



## Press Release

For Immediate Release

---

**Media Contact**     Amy Trahey  
                              (215) 558-6184  
                              atrahey@azavea.com

---

### **DistrictBuilder Wins ‘Data Used for Social Impact’ Award at Strata Data Innovation Awards 2012**

**Part of the O’Reilly Strata Conference & Hadoop World Conference, the Strata Data Innovation Awards recognize innovation in big data and data science. DistrictBuilder has enabled the public to generate several thousands of redistricting plans nationwide.**

**Philadelphia, PA, October 25, 2012** – DistrictBuilder (<http://www.districtbuilder.org/>), open source software for collaborative redistricting, won the ‘Data Used for Social Impact’ award today at the Strata Data Innovation Awards. The Strata Data Innovation Awards recognize “disruptive, innovative technologies in big data and data science, highlight data science as an increasing importance for companies, and showcase the highlights of the growing data community. “

The DistrictBuilder software was developed by the Public Mapping Project (<http://publicmapping.org/>) with software engineering by Azavea (<http://www.azavea.com/>), a geospatial analysis (GIS) software development company, and the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, to give the public access to online redistricting tools that make the redistricting process more open and collaborative. The platform has supported redistricting efforts for the states of Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Virginia and others. It was also used at the local level in Contra Costa County, CA, Marion County, IN, and in Philadelphia for the first online redistricting contest ever held in that city. The DistrictBuilder software development effort was catalyzed by the enormous U.S. redistricting effort triggered every ten years by release of official population data-- but in the past year has also been extended to support redistricting laws and languages throughout the world. All told, thousands of users have generated several thousands of redistricting plans nationwide thanks to DistrictBuilder, demonstrating that not only are citizens interested in the redistricting process, they are sufficiently invested and motivated to spend many hours drawing high quality plans that would pass legal muster in their city, county or state.



## Press Release

### For Immediate Release

“We are pleased to have been able to work with our advocacy partners to support them in their efforts to improve the redistricting process.” said Michael McDonald, Principal Investigator in the project, and Associate Professor at George Mason University. Micah Altman, Principal Investigator, and Director of Research at the MIT libraries stated, “The drawing of electoral districts has been among the most easily manipulated and least transparent systems in democratic governance. DistrictBuilder has demonstrated that the thoughtful application of information technology and open data can promote public commentary and discussion about redistricting; inform legislators, redistricting authorities, and courts as to the range of possible plans; can signal public preferences over redistricting plans; and can educate the public about the electoral process. We are optimistic that continuing effort to make redistricting more transparent and participative will create, over time, a ‘market’ for plans that support political fairness and community representational goals.”

With DistrictBuilder, the Public Mapping Project’s Principal Investigators, Dr. Michael McDonald and Dr. Micah Altman set out to:

- Enable the public to learn about the redistricting process.
- Encourage civic engagement in redistricting efforts
- Demonstrate that a non-partisan and open, public process based upon objective criteria can produce fair, legal legislative districts.

“We could not be more thrilled to be a partner on the DistrictBuilder project. As a B Corporation, Azavea strives to create civic-minded geospatial software that helps make our communities more vital, resilient and sustainable. DistrictBuilder demonstrates that open access to data, combined with open software and a well-designed user experience, can enable people to become directly engaged in the democratic process at a much deeper level than simply casting a vote on Election Day.” said Robert Cheetham, Founder and CEO of Azavea.

---

**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](http://www.azavea.com) 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 out more at <http://www.azavea.com>.



## Press Release

For Immediate Release

**About the Public Mapping Project** - The Public Mapping Project is comprised of a coalition of people who believe that democracy works best when the public is engaged. The principal investigators of the project are Dr. Michael McDonald, Associate Professor, George Mason University, and Dr. Micah Altman, Director of Research, Libraries, M.I.T. Both Dr. McDonald and Dr. Altman are also non-resident Senior Fellows at The Brookings Institution. Find out more at <http://www.publicmapping.org/>

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](mailto:atrahey@azavea.com).

###