



## Accessing FCC Database Information

Broadcasters provide a lot of information to the FCC – from license applications to construction permits to ownership reports, there are literally dozens of forms used by the FCC to collect all sorts of information. A number of Internet-based tools exist which provide access to much of the information collected, and one innovative tool that was recently made available to the public, discussed below, offers a unique graphical interface utilizing Google's *Google Earth™* application.

The licensing information for broadcast radio (AM and FM) and television (TV, LPTV, and DTV) stations is contained in an FCC database management system called the Consolidated Database System (CDBS). This database contains broadcast applications electronically filed with the FCC, as well as data from applications that were submitted to the FCC on paper and stored in previous FCC database systems (additional information on CDBS may be found on the FCC's Web page at [http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/cdbs/pubacc/prod/help\\_pa.htm](http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/cdbs/pubacc/prod/help_pa.htm)).

One popular way to search CDBS is by using the "Query" pages located on the FCC's Media Bureau Web page. There are three separate Query pages, one for each of the primary broadcast services:


- AM Query – <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/amq.html>
- FM Query – <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/fmq.html>
- TV Query – <http://www.fcc.gov/fcc-bin/audio/tvq.html>

Another, perhaps more convenient search tool has been put together by the broadcast engineering consulting firm of Cavell, Mertz & Associates (CM&A, Manassas, VA, [www.cavellmertz.com](http://www.cavellmertz.com)). Called [FCCInfo.com](http://www.fccinfo.com) (and that's the URL, as well), this search tool accesses the CDBS to provide information on AM, FM, and TV data. Additionally, the FCC Wireless Bureau's Universal Licensing System (ULS) database is used to obtain information on broadcast microwave and land mobile data. ULS is the consolidated database and application filing system for most Wireless Radio Services including Broadcast Auxiliary Service and Local Television Transmission Service (used by common carriers to relay television programming material). Additional information on ULS may be found on the FCC's Web page at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/index.htm?job=about>. Searches supported by [FCCInfo.com](http://www.fccinfo.com) are shown in the table.

<b>Station call sign</b>	<b>Historic call sign</b>	<b>Antenna structure registration (ASR)</b>
<b>FCC file number</b>	<b>Facility ID</b>	<b>ASR coordinates</b>
<b>Licensee</b>	<b>Community of license</b>	<b>Broadcast Auxiliary Service (BAS) call sign</b>
<b>Coordinates</b>	<b>Place name</b>	<b>BAS licensee</b>
<b>Zip code</b>	<b>Airport coordinates</b>	<b>BAS FRN or facility ID</b>

Earlier this year, CM&A made a graphical interface to [FCCInfo.com](http://www.fccinfo.com) available to the public, which utilizes the popular *Google Earth* mapping application. An example of this interface is shown in the image below, for a search of AM and FM licensees in the San Francisco, CA area; in this image, the green callouts are FM

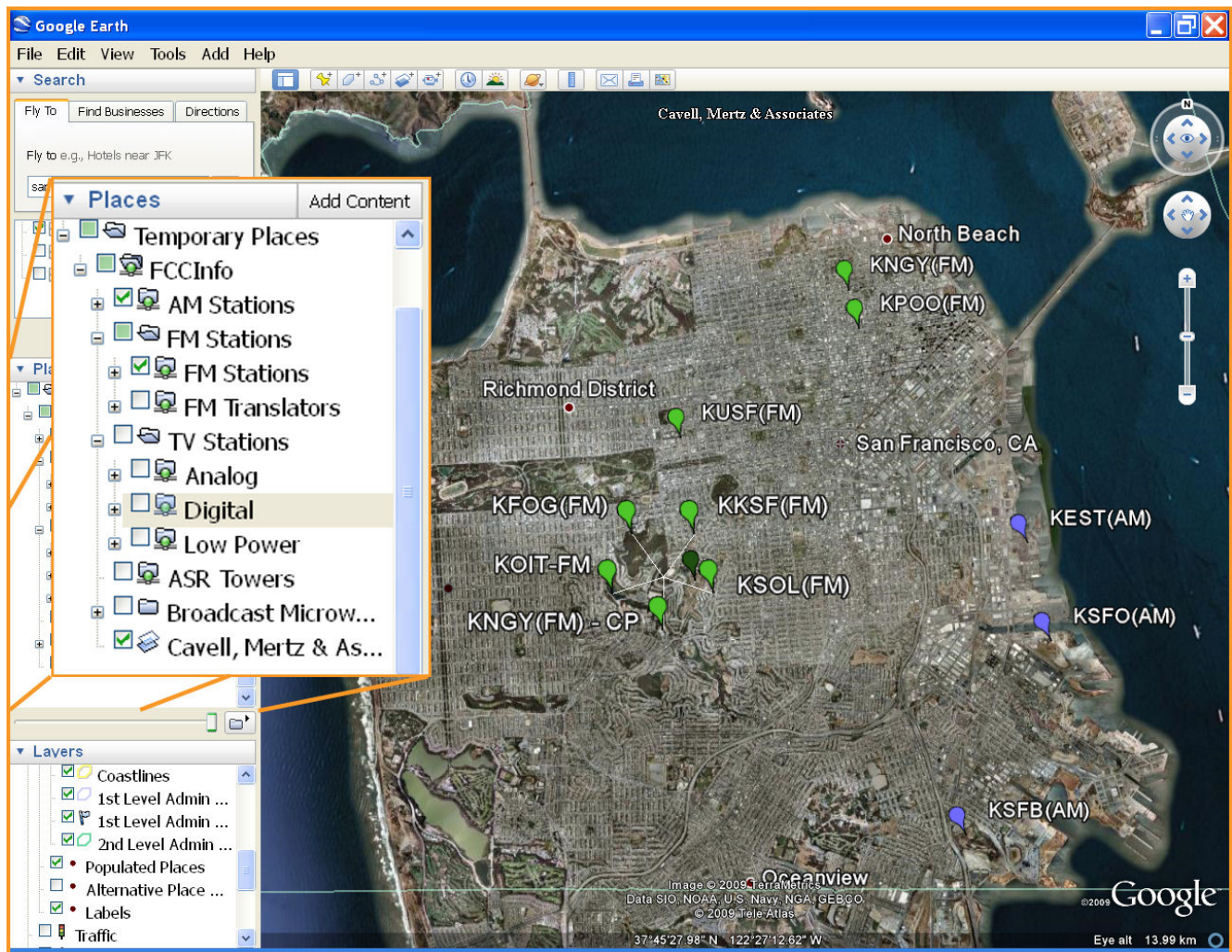
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stations and the blue callouts, AM. The various categories of information available for display are shown in the box to the left of the image (in the PLACES menu), where for this example only the AM and FM Station boxes are selected. Clicking on the “+” sign next to each box creates a list of all the stations in that category, and these stations can be individually selected or de-selected for display.



Some of the features of this new graphical interface as described on the CM&A Web site include the following:

- Click on any station’s callout to display city of license, signal power, frequency, channel number, antenna height (HAAT), facility ID, and licensee. Also, links are included to details from the [FCCInfo.com](http://www.fccinfo.com) Web site;
- For microwave links, paths are plotted above ground using licensed transmit antenna heights and, when available, receive antenna locations;
- Towers and antenna structures are plotted as a vertical line based on their registered heights;
- Useful for verifying coordinates shown on station licenses and on tower registrations;
- To assure accuracy, broadcast coordinates are automatically converted from FCC datum to Google Earth’s native datum;
- Works on Windows, Macintosh, and Linux operating systems;
- Program enhancements and updates are provided automatically.

To activate this Google Earth interface, click on the link <http://ge.fccinfo.com/fccinfo.kmz> which will start the Google Earth application (which must be installed on your computer) and the selection boxes shown in the image will appear (be sure that the SIDEBAR option is enabled in the Google Earth VIEW menu). Additional information is available on the CM&A Web page at [www.fccinfo.com/fccinfo\\_google\\_earth.php](http://www.fccinfo.com/fccinfo_google_earth.php).



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