MyDistrictBuilder
Building Districts “in the Clouds”

Presentation to:
NCSL National Redistricting Seminar

By:
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House Office of Reapportionment
Florida House of Representatives
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Refer to MyDistrictBuilder Website

Visit: http://floridaredistricting.cloudapp.net/MyDistrictBuilder.aspx

Password: hou$e
Mission: To allow all interested Floridians to have an equal opportunity to take part in the redrawing of Florida’s state legislative and Congressional districts after the 2010 Census by providing a web-based district drawing tool.

Vision: The Florida House of Representatives can provide Floridians with an unprecedented level of access to information, opportunities to testify, and direct means to participate in Florida’s 2012 Redistricting.

Values:
- Discipline of Law.
- Consistent Application of Standards.
- Equal Opportunity.
- Accessibility.
- Community-Driven.
- Individual Empowerment.
- Partnerships.
- Innovation.

Background: Mission, Vision, Values
Development:
- Existing and expected “off-the-shelf” products.
- Open source software.
- In-house development.
- A combination approach.

- Ability to integrate data, mapping programs and server capabilities.

- Cost of staffing, technology and maintenance.

- Proof-of-concept:
  - Open public testing of the application through multiple stages of development.

- Enhancements to the 2002 Redistricting.

- Legal impacts.

Key Considerations
Proof-of-Concept: www.myfloridacensus.gov
Proof-of-Concept Technology Stack
- Rich visuals.
- Vendor development assistance and web service delivery.
- Scalable infrastructure.
- Cost-effective servers.
- Cross-browser compatibility.
- Security and privacy through isolated storage.

Technology Stack
Intensive research phase, prior to development, to select all the technology pieces.

The use of “cutting-edge” technology:

- Learning the technology stack.
- Learning how each piece of the technology stack and data works with cloud servers.
- Cutting edge products often mean cutting edge glitches.

Being ahead of the technology:

- In some instances, the technology had to catch-up to what was being asked of it.
- Sometimes waiting for the technology to add features or capability.
- The speed necessary versus what the spatial library could offer.
- Had to develop our own “work-around” in several instances.

Challenges...
• The combination of this particular technology stack and small staff required the development team to be the “jack-of-all-programming-trades.”
  • Only 1 developer for the first six months; 2 developers thereafter.

• No “one-stop-shop” cure in this area of development.

• A healthy partnership with the vendor was critical in instances when no fix existed.

• While the total cost is approximately half what it would have been if we used in-house servers and other private vendor options could not guarantee the same ability to share this program with every Floridian, there is still cost of approximately $250,000, and that cost does not include staff.

• Nothing here changes the fact that census data and elections data are seldom clean and complete, often times tying up the developers.

...Challenges Continued
Pre-September 2009: Researched available technology options.

October 2009: Hired first developer, Brad Boyce.

November 2009: Proposed Bing Maps, Silverlight and cloud server technology stack to House leadership.

December 2009: Began developing with Microsoft Silverlight.

January 2010: Began using Bing Maps; Began work on proof-of-concept.

April 2010: Hired second developer, Derek Morgan.

June 2010: Displayed 2000 Census & elections data in pre-alpha version of MyDistrict Builder; Began basic district building in MyDistrictBuilder.

August 2010: Loaded current Florida House, Senate and Congressional maps into MyDistrictBuilder.

September 2010: Stress-testing, speed testing, “crash and burn” testing of MyDistrictBuilder.

Post-proof-of-concept to Today

- November 2010: Complete plan submission and review of plan components to MyDistrictBuilder.

- December 2010: Add choropleth mapping, reports and data browsing to MyDistrictBuilder.

- January 2011: Complete beta of MyDistrictBuilder; Begin marketing plan for MyDistrictBuilder; Complete ADA compliance for [www.floridaredistricting.org](http://www.floridaredistricting.org).

Completing the Beta Version
• February 2011: Begin public beta-testing of MyDistrictBuilder.

• June 2011: Complete cosmetic and user-friendly enhancements of MyDistrictBuilder.


• July 2011 throughout 2012 Session: Legislative and public use of MyDistrictBuilder and active marketing of website.
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Questions/Comments?

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