



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Azavea and Temple University's Center for Security and Crime Science Announce the Release of ACS Alchemist, an Open Source Software Tool to Access Census Data

ACS (American Community Survey) Alchemist enables users to easily extract specific portions of the U.S. Census ACS data to enable in-depth spatial analysis.

Philadelphia, PA, July 31, 2012 – [Azavea](http://www.azavea.com), an award winning geospatial analysis (GIS) software development company and the Center for Security and Crime Science at Temple University announce the release of ACS Alchemist, an open source tool that enables the extraction of up to 100 variables of the American Community Survey (ACS). The data is extracted directly into a format convenient for display on maps or for use in advanced spatial analysis and modeling. The source code for ACS Alchemist is being released under the GNU General Public License and is available for download at: <https://github.com/azavea/acs-alchemist>.

The U.S. Census ACS is an ongoing statistical survey that samples a small percentage of the U.S. population every year. It has more than 20,000 variables for the 50 states, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, at multiple levels of geographic aggregation. For organizations that need to analyze Census data to either serve their constituents more strategically or pursue their mission more effectively, the task of extracting such data from the U.S. Census Bureau website is fairly complicated. The ACS Alchemist software provides a simple and free solution to this challenge. ACS Alchemist provides straightforward user interface that takes the user through a simple step-by-step process to extract the data based on ACS survey year and level of geographic aggregation, i.e., counties, county sub-division, tracts, blockgroups, etc. The data is then saved as a Shapefile on the users' computer for use within other GIS applications.

The software was developed by Azavea in connection with a National Institute of Justice grant awarded to Jerry Ratcliffe and Ralph Taylor of the Center for Security and Crime Science at Temple University. It is the



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first of several software tools that Azavea is building to support predictive policing research in collaboration with the Center for Security and Crime Science. This research is aimed at forecasting crime by combining socio-economic data that models crime over long periods of time with short-term changes in criminogenic risk.

“The ability to analyze census information in a timely manner is a key component to predictive policing and crime prevention,” said Dr Jerry Ratcliffe of Temple University’s Center for Security and Crime Science, “and this tool will definitely aid our understanding of the causes of crime and ultimately, improve community safety.”

This is not the first time Azavea has released the source code for a tool it has developed. The company built OpenTreeMap, a geographically-based tree inventory system; DistrictBuilder, a web-based platform that enables citizens and government officials to work together on redrawing legislative districts; Open Data Catalog, a portal that provides access to open data sets, applications, and APIs; and GeoTrellis, a framework for the fast processing of geographic data. They are each available at: <https://github.com/azavea> .

ACS Alchemist was supported by Award No. 2010-DE-BX-K004, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this software are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice or Temple University. It is available at: <https://github.com/azavea/acs-alchemist>

About Azavea - Azavea is an award-winning geospatial analysis (GIS) software development firm specializing in the creation of location-based web and mobile software as well as geospatial analysis services. Azavea is a [certified B Corporation](#) that applies geographic data and technology to promote the emergence of more dynamic, vibrant, and sustainable communities while advancing the state-of-the-art through research. Each of Azavea’s projects, products and pro bono engagements showcases this commitment. Find more at <http://www.azavea.com>.

If you would like more information about Azavea or to schedule an interview with Robert Cheetham, Azavea CEO and President, please contact Amy Trahey at (215) 558 – 6184 or e-mail atrahey@azavea.com.



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About the Center for Security and Crime Science at Temple University - Housed in the Department of Criminal Justice at Temple University, the Center for Security and Crime Science is the first center in the United States devoted to Crime Science. Current projects involve: The Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment, Research on crime reduction effectiveness of CCTV, The Smart Policing Initiative, and research on predictive modeling of long and short term crime risk. Find more at: <http://www.temple.edu/cj/cscs/>

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