ArcGIS API Lite for Flex – Open Source Initiative Project

Version: Draft v1

Overview:
The ArcGIS API Lite for Flex enables you to embed mapping capabilities into your Flex projects very easily. It rivals in simplicity with other popular mapping APIs such as those from Google, Yahoo, etc, and provides a comprehensive collection of maps to utilize (Topographic and Street maps, Imagery, Shaded Relief, etc) in your projects. It also offers unique analytical capabilities such as calculating drive-time polygons and others.

This API is available as a developer sample under the Apache 2.0 license and can be downloaded from Github. The ArcGIS API Lite for Flex is built as a wrapper around the powerful ArcGIS API for Flex, a more advanced API for building GIS web applications.

Common Questions:

Q1. Why did Esri create the ArcGIS API Lite for Flex?
Esri is the leading provider of advanced GIS capabilities in the market today. While very powerful, its ArcGIS API for Flex is more sophisticated than other popular mapping APIs available. We wanted to create a simpler API that would introduce the average non-GIS expert into the great opportunities that GIS has to offer.

Q2. Why should I use this API instead of Google, Yahoo, or others?
1. The ArcGIS API Lite for Flex offers many base maps including: Street, Imagery, Shaded Relief, World Topographic, US Topographic and Ocean Base maps. Other APIs only provide a small limited number of base maps to utilize.
2. In addition to the popular operations commonly found in the other APIs (e.g., find addresses, navigating the map, simple graphics handling, etc.), the ArcGIS API Lite for Flex features unique analytical capabilities such as determining drive-time polygons.
3. The API and its source code are licensed under Apache 2.0, giving you the freedom to adapt it to your specific business needs
4. With other APIs, you are limited to simple mapping. They do not offer a "next level" to advance to if desired. The ArcGIS API Lite for Flex is a great introduction to the power of the ArcGIS API for Flex: a sophisticated library for geographic analysis on the web. In fact, you could potentially leverage both within the same application if desired.
5. No user keys or tokens are needed. You simply download the API and start developing.
6. Unlike other APIs, you retain all rights over your data.
7. Google recently announced the deprecation of its Google Maps API for Flash.

Q3. What is the business/licensing model for the ArcGIS API Lite for Flex?
The ArcGIS API Lite for Flex is licensed under the Apache 2.0 license. However, it uses both the ArcGIS API for Flex and ArcGIS Online services. To use the ArcGIS API Lite for Flex, you will be asked to download the ArcGIS API for Flex - where you will be exposed to its terms of use. Most of the maps and analysis functionality available through the ArcGIS API Lite for Flex is provided by ArcGIS Online services. Usage of ArcGIS Online web services is governed by the Web Services and API Terms of Use. You can view the summary or the complete Esri Terms of Use documents. For additional questions please email arcgisonline@esri.com.

Q4. Are any resources/documentation available for the ArcGIS API Lite for Flex?
Yes, through the developer community at GitHub: https://github.com/ArcGIS/FlexAPILite/wiki
Developer help is available at no cost from the ArcGIS API for Flex Resource Center and its discussion forum. If you need additional Technical Support for the ArcGIS API for Flex, you can purchase the EDN Tech Support plan (only available in the US), or an ArcGIS product.