

Preliminary note

Summary

This article present a new source for APRS maps to be used with UI-View: the database from OpenStreetMap and the TAHO.EXE converter

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TAHO.EXE, a map generator for UI-View, using OpenStreetMap

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Short introduction to APRS

Many radio amateurs know APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System). This transmission mode aims to transmit geographical positions of mobiles (and fixed) stations, over packet radio. Using a suitable software (UI-View for example) the whole activity on the air can be displayed on a computer screen. It's also possible to send short messages (SMS like), broadcast announcements, place objects on the map that are visible to others stations,... APRS is typically located on 144.800 MHz in Europe. It requires very few hardware. An FM transmitter, an antenna, a computer and a software are the mandatory components of an APRS system. Even the TNC can be emulated through the sound card of the PC.

UI-View software

Within the Windows world, UI-View is a very appreciated software. Its creator Roger Barker has sadly become Silent Key since some years now. Nevertheless, many OM have developed or are still developing plug-ins for UI-View. It's downloadable on the official website: www.ui-view.org

UI-View maps

To represent the geographical position of the active APRS stations, one needs a map. UI-View comes along with a few of them, but it's quite easy to add some more, especially when using TAHO.EXE (see below). Of course the process can be done « by hand » but it's quite tedious. By the way, any graphical file may be used as a map by UI-View. The condition is to describe the coordinates of the map borders in an associated *.INF file.

TAHO.EXE generated directly both files (*.JPG and *.INF) in a few mouse clicks.

OpenStreetMap

OpenStreetMap is a map of the whole world, which is available for free, to anybody, without any restriction. Most important thing, it's editable by anybody. Similarly to « wikipedia », OpenStreetMap may be corrected, and enhanced by any web user. The quality of the map is still very variable around the world but it's continuously improving. In some areas, only a few roads have been sketched, but in other regions, the mapping is done in a very comprehensive way, including buildings, trees, shops, public transportation networks. In these regions the map quality may be much better than google maps. The [center of London](#) or the city of [Port-au-Prince in Haïti](#) are quite good examples of nice maps.

OpenStreetMap is available at following address: www.openstreetmap.org

Nowadays, the number of registered users of OSM went over 250'000. This starts to be not so negligible anymore. And this number keeps growing day after day. As it's not required to register oneself to use the maps, the number of occasional users is in fact much bigger.

By the way, if your village or town is not mapped or only with very few details, don't hesitate to contribute by yourself. Just create your login and start adding the missing items. After a few minutes or maximum hours, your work will appear on OpenStreetMap.

TAHO.EXE, the converter

This small open source software allows to easily generate map files following different formats out of the OpenStreetMap database. I've asked it's author, Dimitri Junker (who is not an amateur radio operator himself) whether it would be possible to add the format needed for UI-View. As an answer, he came back very fast with a new version of the software generating the requires files for UI-View. So nice of him. It seems that the people working within the free software community have a kind of ham-spirit!

Downloading TAHO.EXE

Let's start to be serious. Where to find TAHO.EXE. Answer, on its author website:

<http://www.dimitri-junker.de/html/openstreetmap.html>

Using TAHO.EXE

Using TAHO.EXE is fairly simple. In a few mouse clicks you'll have generated your first map for UI-View. Nevertheless, a detailed step-by-step procedure is available on OpenStreetMap's wiki. Therefore I won't describe the whole procedure here.

This user manual has been translated in french and german as well.

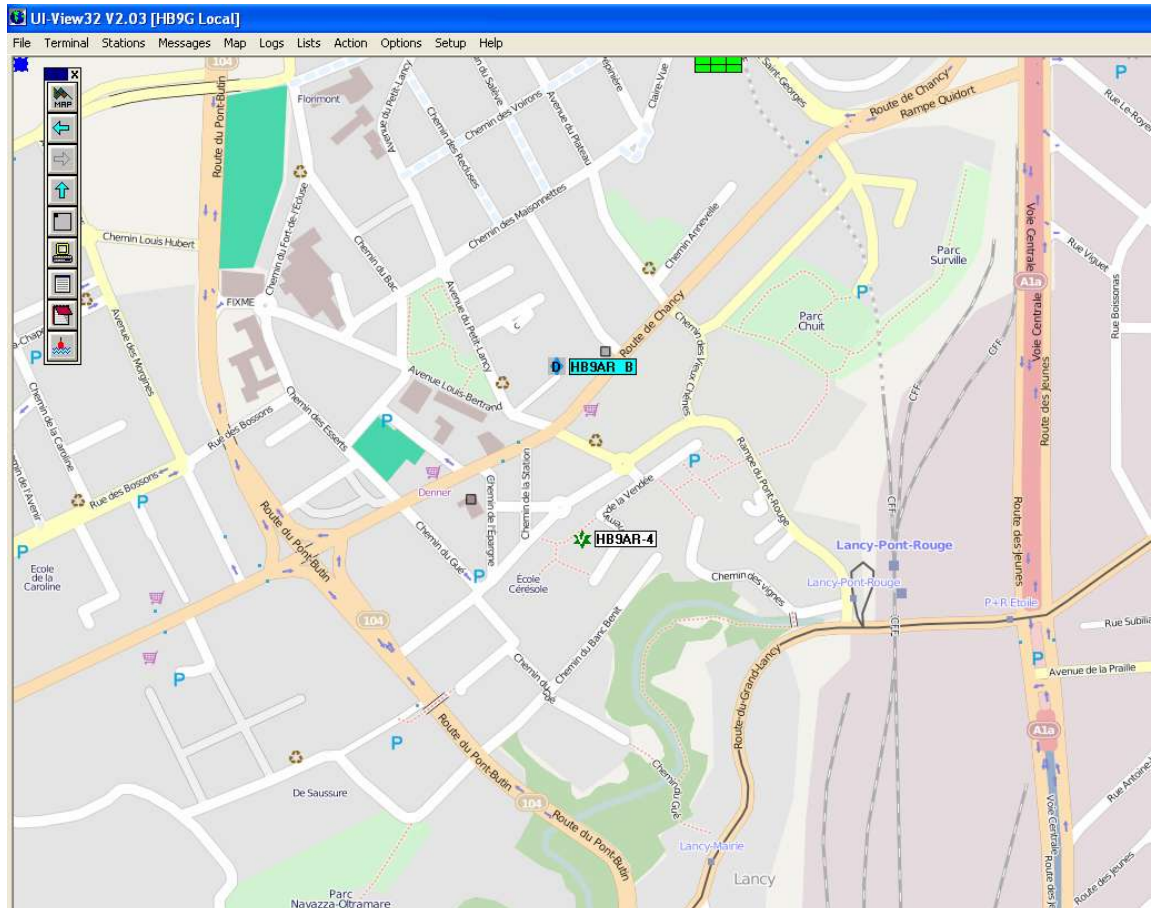
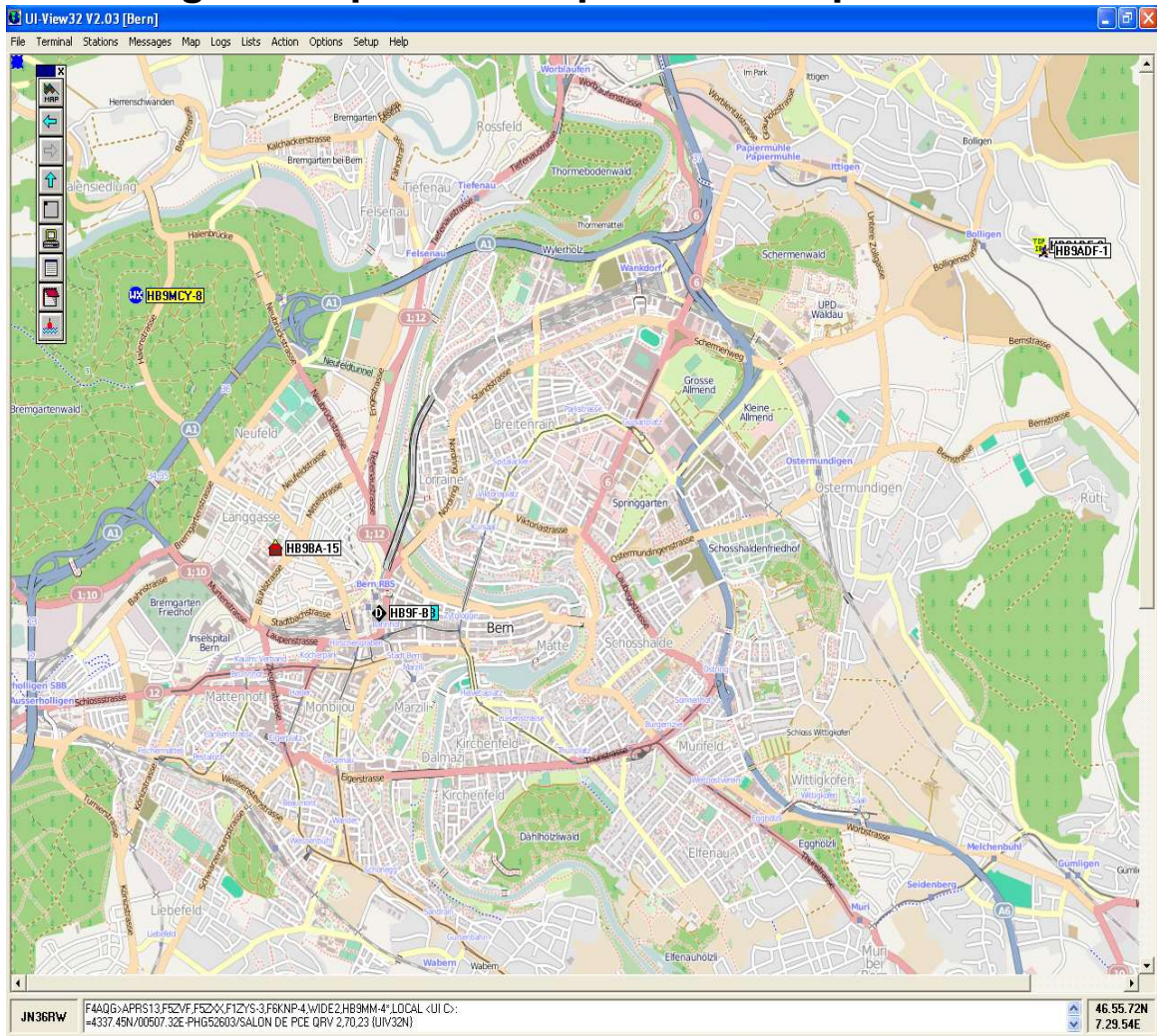
http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/OSM_Map_On_UI-View

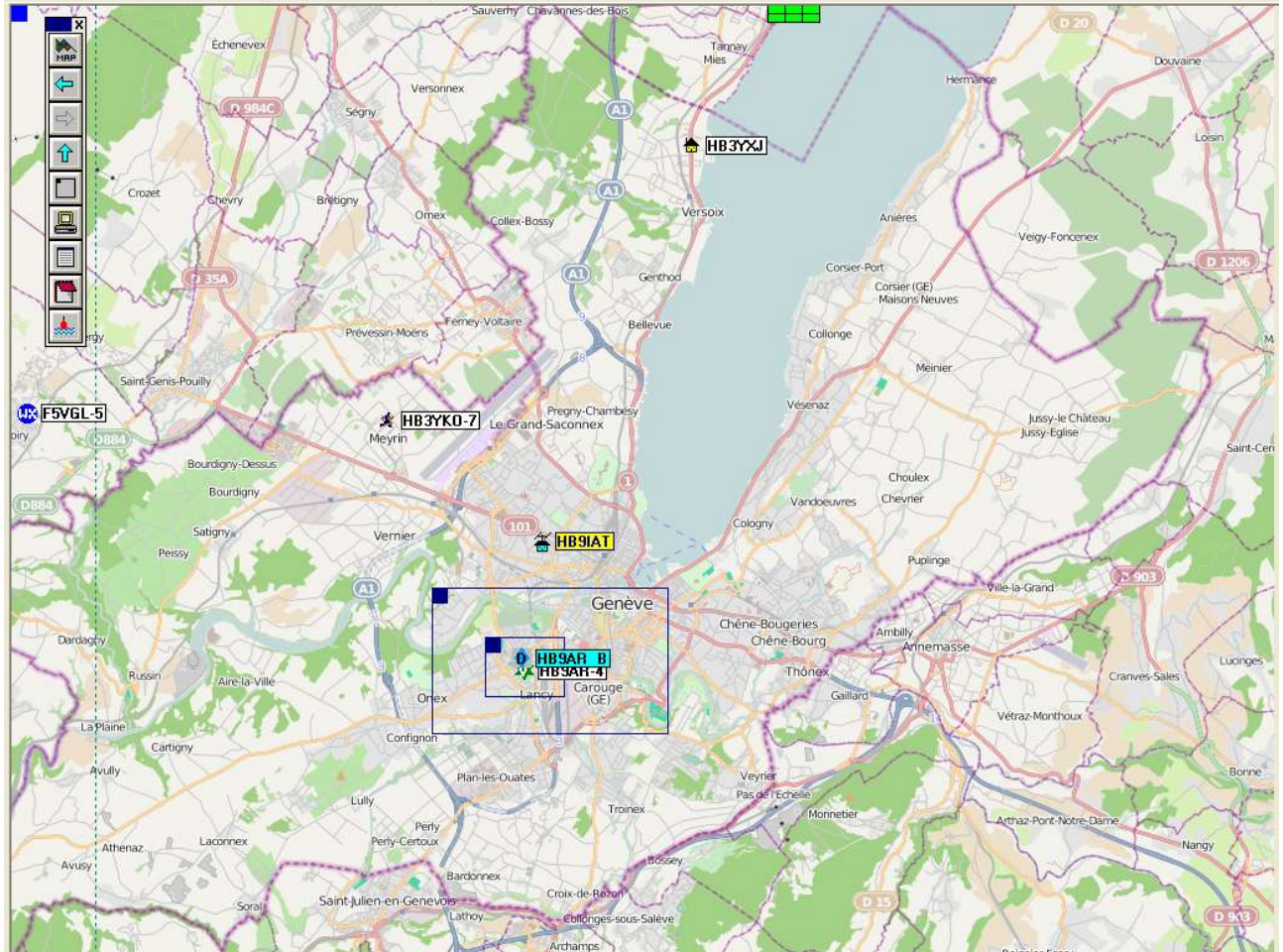
Conclusions

For those who are active in APRS with Ui-View, TAHO.EXE is a very convenient add-on. And it's easy to use.

If you need geographical maps, OpenStreetMap is a free and restriction less map source. Please consider it.

UI-View usage examples with OpenStreetMaps







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