Participatory GIS: Lessons from Redistricting

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www.electproject.org · @ElectProject
Why Redistrict?

**Equal Population** of districts required by 1960s Supreme Court rulings. New census → new districts.

**Additional Requirements**
- Federal Voting Rights Act
- State rules, such as respecting local political boundaries and compactness.

**Other Considerations**
- Control of legislative body
- Incumbent careers
- Racial representation
The Public Mapping Project
www.publicmapping.org

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Awards:
Strata Innovation Award
Tides Pizagitti Prize
American Political Science Association
Four Pillars to Public Mapping Success

Software Development

Data Collection

Public Education

Dissemination
DRAW OUR MINNESOTA
It's Your Turn to Draw the Lines

Learn about Redistricting
- Redistricting 101
- How to Draw the Lines - Step by Step

How to use this tool
- User Guide
- Training Video
- Data Methodology

Log In
Username
Password
Login

Don't have an account?
Draw Your Own Maps...
Sign Up
To View Other Users' Maps...
Enter as a guest
Terms of Use

We've designed the software to run on
Mozilla Firefox - a free web browser
DistrictBuilder is web-based, open source software for collaborative redistricting

- Key features:
  - Accessed through a web-browser, users need no specialized software
  - Designed specifically for novices to accomplish redistricting
  - Users can share redistricting plans or community maps
  - Evaluate and rank plans on all U.S. (and Mexico) legal criteria
  - Multi-lingual user interface
  - Regionalization means one version of DistrictBuilder can support state and local redistricting for entire state
DistrictBuilder

Introduction to the reporting tool.

Top Ten - Equipopulation

- District
- County Splits
- Tract Splits

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<th>Rank</th>
<th>User Name</th>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>VIAM Law, Congresso (Competitive)</td>
<td>53.96%</td>
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U.S. States & Regions Deployments

- CA: Contra Costa County
- AZ: Competitive Districts Coalition
- PA: Fix-Pilly Districts Competition
- OH: Ohio Redistricting
- MI: Citizens Redistricting Competition
- VA: Redistricting Competition
- MN: Draw Minnesota
- NY: Redistrict NY
- IN: Marion County
- VT: Burlington DistrictBuilder
DistrictBuilder Deployment

- Redistricting competitions: Inspire participation, transform the redistricting story

By Joe Brier for USA TODAY
Minneapolis Experience

- Citizen redistricting commission created by 2010 voter initiative

- Software Users:
  - Redistricting Commissioners
  - Community Groups (Somali, Latino, African-American, Common Cause & League of Women Voters)
  - Private individuals

- Public participation:
  - 170 users
  - 500 total plans
  - 96 publicly shared plans

- Created new Somali district and new Latino district
Advocacy Lessons

Where was advocacy successful?

- Buy-in from strong, local advocacy organizations
- Advocacy organizations unified
- Redistricting authority takes public participation seriously
- Overcome data challenges
Lessons from Public Mapping

- Public capable of drawing *legal* redistricting plans
- Public approaches redistricting differently than legislatures
  - Public explores a greater range of plans across criteria
  - Public plans tend to be “better” on most criteria: compactness, county integrity, partisan balance, and competition.
- Criteria are not necessarily constraining, if you want fairness, make it component of objective function.
- Demonstrated reform and voting rights communities’ goals are more in harmony than at odds.
Future Directions

- International deployment, build optimization tools
- On-line education tools
- Contribute generalized open-source redistricting tools back to open-source community
- Build methods and tools for eliciting geospatially-based preferences and opinions
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