

Press Release

OpenStreetMap hits 1 million users

OpenStreetMap, the project to create a free map of the world, has reached one million signed-up users this week.

OpenStreetMap involves "mass collaboration", attracting large numbers of contributors all around the world to create a new map from scratch (without copying from existing maps). Anyone can sign up at openstreetmap.org and add information about their neighbourhood to the map, using simple editing software.

On Sunday (6th Jan) the count of users registered on the OpenStreetMap.org website passed one million. As is typical of any such online community, this sign up count includes a "long tail" of users who contributed very little or nothing at all, while a much smaller number of users contribute significantly on a regular basis (more stats at <http://wiki.osm.org/Stats>) Nevertheless, many hands make light work, and with more than a million users now able to edit the map, OpenStreetMap's coverage and detail is growing rapidly, and beginning to rival that of other map providers.

The process of contributing involves getting out and exploring the world. It can be a fun way to use smartphones, GPS receivers or other gadgets to collect data, though it can also be as simple as taking notes with pen and paper, or even just adding a local cafe or restaurant from your local knowledge.

Join a million others in this open mapping revolution. Sign up on OpenStreetMap.org today!

About OpenStreetMap

While several commercial map providers offer access to a map view at no cost, OpenStreetMap provides much more than that. Its not-for-profit mission is to provide open access to all of the underlying raw data which makes up the map. This is enabling a new wave cartographic / geo-data innovations. The map display on OpenStreetMap.org is just one of many views into the free data.

By allowing anyone to edit, but also to check and monitor each other's contributions, OpenStreetMap follows a model very similar to wikipedia. The ease of contributing makes OpenStreetMap a powerful platform empowering communities to take ownership of their map. This process works just as well in the developing world, where OpenStreetMap can often be the first and only map. The rapid turn-around time for map updates (edits go live on the map within minutes) also makes it an effective (and life-saving) tool for disaster response.

Fact check

- OpenStreetMap is not a commercial company. It is a volunteer-driven "good cause" project, with a mission to release the world's geodata for free. There is a small not-for-profit company registered in the UK called the "OpenStreetMap Foundation" which manages server resources and handles donations (<http://osmfoundation.org>)
- The map data is not "copyright free". It is "open licensed". Using and redistributing the maps and map data is free under the terms of the ODbL, which require that you give credit to OpenStreetMap, and share any improvements you make to the map. (<http://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>) The intention of open data licensing is to encourage new and interesting uses while ensuring that the data will remain free.
- It is commonly described as an "open source mapping project", but in a way this misses the point. Although all of the core software is open source, the "open license" of the data is what makes the project groundbreaking (as well as its open editability)

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