Quality Guidelines for Real Maps

Table Of Contents

- 1 In general
- 2 Realistic
- 3 Authentic
- 4 Characteristic
- 5 Painstaking
- 6 Divergence
- 7 And now...?

1 In general

One of the complex features of LOTUS is the ability to load multiple maps within the multiplayer mode to drive on a even bigger map. This maps is working as one big map. You may drive from Hamburg via fast train to Berlin, if these maps exists. LOTUS will load these three maps at once.

To ensure this feature the maps have to follow the realistic world model, if not the distance between two cities would be wrong. Some map creators won't build a real map but in a real place, may be somewhere in the desert or in the ocean? We don't want to have these maps in the real world, because when flying around the earth, these maps would destroy the "reality" of the real world.

The solution is to use two planets. Both are geographically correct, but they have different rules when building on the planet. When building on the fictional planet everyone can find a place to build and reserve some tiles. The amount of tiles you can reserve is limited, so you can't reserve the whole world at once.

The real planet has restricted access and only projects matching the guidelines described in here are allowed. Payware add ons are only allowed on the real planet, because payware has to have higher standards than freeware maps.

The quality guidelines are based on three pillars. Maps from the real world (and also maps, which aim at the qualification for the real world) have to be:

- authentic
- representative and
- build with a high detail rate.

2 Realistic

The first and important point when building a real map is the realistic transfer from the reality into the simulation, so you can clearly recognize the map and its locations. We just want to clarify that, we think most people know about this point. Imagine if other people from the city your project is based on would recognize

the locations you built on your map. So the first step is to build realistic roads with its furniture based on the aerial view you load into the map editor. Not only the road course is mentioned by that also the looking of the road and the sidewalks, curbstones, cobblestone and so on. You only have to concentrate on the roads or section you can drive on. Roads, which are not important for the simulation, doesn't need this high detail rate.

3 Authentic

Basically we have no problem, when you won't build every object on your map by yourself, maybe you take objects from other authors or from the base content of LOTUS. Maybe the sidewalk has an other shade of gray than in reality, this is not the end of the map. The important thing is, that the map will stay authentic.

This is also a point when building anachronisms: Its hard to create a historical map, you have to keep an eye on specialties from the century you build. Brands from the current time should be ruled out of the textures or buildings, which doesn't exist back then, shouldn't be part of your map. Or maybe a traffic sign in an other country may look different to the traffic sign from the base content, so it would be a shame to use the base content. All these factors decrease the authenticity.

Beside anachronisms, which you should avoid, you can replace the content, you would probably create by yourself, with content that does already exist, when the difference between the objects is very small. Regarding Berlin there are older buildings with 3 or 4 floors, that are placed all around in Berlin. If they are nearly the same at an other position you can of course use them twice or more. But you obviously should not place this building every second corner. The main consequence from this is to find a good way to not build already existing content twice, but provide a high amount of objects for your map, so the map keep its own flair. A map aiming at the real planet can't be consist of the base content in a mixed up way. On the other side, when building nearly every object on your own, you have to keep in mind, that this is a long term process to finish the map. To shorten this process you may think about to split you map in areas, where the vehicle you drive, is standing still or is driving. When the user is not moving the vehicle, he has more time to spend on looking at the scenery. Of course in this areas, e.g. near traffic lights or near stations, the scenery should be more complex, while when passing by the scenery with 50 km/h, you barely can spot details. An other point is the direction of the building. When the building is standing in the direction you are driving, you will see it only for a very short period of time, while a building maybe standing at a street corner, you'll see quite long. If a building is for a longer period of time in your eyesight, you don't want to see a building you have seen on plenty of other maps. So please keep in mind to set the right objects at the right place and build as many as needed objects on your own. More own objects results in a more authentic map.

4 Characteristic

This point is not quite far away from the authentic feature, we talked about before. There are sights or special places on your map, which would destroy the integrity of the environment, if they would be missing. This could be churches, in general complex buildings or a special kind of architecture. Examples for this could be timbered houses or a "Hundertwasserhaus". To say it clearly, if the building is very unique, it can't miss on your map.

These objects promotes the recognition value a lot, so the user won't bother about other places on your map, where you made compromises. You can't save resources on objects, that make your map characteristic.

5 Painstaking

The first thing you look for is realism. After you cared about realism, the next big thing is: make an effort. Let quality stand in front of quantity. We know that at some point the 200 th building is a bit annoying, but the result is worth it to keep grinding and by the way we expect you to do so to meet this guideline. It's obvious for everyone if a map spreads a charm or if the map is very basic.

We rate the map by its scenery with its details and also by the technical features LOTUS has in stock like traffic demand, night textures, realistic timetables and so on.

6 Divergence

Beside the high stake of realism we allow some differences to the reality, if this difference is not due to save time, effort or work. They have to have a concrete purpose. You can put some details from the history into the map, like reactivating some old rails. The main thing you have to look for is, that these additions are only an addition to the reality, not to change it entirely. An example is the extension of an underground line further than it exists in reality, but of course you have to take care about the architecture of stations and tunnels, they should be matching to the rest of the underground line.

Tell us the story behind this extension and why you think it can't miss in LOTUS.

7 And now...?

If you are already building your real map and you can present some screenshots, give us a sign and we port you map to the real planet. We provide a whole subforum, which supports you in the process of building a real map and porting it into the real planet.