



Irrigation area soil maps now available in Google Earth™

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- Knowledge of soil types and characteristics is an important aid in making farm decisions – from purchasing a new property to determining water holding capacity
- Soil maps covering the MIA, CIA and Murray Valley (NSW) are now available for download in Google Earth™ free of charge
- The system allows users to view soils maps directly in Google Earth. They can see their property and then with the click of a button overlay their soil map showing soil boundaries and soil types

Ever wondered why that top corner of your paddock performs better than the rest? It may be soil related. You can now find out using Google Earth™. Soil maps for much of the Murrumbidgee, Coleambally and Murray irrigation areas are now available in Google Earth free of charge.

Previously, access to soils related information has been difficult for farmers, natural resource managers and the general public. Much of the soil survey work was undertaken many years ago and the soil maps have remained in isolated libraries or agencies. In order to make this information more freely available a team at CSIRO Griffith has developed a novel approach for converting these soil maps into Google Earth files which allows users to simply download the soil maps free of charge and open them directly in Google Earth with the click of a button. Additionally all maps are available free of charge.

So whether you're interested in knowing your soil type to determine water holding capacity, deciding what irrigation system to install or thinking of purchasing a new block, you can now access soil maps for much of the Murrumbidgee, Coleambally and Murray irrigation areas directly from the comfort of your home!

How to access soil maps

A simple user guide to take you through the process of obtaining the Google Earth overlays for your farm can be found at:

www.clw.csiro.au/publications/science/2008/sr22-08.pdf


The soil maps are all stored online at the irriGATEWAY website <www.irrigateway.net>. An online geo-referencing system is available at this site which allows users to identify their soil map by simply entering GPS coordinates or alternatively if they don't have this information all of the available soil maps can be selected simply from a drop down list.

Once you have identified the soil map which relates to your area it's then simply a matter of downloading the file which, once opened, will automatically appear in Google Earth. The user can then simply scroll around the Google Earth interface and identify their farm and automatically have the soil map appear over it.

Figure 1 shows an example soil map of the Yenda area as it appears in Google Earth. Many of the available soil maps have soil type information available at sub paddock level detail.

Additional soil information

As part of the project two additional reports have also been developed that show typical soil characteristics associated with the soil types found within the region. So once your soil type is identified from the above maps, these reports can be used to understand the typical soil physical and chemical characteristics of the soil type based on previous studies undertaken. Both reports are available free of charge from <www.clw.csiro.au/publications/science/>.

So – accessing soil related information now has become significantly easier! 

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Further information

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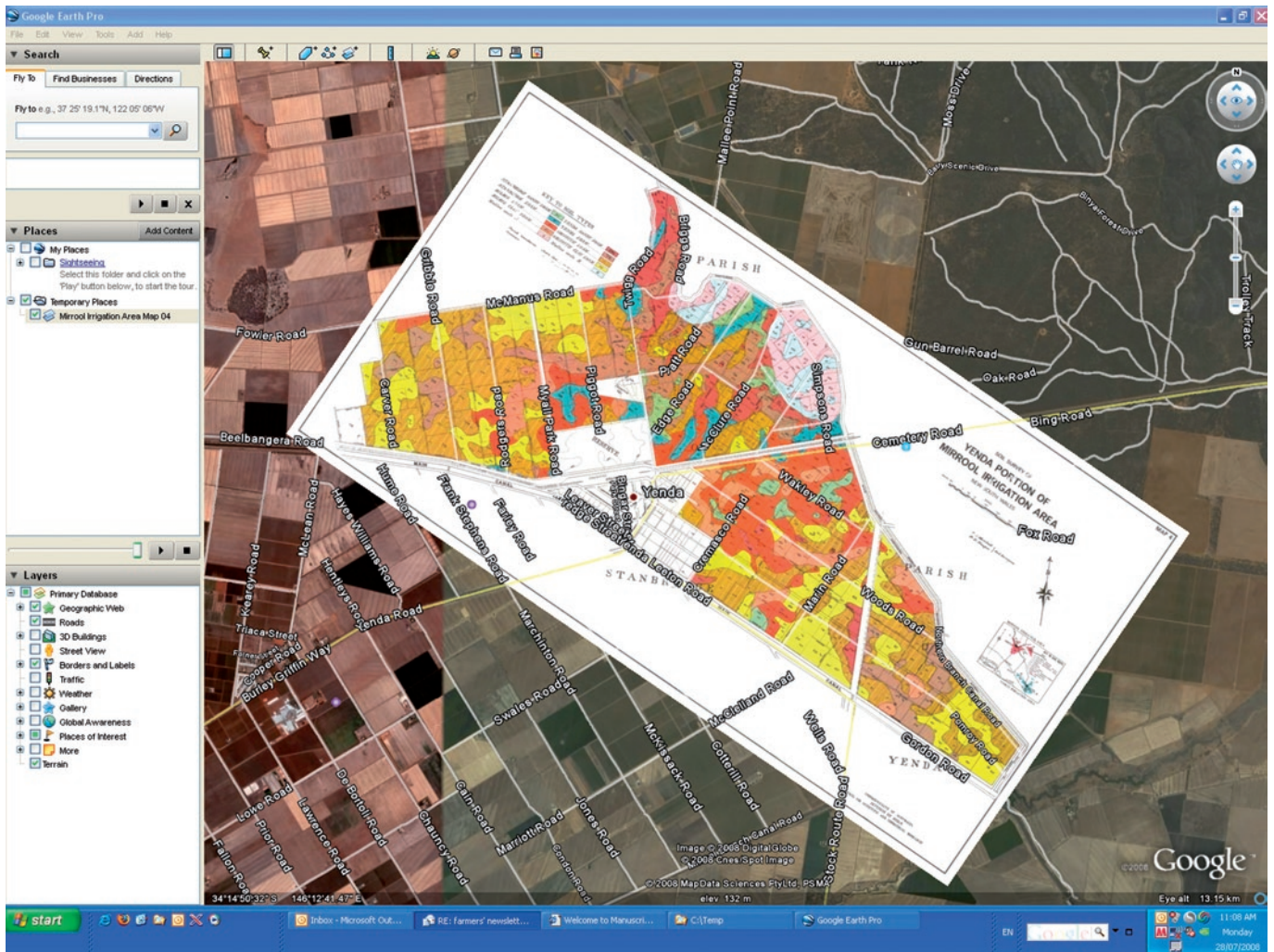


Figure 1. Soil map for the Yenda district in Google Earth™. Many of the maps show sub paddock level detail of soil types from which properties such as water holding capacity can be inferred. Users can move around the Google Earth and identify their individual farm and then with the click of a button overlay the soil map.