors in builder</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change background colors in builder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(older layouts)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change all colors in ago-assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add custom css via <code>&lt;style&gt;</code> tag</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add custom html in text panel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply Shared Theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>logo only</td>
<td>logo only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change loading indicator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(loads a second after the default gif)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customization requiring downloading

- Add custom html anywhere besides the text panel
- Add javascript

For all templates, these two customizations always require downloading and self-hosting.
So I'm assuming you're coming to this with your own pre-defined brand colors. Today, I'm going to use some of Esri's brand colors to change the look and feel of a Map Journal and Map Series app that I've already created.

The larger blue and green squares are our Core Colors, so I'll try to use those prominently when changing the colors of my app. The other blues and greens are shades of the Core Colors that I can use for accent colors, and I've pulled in our grays for backgrounds and text.
Most of our applications do come with a number of well-thought-out color scheme choices that we call "themes". These are available in the WYSIWYG builders, and all you need to do is choose one of these themes to change the colors of your application. You can see the choices for both Map Journal side layout and Map Series tabbed layout.

Of course, for this talk, we're assuming that you're coming with your own specific brand colors that you want to incorporate into your Story Maps to promote your brand identity. So we're going to see how easy it is to do that.

The good news is, you do NOT need to download and self-host your Story Maps to be able to do this. You don't even need to know CSS. All you need is to know is hex colors, and how to use ago-assistant.
AGO-Assistant, you ask?

So for those of you who haven't, ago-assistant is an online tool built by Esri's National Government team to edit the data behind your ArcGIS Online or Portal items.

We have a blog post about how to use it on the Story Maps Developers Corner. https://developerscorner.storymaps.arcgis.com/editing-the-configuration-of-a-story-map-7b984560b7c2
The data behind your items, you ask?

Story Maps are a combination of app code that we write and data that you put into it. That data is stored as a type of text file called JSON, and when a user loads your Story Map, our app code reads your app's data, interprets it, and displays it to the user. And when you as an author make changes in the Builder, it saves those changes back to this data file.

Now, the easiest way to change the data in that file is to use the Builder. But you don't have to. You can edit the JSON directly using AGO-Assistant. This way, you can gain access to options that aren't available in the Builder, including custom colors.

So in that mess of text you see on the right, there's a section that specifies what colors are being used...
... and it looks like this. This is our gray default theme for Map Journal.

dotNav is the background of the side bar with the navigation dots on it, and also the background of the Legend dropdown.

panel is the background color for the main text area,
text is the text color for the main text area,
textLink is the color used for both regular links and story actions in the main text area,

softBtn is used for the dots in the dotNav as well as the dropdown arrow for the Legend, and softText is the label for the Legend.
And this is what it actually looks like.

So what I want to do is incorporate some of my brand colors into this application.

I want to make the dotNav that Core Blue color, use the light gray for the panel background and the dark gray for the text, and then put the Core Green in as the link color in the main text. I'm also going to change the softBtn and softText colors to contrast better with the dotNav Core Blue.
This is what my new theme colors will look like in the JSON, and I've included the color swatches.

Note an important step here is to change the "name" from "side-default-1" or whatever it was to "side-modified". That key word "modified" needs to be in there for the app to recognize this is a custom color scheme, and do something slightly different.

(Demo – mapjournal id 2e6ea074d2dc4e3d911e11ba9a186496)
Here is another variation of our brand colors this time with the panel background using our Core Blue color. The green has been dropped from this because that blue panel is going to be a lot of color in the app.

(demo, same mapjournal)
We can do the same thing with Map Series. The only difference here is that Map Series has a lot more colors than Map Journal.

It has two text colors in the header, as well as a default, hover, and active state for its tabs. Here is what the JSON looks like for the default theme, with color swatches next to the key colors.
And this is where those colors fit in visually. Hopefully most of the names of the colors are self-explanatory, though note softBtn and softText are less obvious.
Here is a close up of the six tab colors needed – the first tab is active, the second tab is the default unselected state, and the mouse is over the third tab, activating its hover state.
When you're designing your brand theme for Series, you just need to make sure you provide brand-appropriate colors for all these different properties.

I'm going to emphasize our Core Green this time, and do something a little different than most Tabbed Map Series. I'm going to make all the tab states the same background as the header, so you don't even see the tab outlines at all – just the section text.

I'm also going to put in a lighter blue for the links in the panel content, and the map controls (Legend, Overview map)

(Demo, MapSeries id: 4333011d8a824257bd58a0549b987bd1)
But wait, you say. This is all well and good if I only ever have like two Story Maps. But I work for an Organization. With a Brand. And lots of other people across my organization make lots of Story Maps. I don't want to go through all of this for every one! (or trust other people to go through all this)
Well, you're in luck. ArcGIS Online Organizations and Portal both support something called Shared Themes. These are seven colors and a logo can be set by an org admin, and serve as a common color palette for some Story Maps and other app templates.

You can see the seven colors here – header background and text, body background, text, and link, and button background and text.
I'm going to set the header background to our Core Blue, #007ac2. The header text needs to contrast with that, so I'll set it to white, #ffffff.
I'll keep the Body simple with a white background, #ffffff, and a dark gray text, #555555, but put my dark green in as the link color, #288835. And the button color will be the lighter blue, #c7eaff, with the darker blue text, #00619b.

I can also add a logo and a logo click-through link that will be used across apps.
And here's the result of those changes in a new Map Journal and new Map Series.

This "Shared Theme" of your organization will be applied to all new Map Journals and Map Series. It will also show up as an option in the Settings > Theme tab of already created Journals and Series, but you as the author would need to choose that theme for it to affect these existing Story Maps.
This is by request from my first presentation on branding -- someone asked how to change the loading indicator that appears on app load and when maps and other media are loading in the main stage area.

You can definitely do this if you download and self-host, and it's going to look better that way. However, you can do this without downloading, in stories that take custom css (Journal, Series, Tour, Shortlist). The catch is that the custom css loads after the default story css, so as the app itself is loading, you'll see the default loading gif for about a second, and then it will change to your style. For subsequent times the loading indicator is shown (for instance, while loading new maps), you'll only see your specified gif. However, note that embedded apps will still show the default loading indicator – your css changes won't affect any apps or websites that are embedded in your Story Map.

See this Developers’ Corner post for where/how to add style tags to Map Journal and Map Series: https://developerscorner.storymaps.arcgis.com/create-buttons-for-story-actions-in-map-series-ec71bae1b9b9
Resources

• storymaps.arcgis.com
• Story Maps Developers Corner
• Story Maps blog on arcgis.com
• GeoNet Story Maps forum
• github.com/esri – search for “storymaps”

I would encourage all of you to stick around, or come back later, and talk to us for a more personalized discussion about Story Maps, and what we can do for you, and what you guys are using our stuff for. We love to see cool new things, and sometimes our best ideas come from you guys, so maybe the interesting customization you’re doing today could inspire our next new feature in a future release.
Take the survey!