

Demonstrating why 'maps make sense'

ArcGIS Online Competition

The Challenge

- A competition to create an attractive, intuitive and informative map using ArcGIS Online

The Benefits

- High quality maps can be produced in just a few hours
- Online service is straightforward to use for novices and experts alike
- Maps reveal deep insight into complex issues



The Challenge

To coincide with the launch of Esri's ArcGIS Online service in Ireland, Esri Ireland organised a competition called 'Maps Make Sense'. This event challenged customers to use ArcGIS Online to create and share an interactive, web-based map on any topic.

All the maps entered in the competition were evaluated against three criteria: their attractiveness; their ease of use; and the value of the insight they delivered into a particular issue. A panel of independent judges was given the difficult task of reviewing all the entries and selecting the winners.

The Solution

The competition clearly demonstrated the numerous ways in which geographic information system (GIS) technology can be used via the Internet to help people make sense of vast amounts of complex data. Maps were submitted to the competition judges, addressing a wide range of topics including environmental concerns, economic trends, community amenities and public safety.

The winning map was created by Justin Gleeson of the The National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA). Entitled 'Feeling the Pinch', it drew on newly available census data to show the changing levels of unemployment across Dublin Electoral Divisions between 2006 and 2011. *"This map is an incredibly useful tool for indicating the effects of the Irish recession on employment levels and clearly illuminates trends across Dublin,"* Gleeson says. *"I believe that maps such as this and the use of ArcGIS Online will be very helpful for people involved in policy development in Ireland."*

Four other maps were highly commended by the judges, and runners up prizes were awarded to their authors. Simon Wheeler from the Department of Environment Northern Ireland developed an interactive map of the village of Whitehead, on the County Antrim coast. This seaside community is reputed to be a retirement destination, but Wheeler used ArcGIS Online to create a map showing that there is plenty to do here for all ages.

The judges were also impressed by a map built by Rachel Scott from the Loughs Agency of Northern Ireland. Scott used ArcGIS Online to display the results of recent electro-fishing surveys and highlight the health of the country's salmon and trout populations. Catchment areas where there is an abundance of juvenile salmon and trout were coloured green on the map, while areas with no stock were coloured red. The map is expected to help the Loughs Agency to implement suitable fishery management practices.

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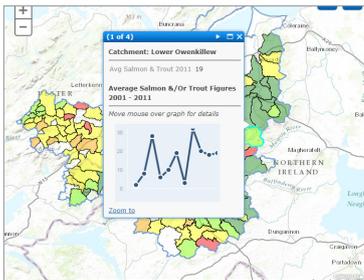
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Justin Gleeson, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis



Juvenile Salmon & Trout Numbers from 2011 Electrofishing Surveys of Loughs Agency's Foyle Catchment.

A map created by Gavin McArdle from the National Centre of Geocomputation focuses attention on the very important issue of road safety in the Republic of Ireland. McArdle used ArcGIS Online to display data on road deaths, roads where speed checks are regularly conducted and the number of safety cameras per county.

The final runner up was Paddy Flaherty from Wicklow County Council whose map draws in data from four external sources to show current planning applications in the county, as well as historical records on granted applications in previous years.

Benefits

Esri Ireland's Maps Make Sense competition served to highlight how quick and easy it now is to create web-based, interactive maps using ArcGIS Online. After spending a little time familiarising himself with Esri's new online service, Gleeson needed just half a day to create his winning web-based map. *"It was a very easy process to create an interactive map using ArcGIS Online,"* he says.

The simplicity and versatility of ArcGIS Online means that many more people – with no prior experience of GIS – can now start to take advantage of this technology. *"Online GIS is no longer something that can only be done by a small number of people who are highly skilled in GIS,"* agrees Gleeson. *"Experts and novices alike can have a go and create really effective online maps."*

As the competition has clearly shown, ArcGIS Online can be used to create maps that help people gain a far deeper understanding of complex issues. Commenting on the value of interactive mapping to the Loughs Agency, Scott says: *"In order to ensure the sustainable development of our fishery, it is vitally important to monitor young salmon and trout stocks in our loughs. Our online cross border map is extremely helpful in highlighting those areas where intervention will be required to ensure the conservation, protection and improvement of fish stocks & their habitats for future generations."*

Esri Ireland's CTO Eamonn Doyle is delighted with the outcome of the competition. *"All of the projects entered revealed incredible insights into important issues or topics – yet these highly valuable maps were created inexpensively and quickly,"* he says. *"I think this really shows that ArcGIS Online not only makes sense of data but makes good business sense too."*

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