LearnOSM

HOT Remote Response Guide

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The Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) is a global community working to apply the principles of open source and open data sharing towards humanitarian response and economic development.

How Remote Response Works

MissingMapsProcess

The majority of HOT's response activities occur remotely. After a disaster strikes, HOT members search for existing data and available satellite imagery. Pertinent partners are contacted to provide ODbL compatible imagery. Once the imagery is obtained the virtual community digitizes, or traces from the imagery (normally, the focus is on recognizable objects that are useful for humanitarian response, like roads, buildings, blocked roads, flood extent, etc) and generates data and maps. During this time, responding organizations are also contacted to determine their needs.

Considering the scale of the crisis, HOT allocates the necessary resources and the response is coordinated by a specific team or member who makes sure everyone knows when new resources are available as well as where to focus efforts. HOT fosters the engagement of the OSM community and, if existing, local actors to use tools like the Tasking Manager to coordinate response efforts. Examples include the remote activities done in Ivory Coast, Senegal, Philippines, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Syria Activation Example

The HOT Tasking Manager

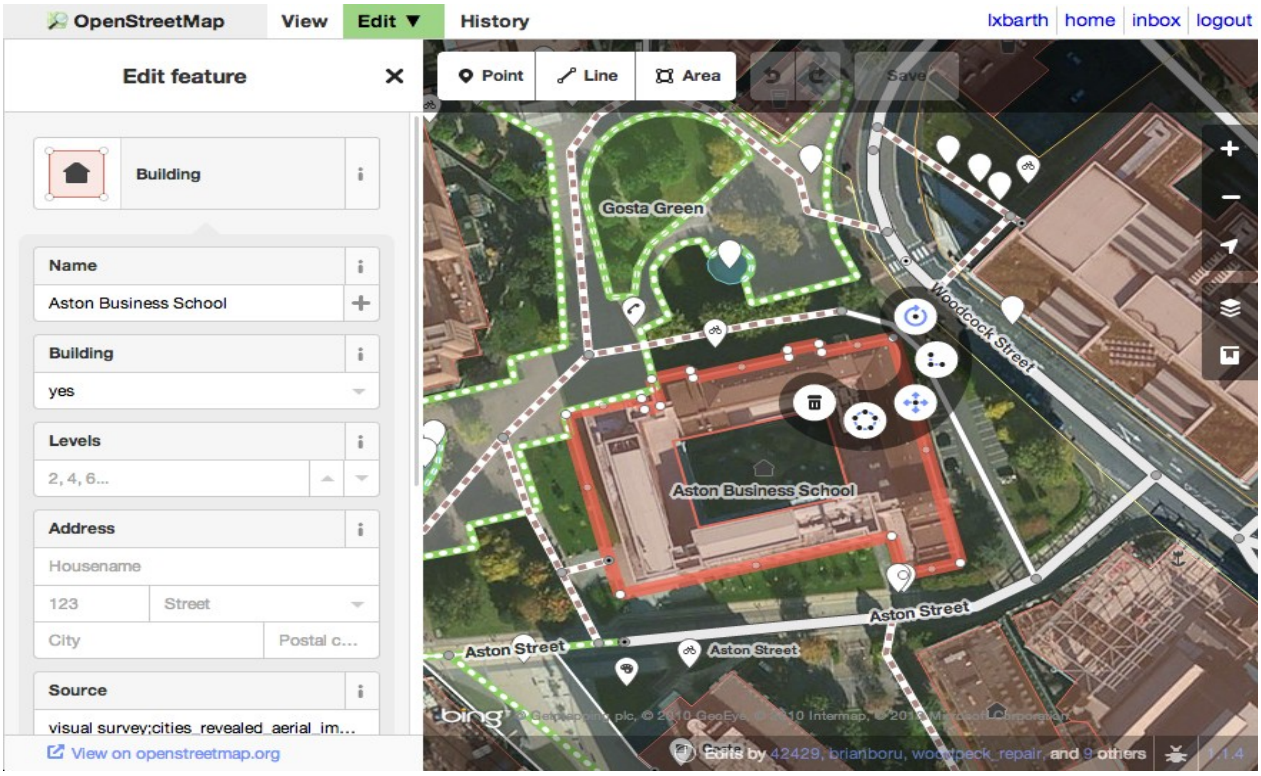
The HOT Tasking Manager is a open source tool designed to divide up a mapping job into smaller tasks that can be completed rapidly. It shows which areas need to be mapped and which areas need the mapping validated by others. It includes mapping tasks for Activations, and longer standing Humanitarian Projects.

In order to use the HOT Tasking Manager you need to sign up with OpenStreetMap (OSM) with a username and password. For more instructions read the Tasking Manager Tutorial.

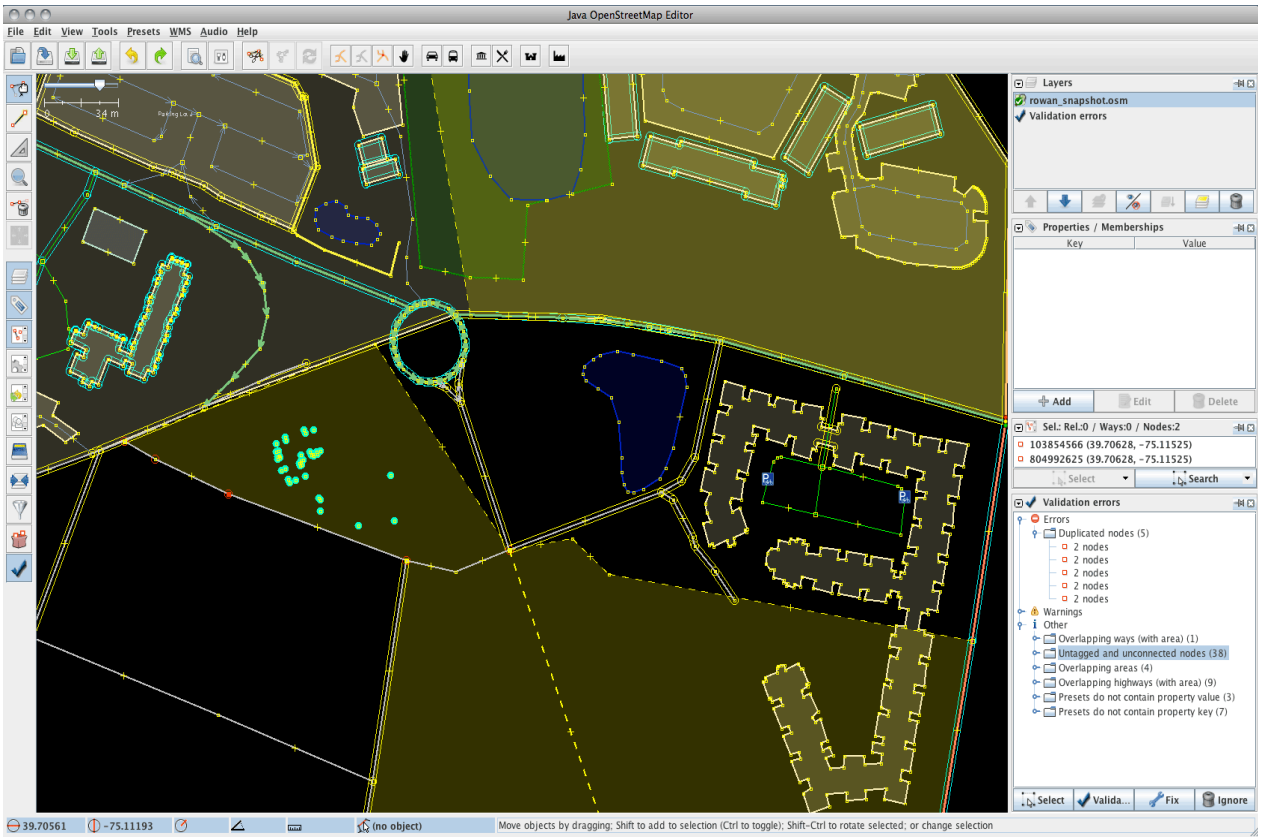
HOTTaskingManager

Editing Tools

iD – the web-based editor created by Mapbox with a very user-friendly interface. Generally considered the best editing tool to start with. You can launch this interactive iD editor tutorial to get acquainted with how to use it.



JOSM– a Java app pronounced as “Jaws-um”, which requires downloading the app and has a greater learning curve. Although it takes longer to setup and learn, it is super-fast for making more edits. Using a mouse is recommended for using this editor.



Advice & Words of Encouragement

> “To practice it’s recommended you start with a local area you know and try some editing, such as updating a local building in your neighborhood.”
>
> “Some tasks are easier than others; if you don’t feel up to one of them, simply cancel out and try another!” -Peter (@meetar)
>
> “It’s no problem if you don’t finish the task; just upload what you’ve done and unlock the task so others can work on it.” -Peter (@meetar)
>
> “If you’d like to see examples of the quality of work that passes muster, check out one of the green "validated” tasks. Don’t worry, clicking the “Review the work” button doesn’t commit you to anything – it just locks the task as though you were editing it. Load it like normal, and simply unlock the task again when you’re done.“ -Peter (@meetar)

> “The satellite pictures are sometimes difficult to interpret, but don’t worry too much about drawing the perfect line or shape – your work will be reviewed and modified by others, and improved with time. And remember, these are crisis areas, not tax records or voting districts – these maps will be read by people who may be in a hurry, in the dark, or in danger. In West Africa, even a rough line on a map is an expression of hope. In Gaza, many of the buildings to be mapped are already gone; but we mark the fact of their construction. Accuracy is nice, but it isn’t the point.” -Peter (@meetar)

Other Resources

This guide has been summarized and collected from a variety of existing tutorial sources and a working HOT Guide. You can find more learning resources at the links below.

Tutorials

LearnOSM’s Remote Mapping Guide– one of the most comprehensive guides

MapGive’s Learn To Map tutorial– includes videos that you can pause to follow along

HotQuickStartGuide – written by Peter Richardson (@meetar) an experienced HOT Remote Response Volunteer

About HOT

HOT Wiki Page– learn more about how HOT operates and some of their latest news

HotCapacities– describes HOT activities in more detail from their website

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