

HOW TO HOST AN OPENSTREETMAP MAPATHON

Adapted from the [Missing Maps](#) guide on Hosting a Mapathon

BEFORE YOU HOST A MAPATHON

You'll want to get familiar with the tools you'll be teaching your volunteer group. First, create an [OpenStreetMap](#) (OSM) account and practice mapping. We recommend starting in your own community. This way you'll already know what you are documenting, so you are best prepared to focus on this new tool. Once you are comfortable with OSM, try mapping for a humanitarian project using the Tasking Manager. Don't forget to read and follow the instructions for the specific project you choose. Once you've mapped about five squares, you should feel more comfortable with the tool. OSM has millions of active editors located all around the world, so if you have a question about appropriate tagging or specifically about the tool, try giving it a google. This will help you reach the correct wiki page for your specific question. Most people feel comfortable after playing with these tools for an afternoon.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- **Participants** - the perfect group size is one where you and your helpers can check on each mapper a handful of times
- **Helpers** - We recommend 1 helper for every 10 mappers at in person events. Less for on-line, 2 or 3 depending on group size.
- **Venue** - A space that fits your group with:
 - Tables and chairs
 - Strong Wi-Fi that can handle multiple simultaneous connections
 - A projector and screen/blank wall
 - Extension cables (remember to tape these down!)
- **Computers & mice** (not tablets) for every participant
- **Snacks** - pizza is always a favorite!
- **Enthusiasm!**

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1. PRE-EVENT CHECKLIST

- **Set a date and time for the mapathon.**

We suggest blocking off 2 hours, which will include:

- 5-minutes to welcome people to the room and ask them to sign into their accounts
- 5-minute welcome presentation
- 2-minute announcements
- 10-minutes of mapping training
- 15-minutes to get comfortable with a new skill
- 70-minutes to map comfortably
- 5-minutes to wrap-up

- **Reserve a space for your event.**

Find somewhere that can comfortably hold your participants and their equipment. Virtual mapathons are a great option too. You'll just need a meeting link with the right permissions.

- **Recruit & advertise for your event.**

If you already have your audience, such as a school club make sure to inform them of the event. Otherwise, we recommend setting up registration and promoting the event through your channels.

If your event is during OSM GeoAwareness Week, add your event to the list at [osmgeoweek.org!](https://osmgeoweek.org/)

- **Practice Mapping**

Make sure that you and your helpers (these can be students!) are comfortable mapping ahead of time. You don't have to be experts, just ready to help answer basic questions.

- **Select a Project to Map**

There is always a need for mapping, from humanitarian needs to small organizations needing data to improve their local community. Be sure to check out osmgeoweek.org/projects for recommended projects.

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2. EVENT DAY CHECKLIST

- **Set up the location where you'll be hosting**

Test equipment to ensure everything is working correctly. If possible, test on both a mac and pc. If hosting a virtual event, consider logging in 30 mins early to connect with your organizers and test your platform privileges.

- **Check on your planned mapping task**

Mappers might have worked on a project outside of organized events, this is a nice problem to have! If this happens and you are at your event, pick a new task. Don't forget to update your materials!

- **Start mapping & have fun!**

Be sure to track your edits! When your attendees save their changes, ask them to use a unique hashtag when they upload their edits, i.e. #ODWmapathon

If your event is during OSM GeoAwareness Week, be sure to add #osmgeoweek to your edits!

- **Ask experienced helpers to validate as everyone maps!**

If you have experienced mappers available to help, ask them to validate tasks during the event. This helps ensure your event results in quality contributions to organizations in need.

- **Post pictures & information to social media**

Sharing mapathon events inspire others to contribute to the project.

If your event is during OSM GeoAwareness Week, be sure to add #osmgeoweek to your posts. A social media toolkit with other relevant hashtags and images are available at osmgeoweek.org

- **Check and celebrate your contributions!**

If you used a unique hashtag, check ohsome Stats at stats.now.ohsome.org