



WaterAid - Mapping tip sheet

Communicating through maps: identifying the opportunities

Where we are now

We have a Google Earth layer and are currently in the process of updating and expanding it.

We use simple Google maps for location-based fundraising events, e.g.:

Our canal walks event:

http://www.wateraidgowiththeflow.org/the_challenge/routes.asp

Tap into WaterAid: <http://www.wateraid.org/tapintowateraid>

We have also used traditional OS Maps (which require an online license) for Trail100, to show detailed walk routes, e.g.:

http://www.wateraidtrail100.org/routes/england/Blencathra_files/Blencathra.htm

We also use static Google maps in offline funding applications (e.g.: to DFID) and we use a simple world map to display where we work:

http://www.wateraid.org/uk/what_we_do/where_we_work/default.asp

Where we want to go in the future

- Google Earth now supports YouTube video content, so we are looking at adding more of this where we can and where it is relevant to the case study and the location. See example in our Google Earth layer called "Where does all the goo go?" (Bangladesh)
- Develop Google Earth tours of more than one project / case study in a specific area, e.g.: to illustrate the combined effects of "community led total sanitation" it is necessary to show case study material from multiple locations in a small area, e.g.: the market, the school, the village, the latrine block. See "charity: water" example <http://www.charitywater.org/projects/map.htm>

- A Google Map showing the location (by IP address) of the 10 most recent donations to WaterAid, updated in real time. People donating are given opportunity "show my donation on the Google Map" and if they select yes, after their transaction is complete they are taken to the map, where they can see their name and location and donation amount. A way of saying thank-you and the donor "seeing their name in lights" for a few minutes after they've donated.
- We also want to include more maps when talking about individual projects which people can give money to. At WaterAid, because we generally want to get away from project-linked funding, we've shied away from this so far, but we are now looking at ways in which we can present detailed project information without project-linking funding directly.
- Virtual tour of a project, e.g.:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/katine/virtualvillage/0,,2191621,00.html> We would like to do more with maps and rich-media "tours" to bring to life the places we work in the field, from a fundraising perspective, to help use mapping to bridge the gap between donors and projects/people. The issue is that such work is resource intensive and expensive to maintain/update.
- There are now serious discussions around encouraging local partners and even benefactors becoming our local "**eyes and ears**" (they are already, but for them to document using new tools), supplying geo-tagged content from mobile phones to illustrate their daily struggles.
- Location-based web content and services:
 It may be of less relevance to charities right now, but the "next big thing" for the web (v3.0?!) is apparently location-based content on smart devices that know where you are. "Google Local" already does this on your phone, and we'll see this develop further. As more people read web pages while on the move, web content will become more relevant to where you are in the world. What this could mean for charities... web content about one of our country programmes displayed when you visit that country?

Identifying opportunities to communicate about your work through mapping

- Great for multi-event / multi-location fundraising or campaigning, where it's important to create a feeling that your event or campaign action is part of something bigger, e.g.: Oxfam, NSPCC Full Stop Campaign.
- Great where you have large amounts of spatial data which needs presenting in a clear and compelling way

How to use maps on your website, in donor reports, etc.

- Simple use of data on a map can be created manually through "My Maps" on Google Maps. This is then embedded into your web page. You can customise the markers with your own charity logo.
- For more complex mash-ups, which bring in data from a database into a map, e.g.: postcodes of people who voted for the BNP, you need to use the Maps API: <http://code.google.com/apis/maps/>

How can mapping complement an overall communications strategy?

Of course, it depends on what your comm's strategy is. If your strategy is to digitally engage with your **supporters** more directly, the "donations map" idea (above) could help.

If your comm's strategy is to improve people's understanding of your **field work**, then maps can also really help, through the ways described above.

Similarly, from a technical and practical perspective, maps can help **improve efficiency** of fieldwork, for example, water point mapping to audit location of existing water sources, and to pinpoint the best location for new boreholes etc.

Maps have become so common on websites that most web users are now confident in using them to access the information they need, so they are a great way of bringing data to life, e.g.: a dull table listing "location of borehole / condition of borehole" might be ignored if presented in a table. But when you put the same info onto a map, and colour-code the borehole icons according to their state of disrepair, you **bring that information to life** and make it immediately obvious to the user what the overall state of the boreholes in that country is, and also spatial patterns may emerge (e.g.: more boreholes in the north are in good working order than in the south) that might not be obvious in a table.

What does it take to keep your map up to date?

Once you have the system in place for updating your data through the use of a simple KLM file, then it's relatively straightforward to update most maps, provided you have a reliable source of data coming in.

Updates require good case study material tied to specific locations, either through place names (if known), or a simple hand held geolocation enabled device used to capture geolocation when gathering case study material.

Updates require approval from Google, so you need to work to their timescales - you would need to give up to 2 months notice to be sure something will be updated, so it's not good for immediate, live updating.

Like a blog, if you create a map with contemporary information in it, there is an expectation that it will be **updated regularly**. Just as a dead blog is a no-no, if your map data is out of date, it's better to take down the map than leave it there as a historical curiosity.

Useful links

<http://www.eightmaps.com/> Mashup of Googlemaps and people who donated money to Proposition 8 in the US.

<http://hub.witness.org/en/map> The hub map - quite a decent mashup, surprised there isn't more stuff like this out there.

<http://www.kiva.org/app.php?page=businesses&action=about&id=112219&tpos=1&tpg=1> Mapping to connect loaner and loanee

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/internet/page11657.cfm> - Useful guide

<http://earth.google.com/outreach/showcase.html> - Google Earth's outreach programme

<http://www.google.com/nonprofits/mapstutorial.html> - Mapping tutorial in the excellent nonprofits section on Google.

Note – Join the nonprofits group to receive the useful monthly email bulletin with latest tools and developments:

<http://groups.google.com/group/googlefor nonprofits?hl=en>