

## Creating rich resources with free tools: customised Google Maps for learning and teaching

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Drawing upon two example cases, in this workshop participants will explore teaching uses of Google Maps, and develop their own customised Google Maps with embedded photos, video or other resources. No programming or advanced technical knowledge is required.

Presenting information in its geographical context can help students understand the relationship and significance of locality to a particular concept. Cook (2010) describes the provision of such information through mobile devices as 'digital augmentation'. Whilst sophisticated augmented reality is possible, we would like to present a low-cost way to providing similar learning experiences for exploratory and contextualising activities.

Google Maps offers a free, cross-platform way to provide geographical information to students, and hence may be used to complement field trips or to substitute them for economical or accessibility reasons (particularly with Google StreetView). Though the use of Google Maps in education is not new (see Fluke 2008 as an example of a hard-coded desktop 'mash-up'), the proliferation of mobile devices and free-to-use apps offers both tutors and students an opportunity to create maps on location or collaboratively without technical expertise. By using Google Maps in conjunction with other tools, such as Flickr, YouTube or Blackboard Learn mobile apps, rich learning resources can be created with minimal cost and effort.

We will show two early-stage case studies where Google Maps has been used in teaching within undergraduate social policy modules: a walk highlighting crime prevention measures and a city housing field trip. In each case a mobile-friendly map has been created using the cloud-based Google Maps system, which students can use 'in the field' with a smart phone, thus allowing students to view contextual information in the physical environment to which it relates.

We will guide participants through the creation of a custom map using the cloud-based Google Maps site. Participants will need to have a Google Account and at least one of the following internet enabled devices (note: the larger the device, the easier it will be to create a map):

- An iPad or iPhone with the free 'My Maps Editor' app installed
- An Android tablet or phone with the free 'Flickr' app installed and a Flickr account
- A laptop

Participants will have access to example maps to experience how students may use these as a learning tool, and will require either a full browser or the 'Google Maps' app installed to view them.

### References

Cook, J. (2010) Mobile Phones as Mediating Tools within Augmented Contexts for Development, *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning*, 2(3), 1-12.

Fluke, C. J. (2008) Virtual Field Trips: Using Google Maps to Support Online Learning and Teaching of the History of Astronomy, *Astronomy Education Review*, 7(2), 74-96.