

Why a Free Wiki World Map?

There are lots of free city plans and maps on the Internet. But most are only for private use and cannot be republished. For example, we would not be allowed to reprint them in a flyer like this. Often, they're not current, not complete, and any mistakes are fixed slowly – if they are fixed at all.



The key problem is that you only get to view map images, but not access to the data from which they were created. You need that data if you want to create your own maps, or use the map on different devices, for example for outdoor navigation.

OpenStreetMap is a world-wide community project which has people like you and me collecting raw geo-data ourselves – sometimes as a team and sometimes on our own.

With our own data and our own software we have the freedom to use the data for any purpose. As with Wikipedia, everybody can take part, and hundreds of thousands of us are already mapping. Join us today!



How does OpenStreetMap work?

You can collect map data for OpenStreetMap in various ways. A GPS device and written notes are the traditional tools of the trade; the GPS tracks are a recording of the roads and paths that you have traveled that day. You can use a notepad or a camera to record the details of what you see on your route. "Mappers" (our name for volunteer surveyors like you) will also frequently make good use of aerial imagery made available for the purpose by companies like Bing, Digital Globe, ESRI, or smaller regional providers.

An editor specially developed for OpenStreetMap will show you our aerial imagery and the GPS tracks that have been collected, and also the data already present in OSM. Street geometries, building outlines, forests or lakes can be traced from aerial imagery, but information like house numbers, street names, or points of interest are missing from such images. Such data (down to the opening times of individual businesses) can only be added if you know the place well – or if you travel there for surveying.

Afterwards, your results are uploaded to the central project database, and the finished map is created. Shortly thereafter, the new changes are visible for everyone!

