

Overview



DC by the Book is a website featuring a custom map that allows anyone to explore the landscape of Washington, DC as it has been represented in fiction. When a user clicks on a map icon, the popup box displays a passage from a work of fiction describing that location, as well as the book title (which links to the DC Public Library catalog record for the item), author, and other ancillary information about the work. Users will be able to browse the map or search using various filters, so that they could, for example, view only locations linked to a single author, or locations only described in crime fiction, or locations from a specific era.

However, in order for the map to have any icons on it, passages from DC fiction will need to be entered. This is done via a simple form on the website that anyone can access as they're reading a book set in Washington, DC. As part of the project's initial launch during 2013, several "mapathon" events will be held across the city where anyone can drop by, read a book, and enter passages.

For those not sure what DC-set fiction to read, the website will include a database of hundreds of works of fiction set in Washington, D.C., ranging from classics such as Henry Adams' *Democracy* to the most recent novel by New York Times bestselling author Stephen Carter (*The Impeachment of Abraham Lincoln*). It includes works ranging from literary lions such as Ward Just, Thomas Mallon, and Susan Richards Shreve, to murder mysteries, science fiction, and romance. The works of a wide range of local writers will be represented, from Pulitzer winner Edward P. Jones and bestselling crime writer George Pelecanos, to the street lit of Kia Dupree, and many more.

What's exciting about the project is that it's a collaborative effort between librarians, experts in local fiction, local history organizations, and the general public. The project's goal is that the bulk of the content that will populate the map will be contributed by the public, since anyone with internet access can submit content via the website and be recognized for doing so. This content will always be reviewed and curated by DC Public Library staff, but the open creation process moves the library into the role of a facilitator and content collaborator, and directly engages the public in a digital project that may change how they interact with the city they live in.

For more information, contact info@dcbythebook.org. If you are interested in helping to coordinate a map-a-thon this spring, summer, or fall, contact Kim Zablud, Special Collections Manager @ DC Public Library (kimberly.zablud@dc.gov).

