



Case Study | Google Maps API for Work

Department of Parliamentary Library



At a Glance

What they wanted to do

- Enable users create maps crossed referenced with census data without having to rely on another department.

What they did

- Utilised OniMap to provide users with the ability to create maps showing census data and electoral boundaries.

What they accomplished

- Ability for individual users to interact required data and layers on maps.
- Removed the requirement to rely on technical backgrounds to create and interact with mapping services.

“ParlMap’s ability to display the demographic data over a richly detailed geographic base map with a familiar look and feel has provided our clients with a service that wasn’t previously possible.” - Toby Bellwood: Senior Researcher.

Business

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) is a service department that supports the work of the Australian Federal Parliament. DPS is the principal support agency for Parliament House—a building where more than 3,500 people work on sitting days and which nearly one million visitors visit each year. DPS has around 800.

The Parliamentary Library operates as part of DPS and provides services to senators, members, their staff, and the staff of other parliamentary departments. The first library services were delivered to federal parliament in 1901 and continue to provide significant support to parliament and the democratic process.

Challenge

One of the many responsibilities of the Parliamentary Library (the Library) is to provide clients with geographic representations of demographic and election result data, usually for their respective electorate or state. Previously the Library’s only method of visualising this data was for the Library GIS staff to create a cartographic printed map, which had an associated lead time. The need for clients to make quick and informed decisions for their specific regions meant that the convenience, flexibility and speed of this service were major challenges that needed to be addressed.

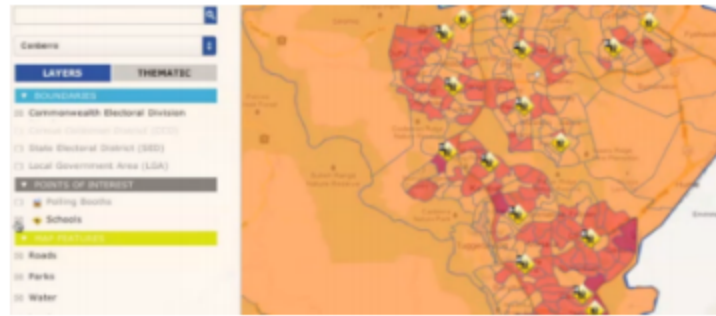
The key challenge was to provide a self-service mapping product which would allow clients to create maps to suit their specific requirements for geography, content and other details. This product needed to complement the bespoke mapping service already available through the Library’s Statistics and Mapping section, where staff work to specific, more complex requests. The intention of this solution is to provide a service for commonly requested data on a predefined set of areas.

About Google Maps for Work

Google Maps API for Work makes it easy for companies to include fully interactive Google Maps on their public and internal websites. The Maps API helps your customers and employees make the right business and purchasing decisions by visualizing important information on a familiar map.

For more information visit:
<https://www.google.com/work/maps/earth/>

"Parlmap is an easily accessible online resource clients can use at their own convenience, whenever and wherever they want. It can be customised to show the type of information each user is most interested in." - Sue Johnson:
Director of the Statistics and Mapping Section



Solution

The Library decided to develop a self-service product which clients could access at all times, which would free up staff for more complex, time-consuming jobs.

ParlMap is a thematic mapping solution which was developed by OniGroup specifically to fulfil these requirements. The ParlMap solution includes a Google Maps for Work License which is integrated with the OniMap platform. ParlMap is hosted on OniGroup's own servers and maintained by OniGroup's technical staff. This solution has allowed the Library's clients to effectively produce and design many of their own maps without needing input from Library staff. With the ParlMap solution senators, members and their staff are able to perform their own extensive data analysis before requesting printed maps (if required). Using ParlMap, clients are directly creating, on average, around 90 maps each month. This allows the GIS staff of the Library to focus their attention to more important tasks as clients are no longer reliant on their GIS expertise for basic data analysis tasks.

By utilising Google Maps technology as the base of the ParlMap solution, the end users were already familiar with the easy to access controls and functionality expected from maps.google.com. ParlMap allows clients to pan, zoom and filter between data layers so that they can design maps they're particularly interested in. All of this functionality was made accessible with very limited need for training, thus eliminating the need for a technical background in order to utilise the mapping services.

Capabilities

ParlMap is a web-based solution which means users can access the services through an online portal and are able to create and customise maps from anywhere at any time. The dynamic mapping display allows users to pan, zoom and filter the census and election data layers in order to produce maps that are of most interest to each individual user. Search-as-you-type technology similar to the

capability of maps.google.com is provided for increased accuracy and speed of address searches. The thematic mapping display allows for satellite overlay as well as the familiar google map tiles. By providing end users with the ability to create their own customisable output, the Parliamentary Library has effectively alleviated some of the demands on their GIS professionals to make maps for preliminary data analysis as, in many cases, the clients have been able to do this themselves. Allowing these end users to create their own maps means they will be able to visualise the data they're interested in within minutes as opposed to potentially days.