Guide: PGC Imagery Viewers
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About

The Polar Geospatial Center's Aurora Imagery Viewers are web-based mapping applications for viewing high-resolution, commercial satellite imagery mosaics for polar regions. The three versions (Antarctica, the Arctic, and the World) are each in an appropriate map projection.

The PGC imagery mosaics are composed of hundreds of terabytes of orthorectified satellite imagery from the WorldView-1, WorldView-2, QuickBird-2, and GeoEye-1 sensors and mosaicked into one layer at 50-centimeter resolution. The Viewers also contain other layers — for example, lower-resolution satellite imagery basemaps, features & placenames, and aerial photography — which help users search and navigate the maps.

All imagery is © 2026 Vantor, Inc. By using the viewers you are subject to the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) Electro-Optical Commercial Layer License (EOCL) and to the PGC Viewers Terms & Conditions. For attribution and citation, please see the PGC Acknowledgement Policy.

Account Registration & Access

PGC Aurora Imagery Viewers Landing Page

PGC Imagery Viewers

Licensed Access

Access to the secured & licensed layers in the PGC Imagery Viewers is limited to polar federally-funded researchers with current awards, federal employees, or subcontractors from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Polar Programs. Members of the DoD/IC and Antarctic/Arctic support personnel may also request access.

The links below are for new users to request a new account or change your password. The PGC will verify your funding source after you submit a request for an account.

PGC User Account Sign Up
Manage Existing PGC User Account

Open Resources Access

Access to the open resources in the PGC Imagery Viewers does not require a PGC User Account. Open layers include

placenames, flightlines, lower resolution open source basemaps, and USGS maps (Antarctic only).

Usage Guidelines

Layers

The Layers tab gives users the ability to see and select the different i**magery basemaps** and **data & overlay** layers being displayed in the Imagery Viewer. Clicking **Imagery Layers** will display a pop-up menu to choose which imagery mosaic is shown in the display, depending on user's access privileges. Clicking **Data and Overlay Layers** will display a pop-up menu with different maps, boundaries, and location names that can be used.

> Users need to be logged in and have approved account access to use the high-resolution mosaics.

While viewing the high-resolution mosaic, users are able to get information about individual scenes. To view this information simply click on a scene in the viewer. A pop-up menu will appear with the image information. This will include the catalog ID, the sensor type, date of acquisition, sun elevation, and off-nadir angle.

Zoom To

The Zoom To tab contains three features for navigating to different locations within the Imagery Viewer.

- **Zoom to Coordinates** enables users to go to specified coordinates. Coordinates can be entered in either decimal degrees, degrees decimal minutes, or degrees minutes seconds. Use PGC's Coordinate Converter application for proper formatting.
- **Zoom to Popular Places** gives the user a list of places to navigate to. Click on an image to be brought to that location.

Links

This tab allows for users to navigate to different web pages. Options include the different imagery viewers, the PGC homepage, and the Aurora landing page for the imagery viewers. Additionally, links to the Request Account and Logout pages are provided.

Share URL

The Share URL tab allows users to share a copy of the map on their screen, captured at the time of clicking **Share URL**. A pop-up window will appear with the map hyperlink. Maps can only be shared with other collaborators working in support of the same award and require a PGC account to login.

Prohibited Activities:

- Sharing or copying of imagery for purposes outside of the scope of the award
- Sharing of imagery with collaborators not funded under the award or collaborators at non-U.S. institutions
- Using the imagery after the term of an award has expired
- Posting the imagery to a public website without access controls
- Sharing the imagery or imagery derived products with anyone planning to sell it or use it for commercial gain

Please contact the PGC if you have any questions regarding the sharing or copying of licensed commercial satellite imagery.

FAQ

How do I create an account to access the imagery viewer?

You must have an account with the Polar Geospatial Center in order to view the commercial high-resolution satellite imagery. If you would like an account please visit the Request New Account page. Certain restrictions apply, view the Terms & Conditions for more information.

Why am I unable to stay signed in?

Staying signed in requires a browser that supports local storage or cookies. You will be required to sign in again after 21 days of inactivity.

Why is the satellite imagery slow to load?

Although the application is optimized to serve terabytes of satellite imagery via the internet, slow internet connections can cause images to have some latency.

How can I suggest a feature?

Please send an email to the PGC Web Development team at pgc@umn.edu.

How do I report a bug or issue?

Please fill out this form on the PGC website and select “Website problems or feedback” in the “Reason for writing” field.