

Creating content in Google Earth enables a user to create personal Google Earth files. While this is not exceptionally difficult, there are some specifics that you need to know.

### **The Interface:**

Information in Google Earth is presented in placemarks. These are the push-pins or other icons that you click on when you are using Google Earth. Clicking on a placemark opens a placemark window, and displays the associated content.

Placemarks can hold many different types of information:

- Text
- Image
- Hyperlinks to other Web content
- YouTube video (only on PC machines)
- Other specialized Web content, such as podcasts (from Evoca.com) and PowerPoint files (Slideshare.net)

**Version:** These are instructions for Google Earth v 4.2 (most recent version at the time of this writing).

**Adding Content:** users can add text into a placemark by simply typing, however, normal formatting like in a word processor is not available.

Adding other content (from the bullet list above) requires entering HTML code into the placemark window.

Because most users do not know how to write HTML code, two options are available:

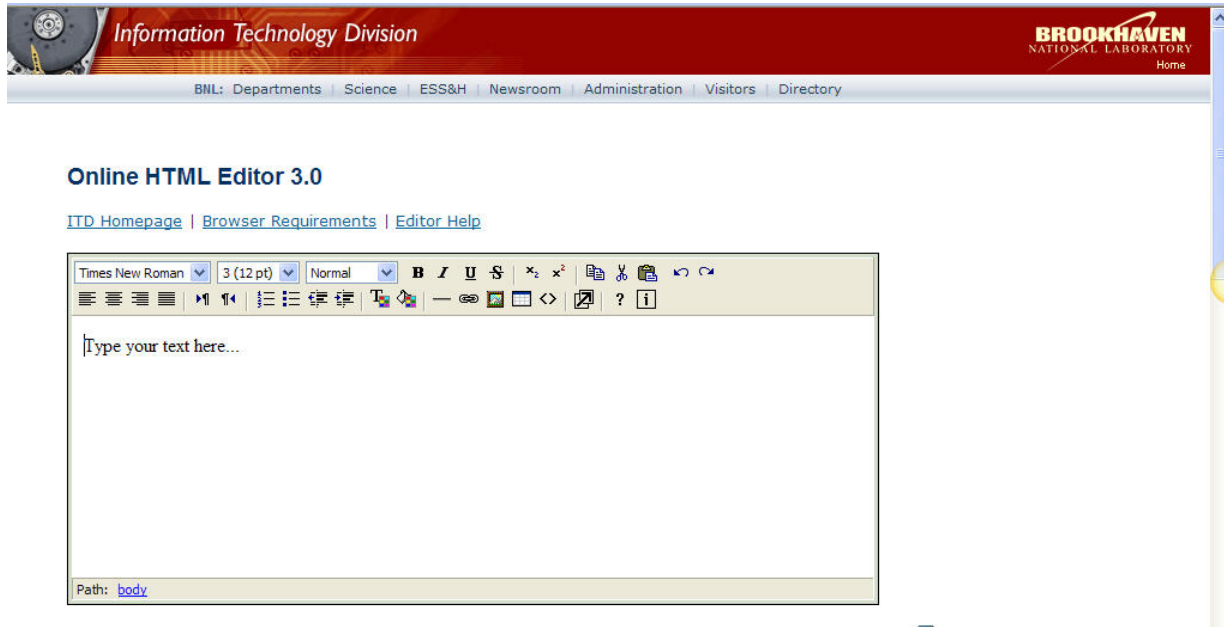
1. Use Web page editing software such as Dreamweaver
2. Use an online HTML editor

To address the HTML requirement, I suggest using a very simple and nice online editor from the Brookhaven National Laboratory. On a PC, I suggest using Internet Explorer (Firefox works, but some functions perform inconsistently). On a Mac, Firefox must be used.

The editor can be found at: <http://www.bnl.gov/itd/htmleditor/apps/>

The purpose of using the editor is to create content in a user-friendly interface (in the case of a Web editor, a WYSIWYG environment-What You See Is What You Get-pronounced wizzy wig), access the HTML code for that created content, and then transfer it to the Google Earth placemark window.

This is what the editor looks like:

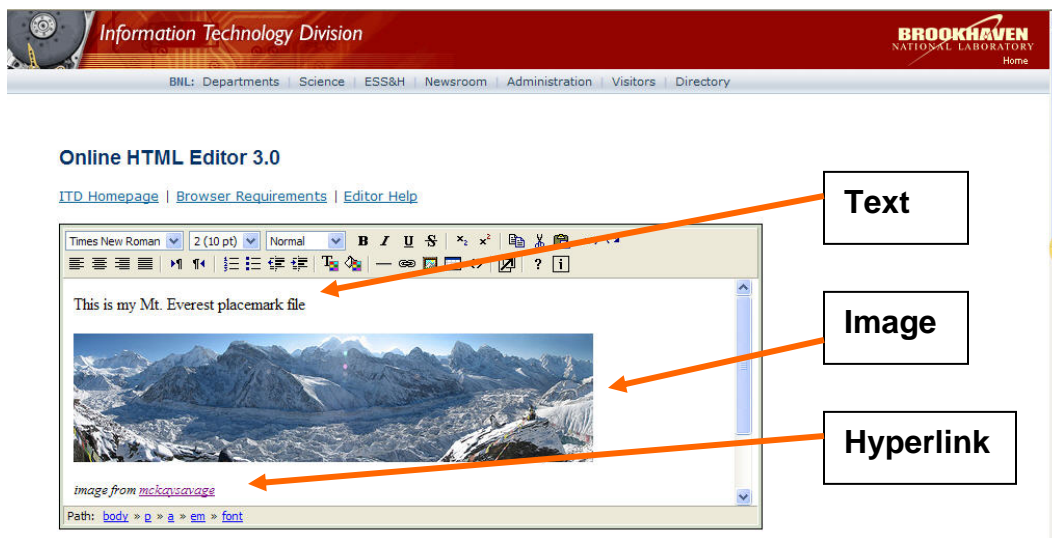


## Adding Content:

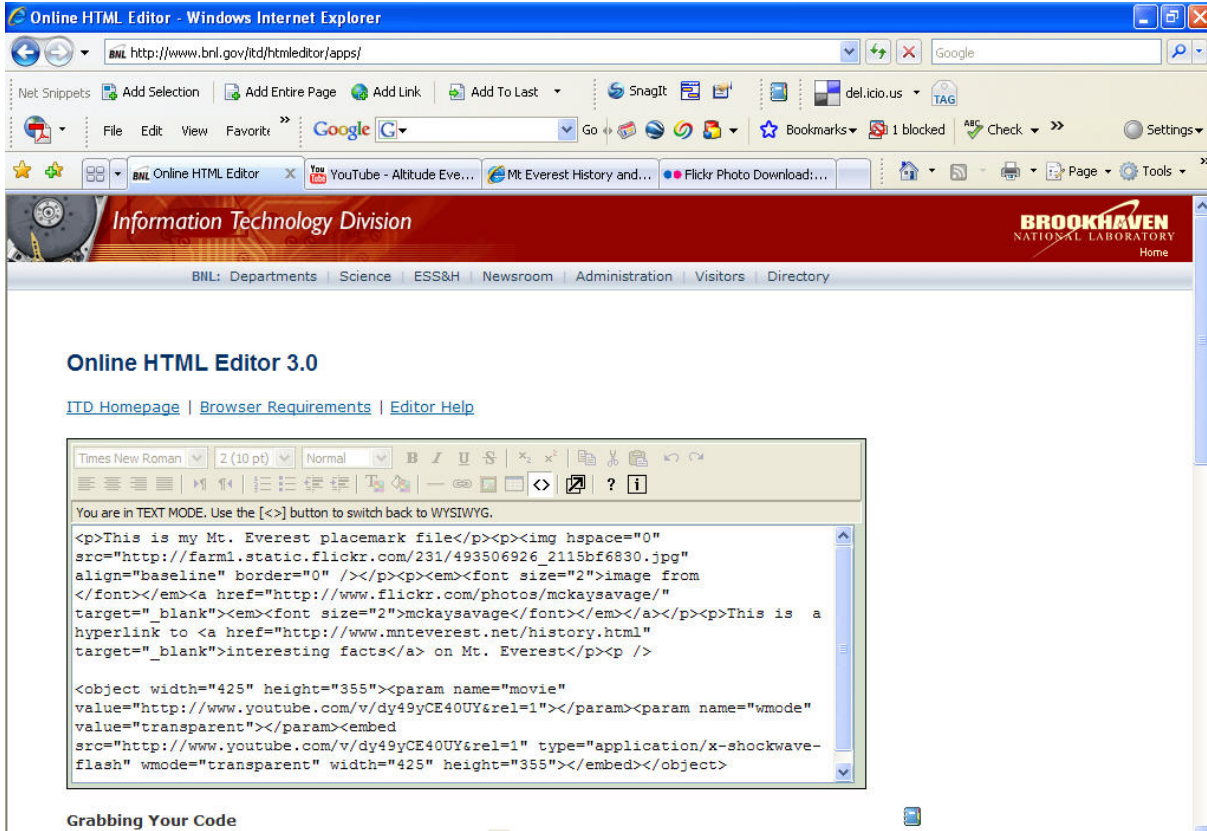
**Text:** To add the text, simply type. Note: you are creating HTML computer code, don't expect this editor to have the same features of a word processor!

**Imagery:** To add an image, locate an image online, get the Web address of the image by going to the properties, copy the address, click the image tool, and paste the address in.

**To add a hyperlink (or URL) to other Web sites:** type the text you want to become the link, hilite it, and use the link tool in the tools menu, and then paste or type the link (URL) in. Here is what it might look like:

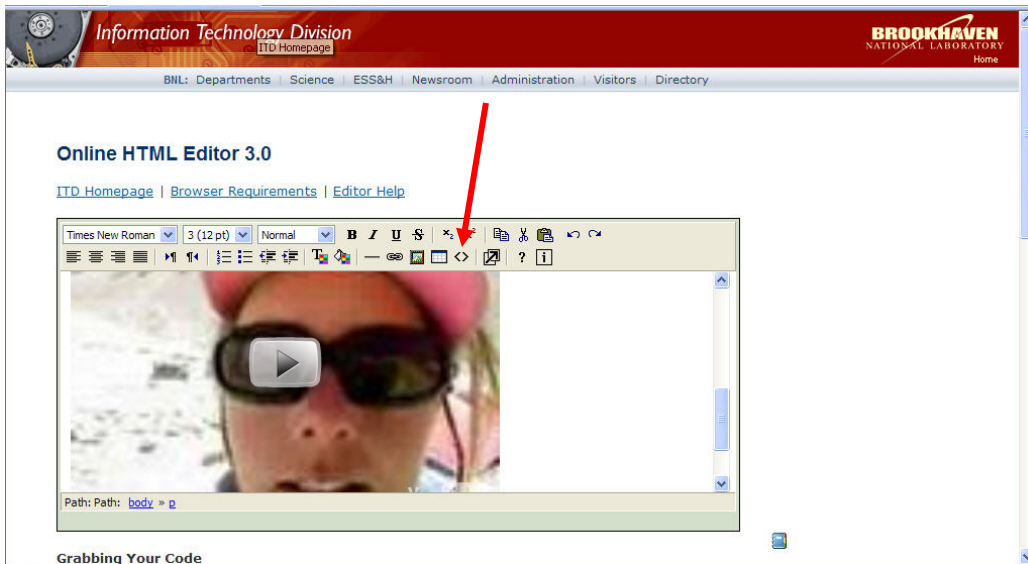




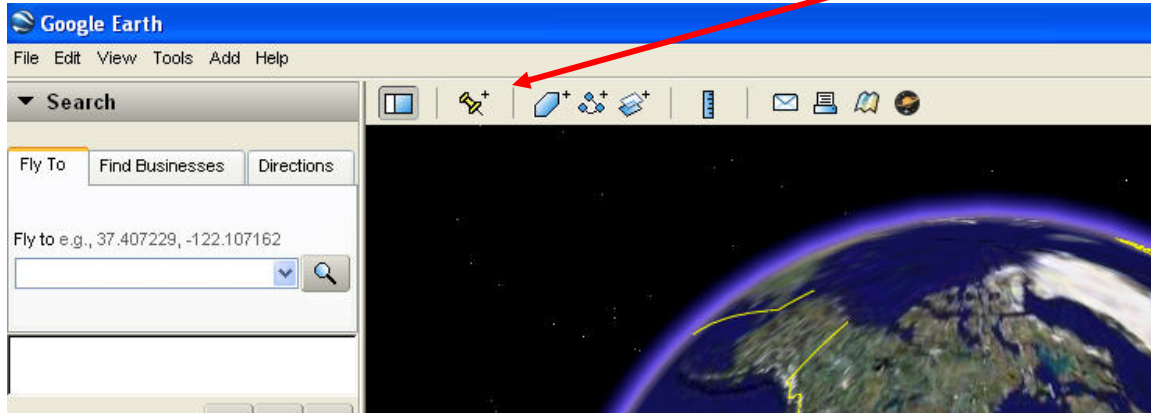


**Getting ready to build the placemark:** Select the code (Control A on the PC) and copy it (Ctrl C).

Clicking on the **HTML Toggle Source button** returns the user to the WYSIWYG editor. Here is the editor, with the YouTube video now in place.



Now it's time to jump over to Google Earth. Open up Earth, locate the area in the world where you wish to place the placemark, and go to the upper menu bar, and **create a new placemark.**



This is what appears:

A screenshot of the 'Add Placemark' dialog box in Google Earth. The dialog box has a title bar that says 'Google Earth - New'. It contains a 'Name' field with the text 'Untitled Placemark', a 'Latitude' field with '40°36'47.89"N', and a 'Longitude' field with '95°50'3.26"W'. Below these fields are tabs for 'Description', 'Style, Color', 'View', and 'Altitude'. The 'Description' tab is selected, showing a large text area. At the bottom are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons. A yellow square with a crosshair is visible on the satellite map in the background, representing the placemark's location. Several red arrows point from text boxes to specific parts of the dialog box and the map.

**Type the name of the placemark here**

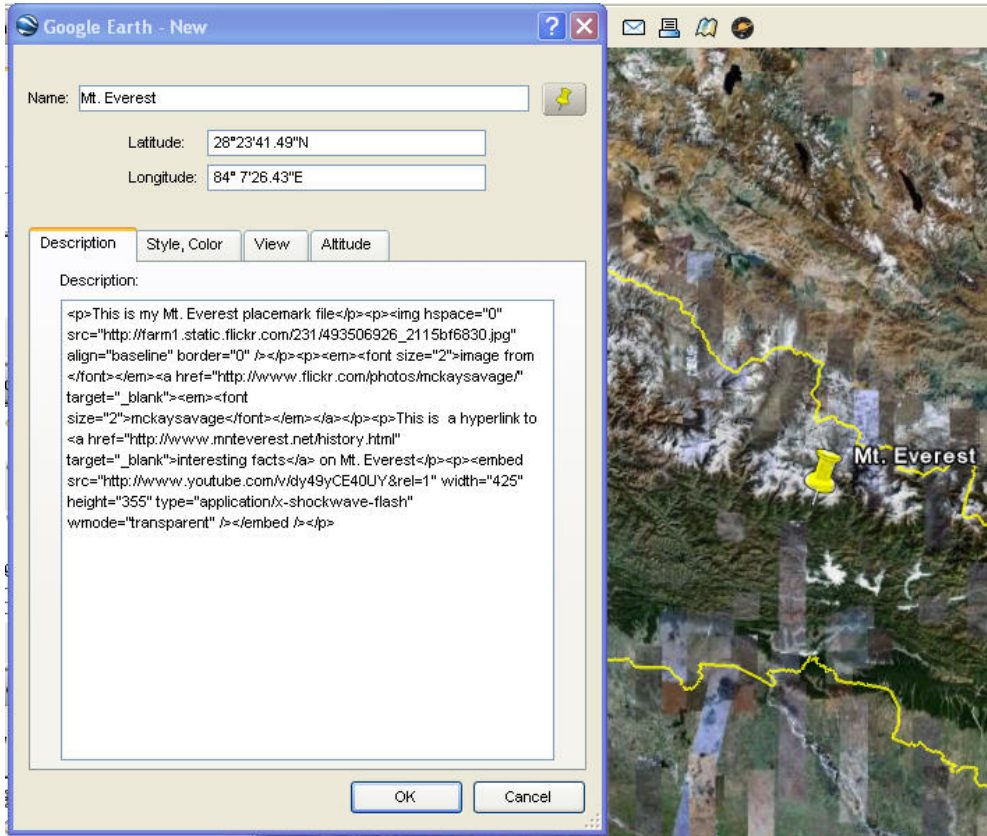
**Change the icon of the placemark here**

**Exact positioning of the placemark can be done through latitude and longitude**

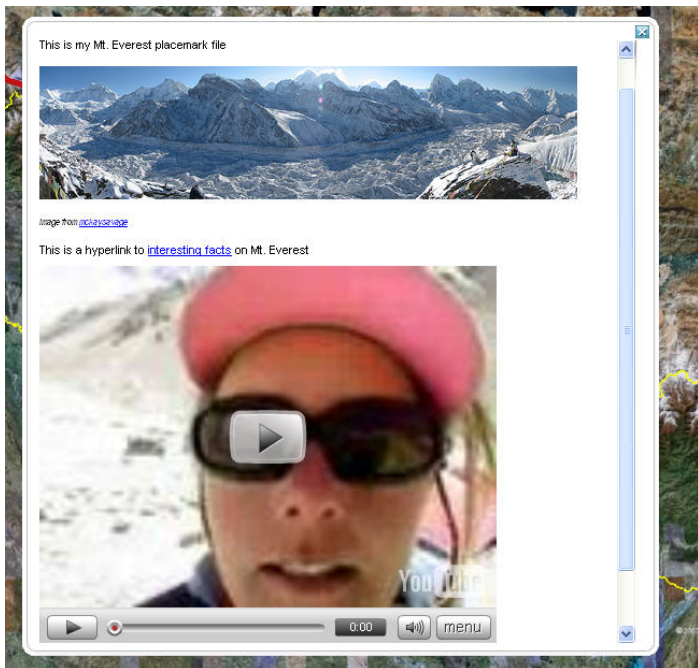
**This is the placemark, drag it to its location.**

**Paste the content from the online Web editor here**

In the placemark window, paste the code from my HTML editor. It now looks like this:



Click OK, and then click on the placemark itself in Google Earth and this is what you see:



The Google Earth placemark now has text, a hyperlink, an image and an embedded YouTube video.

Once a placemark has been completed (or is still being constructed), save the placemark locally to a USB drive or network space by going over to the Places menu (left margin of GE), right-clicking on the placemark and selecting Save As. Be sure to save it as a kml file (although kmz would work).

**Definition:** KML: keyhole markup language, a kml file is displayed in an Earth browser (Google Earth) much in the same way as an HTML file is displayed in a Web browser (Firefox, IE).

**Adding more content to a Placemark:** To add more content to the placemark once it has been saved (for instance, the class period ended, and the you wish to add content on the next school day), simply go to the File menu, select Open, and select the kml file for the placemark. The kml file will launch in Google Earth, and then the placemark can be edited to add more content. On a PC, you would right-click on the placemark icon and select properties to gain access to the placemark HTML code.

**Putting the placemark files together in a tour:** To put all the placemarks together in a tour, create a folder in the My Places area of Google Earth, and open each kml file. The kml file will appear in the Places menu. Drag those to the folder you created, or copy each placemark if moving them in the places menu is awkward, and paste them into the folder (once each has been opened in GE).

Save the folder as a *kmz* (z = zipped, pull down the file type menu in the save dialog box) and in this way, all placemarks can be packaged together, and distributed as a single file. These kmz (or even kml) files can be shared in a variety of ways, such as a wiki. Clicking on either type of file launches Google Earth and the users can see the placemarks.

If you are interested in seeing the end result live, save this file to your machine and click on it to launch Google Earth.

*image of Everest from [mckaysavage](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mckaysavage), <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mckaysavage>*

*YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy49yCE40UY>*

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