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How to unlock the value of Location Intelligence

Tyler Dahlberg | 22 October, 2021

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Travel is one of life's greatest pleasures.

It is one of the most "**spatial**" things we do.

We're returning to a **world without borders**.

How can we meet the **new challenges** of travel with **location intelligence**?

Booking gets a lot of value from location data:

- Marketing
- Forecasting
- New Product Development
- Machine Learning
- Analytics and Data Science
- Customer Service
- Operations and partner services
- Office design and layout!

And more probably!

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That's a lot of location,
but what about
"intelligence"?

This is where you might expect I would tell you about how much value we get from using Location tools like:

- Google Data Studio
- Tableau
- ArcGIS Online
- KeplerGL

Or maybe this is where you would expect me to tell you how we use geographic methods to slice and dice the earth regardless of physical or political geography using:

- Geohashes
- Google's S2 cells
- Uber's H3 hexagons

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Or maybe how we create and share interactive maps

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But instead I'm going to tell you:

In order for most non-geospatial orgs to get value from location intelligence...

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You need a Location Intelligence culture!

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Because the number one issue I run into is:

Non-geo people often aren't aware they're using location data!

Or they have no idea we can even ask location questions!

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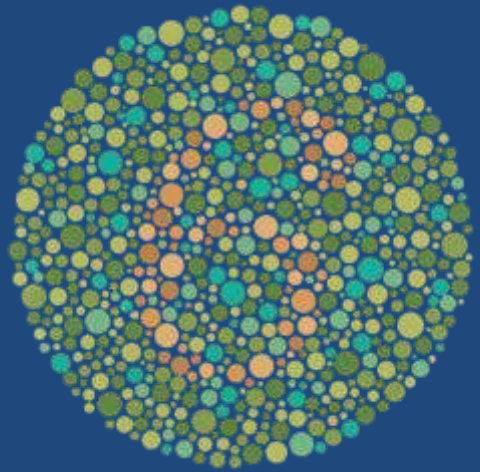
Let's call it "Location Blindness"



If we aren't used to working with location data or asking location questions we might be simply unaware there's another way we can look at the world.

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You need people who can recognize that if we took a table and created a scatterplot of cities...

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This is where a lot of geo-experts would stop and ask:

What if we put it on a map?

You don't even have to know what the underlying data is, and you can already start seeing interesting patterns!
Iceland
Sweden
Finland
Russia
Canada
North Atlantic Ocean
Kazakhstan
Mongolia
Uzbekistan
China
Iraq
Iran
Pakistan
Algeria
Libya
Egypt
Saudi Arabia
Oman
Yemen
Mali
Niger
Chad
Sudan
Ethiopia
Nigeria
Cameroon
Kenya
Tanzania
Angola
Namibia
Madagascar
Indonesia
Papua New Guinea
Australia
Brazil
Peru
Bolivia
Paraguay
South Atlantic Ocean
Indian Ocean

I’m sure many of you have done this yourselves!

You created “A-ha!” moments

TV
14
Nothing has birds on it,
but you know what we're going to do?

TV
14
Nothing has MAPS on it,
but you know what we're going to do?

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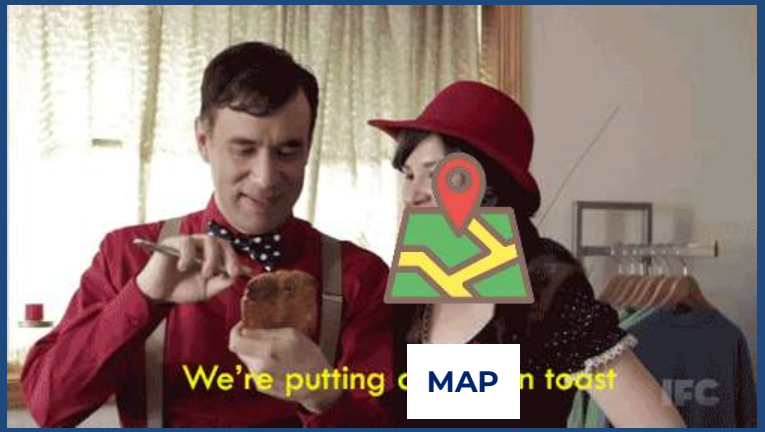

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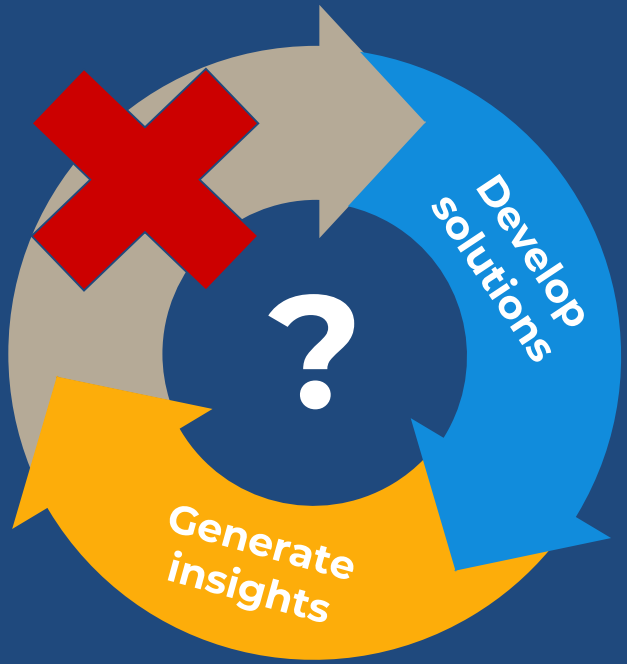
To foster a location intelligence culture we need to create more A-ha moments!

Here is an idealized Location Intelligence cycle:

But in an org with “Location Blindness”
The cycle rarely starts



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In the geo world we tend to focus a lot here:

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When we should focus more here:

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Kickstarting “A-ha!” moments is up to the geo experts!

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Kickstart the Geo Cycle!

Give it a good push!

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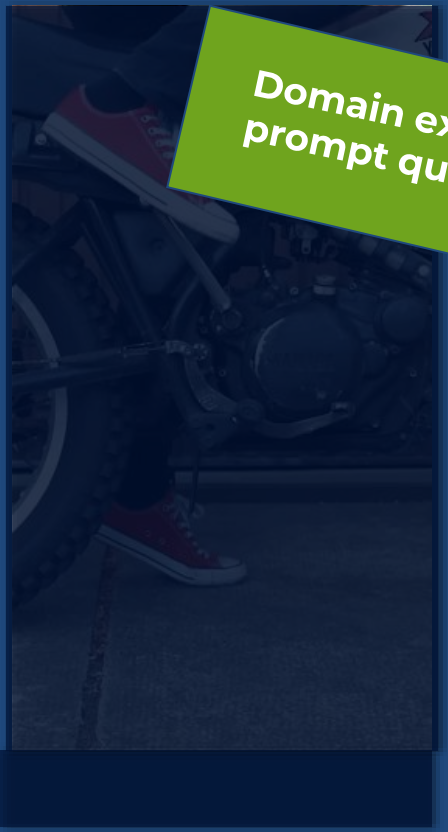
Give it a good push!



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We need to **bridge the gap**
between Experts & Users to
get the real value out of
Location Intelligence

Because change is coming

- Google changing cookies in Chrome
- GDPR is just the beginning
- Privacy being built into in smart devices
- Increasing data privacy awareness

The ability to employ location intelligence by asking the right kinds of questions will be more valuable than ever

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So businesses and organizations need to ask:

- Do you have a culture of asking location questions?
- Do you have geo experts on staff who can kickstart those questions?
- Do your experts share knowledge? Or are they gatekeepers?

If you're a Location-focused org or B2B and I'm preaching to the choir:

- What have you done lately to make location questions easier to ask for lay people to ask?
- We often focus tools on power-users--is there something we could build for decision makers?
- And again, do your experts share knowledge? Or are they gatekeepers?

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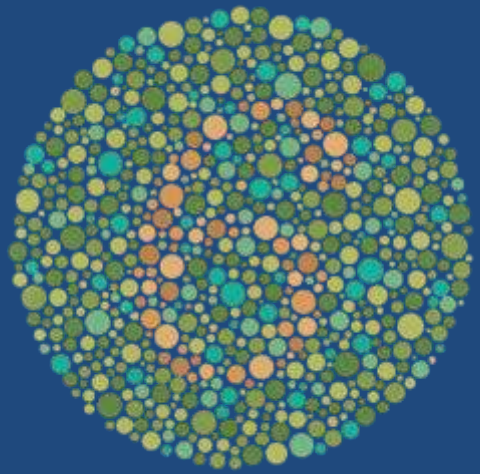
As subject-matter experts, we're subject to our own **Location Blindness**:



Things that are obvious to **geo experts** are not obvious to everyone else!

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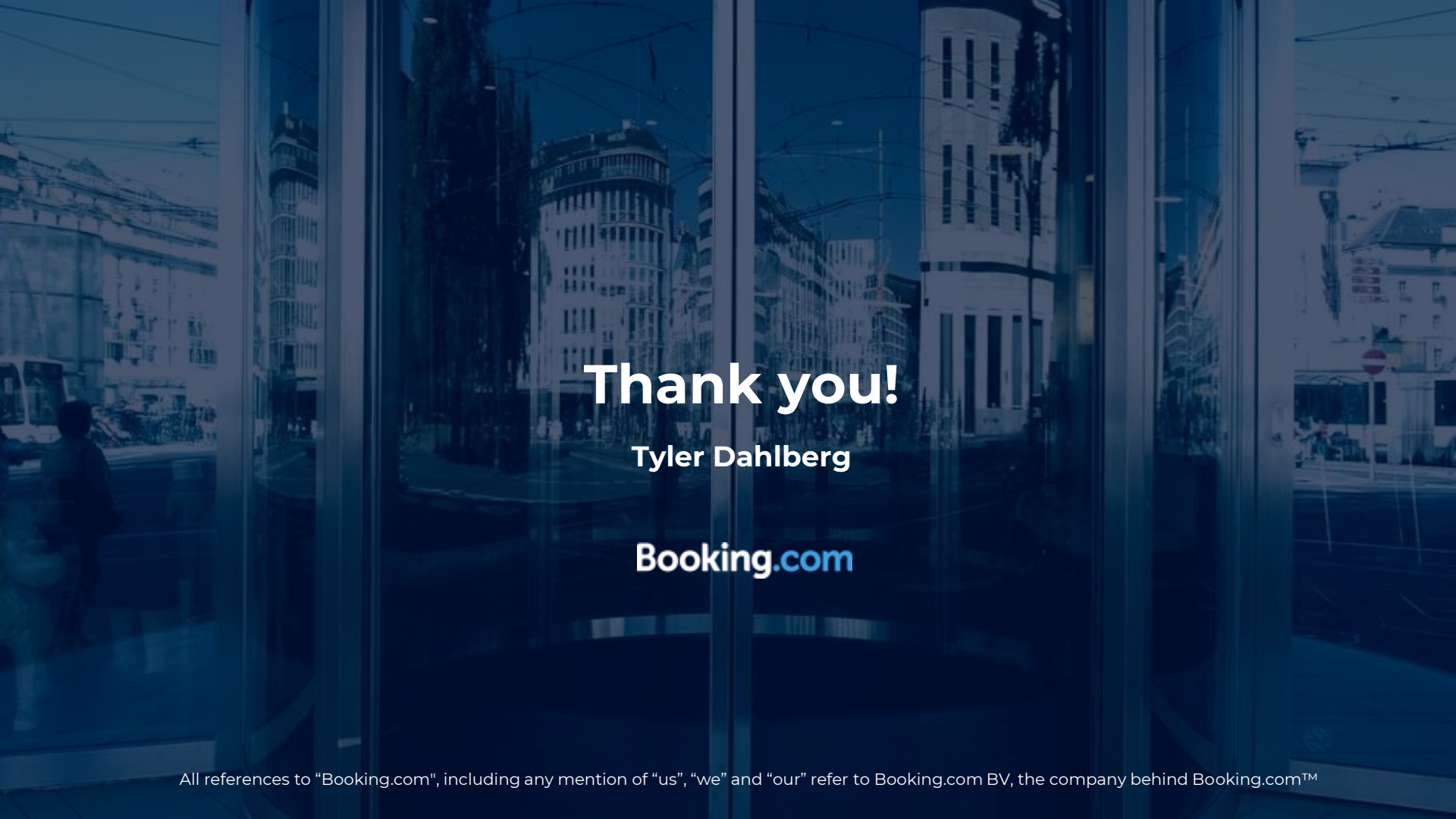
In order to get the most value from Location Intelligence...

We need to make spatial **normal**, not **special.**



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