Web Maps and Story Maps
Bringing your information to Life

InTouch GIS Services is now offering several interactive web based products tailored for your organisation, bringing your spatial information to life.

InTouch GIS Services web mapping products are much more than ‘dots on a map’, a common feature of many websites. They provide true access to the wealth of information that lies in your data, making it available to your clients or public users in a way that is both intuitive, attractive and informative.

Combining locational intelligence, publicly available information, photographs, video and text, the story behind the data comes to life in a fully interactive map, all delivered through an attractive and intuitive user interface.

So what are ‘Web Maps’ and ‘Story Maps’?

Web maps are essentially interactive maps that are either stand-alone web pages, or embedded within your own website. Commonly, web maps use ‘Google Maps’ to show a background map together with ‘Pins’ highlighting features of interest. Clicking on the pins provides more information about the features including textual descriptions photographs and web links.

“Storymaps” takes this to the next level, providing more in depth information in a clearer and more attractive format. Several designs are available depending on the information you want to provide and the story you want to tell, a few are outlined below.

- **Thumbnail lists** – provide an easy way to access places of interest in an area and provide locational information in a form of a map or in depth descriptions of with text, pictures and videos (works well with both mobile and ‘big screen’ environments).

- **Narrative** – a more ‘progressive’ format where there is more of a linear narrative to the story. Ideal for travelogues, describing the evolution of issues or time related stories. Maps and photos can change as the user scrolls down the story (works well with both mobile and ‘big screen’ environments).

- **Immersive** – bring maps, images text and video together in an attractive ‘scrolling’ format. Scroll down and the text and photos change seamlessly allowing maps to flow to pictures and text. Ideal where you want to emphasis large high quality images in a ‘big screen’ environment (not so good for mobile users).
Interactive Web Maps

Fully featured interactive maps can also be produced allowing the user to select, display and query a variety of geographic features. Spatial information already held by an organisation can be made available in a truly interactive way allowing layers to be turned on or off, styles changed and features added and edited.

Fully supporting WFS (Web Feature Service) and WMS (Web Mapping Services), maps can be created just from information already held by public organisations or supplied as a commercial service from third party data suppliers (eg. Aerial photography feeds, OS background mapping services).

Spatial data already held by your organisation can be made available more widely within your own organisation or to the public while still retaining a high level of security for your data, setting it to either ‘view only’ or ‘edit’.

Combining your own data with existing WFS and WMS data can create a data rich website adding tremendous value to your own data and putting it into a wider geographical context so the true impacts, influences and opportunities of your own organisations activities can be clearly seen.

Click here for an example interactive map

How are the Web maps and Storymaps created?

The web maps and Storymaps are created using ESRI’s ArcGIS online service which provides a reliable, secure platform to host your webmap. GIS Data layers are uploaded on to ESRI’s server, then stored and accessed from there and integrated with WMS and WFS services.

The completed web mapping application is self-contained and does not need to be hosted on existing web platforms or your own fileservers, meaning that there are no additional data or access charges.

A storymap ‘template’ spreadsheet will be supplied customised to the users’ needs allowing quick and efficient data entry for ease of map creation.

If controlled access to named users or editing is required for your web mapping application, ESRI ArcGIS licenses can be purchased or existing licenses within your organisation used, allowing controlled multi-user access within your organisation, but ‘no cost’ access option is for a public facing application to be developed.

How much does it cost?

Prices for a web map or Storymap start at £250 for a publicly accessible application based on supply of information ‘ready to use’ (ie. GIS layers, geocoded spreadsheets, descriptive texts and photos). InTouch GIS Services can advise on the best formats and structures for this information, or can undertake this work on your behalf, taking the data entry and data structure issues off your hands.

‘Controlled access’ and ‘Edit Access’ would be at additional costs depending on the number of users and level of access required.

Contact Jonathan Gatward at InTouch GIS Services Ltd on 07806 816 116 or jongatward@ntlworld.com for more details.
Example Storymaps and Web Maps

A Photo Tour of Manchester

This storymap is based on a set of image thumbnails relating to ‘pins’ on the interactive map. Click on the map and the detailed description of the location will appear with a larger high definition photo. The map is interactive and can be zoomed and panned to see more detail of the location. The map can be customised to include your own features and relevant information alongside the ‘pins’ for the locations. Content can include imported photos or links to images on Flickr or Youtube videos, text and website links.

Click here for weblink

A travelogue through France

This travelogue storymap uses a more linear structure ideal for stories with a more chronological or progressive structure such as journeys, routes or historical events. The index bar on the left allows you to either progress through the story section by section or jump to specific sections. The storymap includes interactive maps that can be zoomed and panned to display more detail, and any features on the map can be clicked to reveal specific information about that feature such as photographs, additional site specific text and other web links.

Click here for weblink
Gulbene – Aluksne Railway; A route description of a Latvian narrow gauge railway

A ‘full screen’ display for the Storymap can really showcase the pictures and text you want to show. This ‘cascading’ story scrolls the text over the full screen picture and allows the user to view the pictures, maps and video clips in full size. Ideal for putting the focus on the pictures and maps, this format really puts the user in the driving seat allowing the media to be shown to its best advantage.

The structure lends itself to a ‘progressive’ story, either over time or for different locations, but also allows the user to select Which ever section they need through the ‘top line’ menu bar.

Maps can use standard base mapping with the addition of any features you want to highlight. These too are ‘queryable’ allowing the user to click on a feature and access the information laying behind it

Click here for weblink

Mapping Housing and Planning Areas

This web mapping application is designed specifically for a local authority highlighting development areas and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) areas. It is designed to maximise the map area providing access extensive attribute information on clicking the features. It also allows the user a high degree of flexibility in turning mapping layers on and off and gives some basic mapping functions such as distance and area calculations. This application is controlled by the ESRI ArcGIS Online License and as such is not publicly available.