




COMMONLY USED SPATIAL FILE FORMATS

The top 4 file formats are the ones most widely used as well as easy to bring into a web mapping application. The last 4 are ones less often used.

Shapefile	<p>The Shapefile is one of the most commonly used spatial file formats used to display point, line and polygon data. The 'shapefile' consist of collection of files with the same prefix name but different extensions. The 3 <i>mandatory</i> files have filename extensions .shp, .shx, and .dbf, however, you may have other files such as .prj, .cpg, amongst others.</p> <p>Sample Shapefile looks like this: ApplicationArea.shp, ApplicationArea.dbf, ApplicationArea.shx .</p>
Geomark	<p>A Geomark is a URL that contains spatial information. It needs to be converted into one of the commonly used spatial file formats before you can visually look at it. The benefit of using a Geomark is that it is easily convertible into a number of other spatial formats. The geomark web service has a good tutorial on how to convert a KML in Google earth into a Geomark. The URL associated with a Geomark will expire after 90 days unless it is uploaded into a natural resource online application.</p> <p>Sample geomark looks like this: http://apps.gov.bc.ca/pub/geomark/geomarks/gm-abcdefghijklmnpqrstuvwxyz0000bc</p>
KML	<p>Widely used file format used to display geographic data (points, lines, polygons) in Google Earth. You can create a KML in a number of different web mapping applications, including Google Earth. If you have Google Earth on your computer, you can open a KML file just by clicking on the file – if you want to view it in another mapping application, you will need to 'import' it.</p> <p><u>Sample KML looks like this:</u></p>  <p>ApplicationArea.kml</p>
KMZ	<p>Widely used. A zipped / compressed version of the KML file. A KMZ does not need to be unzipped in order to view it – you can click on the KMZ file and it will open automatically in Google earth</p> <p><u>Sample KMZ looks like this:</u></p>  <p>ApplicationArea.kmz</p>
GeoJson	<p>Less commonly used format</p> <p>Sample GeoJson looks like this:</p>  <p>ApplicationArea.geojson</p>
WKT / GML / XML	<p>These formats are markup languages that represent vector features (points, lines, polygons) . In general, these files must be imported into a mapping application in order to view it spatially</p>

