



Society of Environmental Journalists

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Data Tools You Need Now (And They're Free!)

<http://www.documentcloud.org>

DocumentCloud “If you regularly report on source documents, DocumentCloud can help you get the most out of them. Turn documents into data. Analyze, annotate, and publish. DocumentCloud is a catalog of primary source documents and a tool for annotating, organizing and publishing them on the web. Documents are contributed by journalists, researchers and archivists. We're helping reporters get more out of documents and helping newsrooms make their online presence more engaging. DocumentCloud was founded in 2009 with a grant from the Knight News Challenge. After two years as an independent nonprofit organization, DocumentCloud became a project of Investigative Reporters and Editors in June of 2011.”

<http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>

Google Earth

The world's geographic information at your fingertips.

<http://www.google.com/fusiontables/public/tour/index.html>

Google Fusion Tables

“Gather, visualize and share data online. Visualize and publish your data as maps, timelines and charts. Host your data tables online. Combine data from multiple people. Google Fusion Tables is a modern data management and publishing web application that makes it easy to host, manage, collaborate on, visualize, and publish data tables online.”

<http://earth.google.com/ocean/>

<http://www.google.com/earth/explore/showcase/ocean.html#explore-oceans>

Google Ocean

National Geographic ocean explorer, Sylvia Earle, narrates a highlight tour through some of the best photos and videos in the 'Explore the Ocean' layer in Google Earth.

<http://blog.newscloud.com/welcome-to-newscloud.html>

NewsCloud

“A free, open source software platform for building Facebook applications and Facebook Connect web sites that encourage user generated content and foster online community. Use NewsCloud to create the kinds of engaged hyperlocal community hubs that the Knight Foundation recommends for healthy cities in its recent Aspen Institute report. For the past year, NewsCloud's been working with mainstream journalism organizations around the United States to help them adopt our open source Facebook platform. We've worked with organizations as small as New Jersey hyperlocal blog Baristanet and as large as The Boston Globe and The Washington Post. Our work has been generously funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and is freely available for open source download.”

<http://www.openstreetmap.org/>

OpenStreetMap

“OpenStreetMap creates and provides free geographic data such as street maps to anyone who wants them. The project was started because most maps you think of as free actually have legal or technical restrictions on their use, holding back people from using them in creative, productive, or unexpected ways.”

<http://www.patchworknation.org>

Patchwork Nation

“Patchwork Nation is a reporting project of the Jefferson Institute that aims to explore what is happening in the United States by examining different kinds of communities over time. The effort uses demographic, voting and cultural data to cluster and organize communities into “types of place.” Patchwork divides America's 3,141 counties into 12 community types based characteristics, such as income level, racial composition, employment and religion. It also breaks the nation's 435 congressional districts into nine categories, using the same data points and clustering techniques. You can read about the methodology of the project on the methodology page. Launched to cover the 2008 election and originally developed and hosted with the Christian Science Monitor, Patchwork Nation has evolved to cover more communities and more topics, focusing on the economy and culture as well as politics.”

<http://politiwidgets.com>

Politi-widgets

“Politi-widgets allows you to “insert information on a member of Congress into a blog post as easily as you can imbed a *YouTube* video....The Sunlight Foundation will roll out new and informative widgets that will continue to give you the best information possible on elected officials. On deck is information about campaign contributions, what lawmakers say in the Congressional Record and what kind of fundraiser events lobbyists host for members of Congress. Keep checking back for the latest widgets.”

<http://www.publiclaboratory.org/home>

Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science

“Using inexpensive DIY techniques, we seek to change how people see the world in environmental, social, and political terms. We are activists, educators, technologists, and community organizers interested in new ways to promote action, intervention, and awareness through a participatory research model. This community began as grassrootsmapping.org an effort to produce Do-It-Yourself satellite imagery with balloons and kites, most notably during the 2010 BP oil spill. We are now broadening our scope to explore new inexpensive and community-led means to measure and explore environmental and social issues.”

<http://www.prx.org/>

Public Radio Exchange

PRX is “an online marketplace for distribution, review, and licensing of public radio programming. PRX is also a growing social network and community of listeners, producers, and stations collaborating to reshape public radio.” PRX Story Market was funded in 2010 by the Knight Foundation, “to develop a crowd-funding platform for public radio, so citizens can pay for the professional production of stories they would like to see in the news.”

<http://www.snagfilms.com>

SnagFilms is committed to finding the world's most compelling documentaries, whether from established heavyweights or first-time filmmakers, and making them available to the wide audience these titles deserve. SnagFilms.com is a website where you can watch full-length documentary films for free, but we're also a platform that lets you “snag” a film and put it anywhere on the web.”

<http://spot.us>

Spot.us

Community funded reporting. Spot.us is an open source project to pioneer “community powered reporting.” Through Spot.us the public can commission and participate with journalists to do reporting on important and perhaps overlooked topics. Contributions are tax deductible and we partner with news organizations to distribute content under appropriate licenses.

<http://www.usahidi.com>

Ushahidi

“We are a non-profit tech company that develops free and open source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping. We built the Ushahidi platform as a tool to easily crowdsource information using multiple channels, including SMS, email, Twitter and the web.” A new project of Ushahidi, SwiftRiver is “an open source platform that aims to democratize access to tools for filtering & making sense of real-time information.” Crowdsourcing through Crowdmap is also offered for “when you need to get the Ushahidi platform up in 2 minutes to crowdsource information, Crowdmap will do it for you. It’s our hosted version of the Ushahidi platform.”

<http://www.citmedialaw.org/legal-guide>

Citizen Media Law Project

“Knowing your legal rights and responsibilities is important for anyone who publishes online. The CMLP’s legal guide addresses the legal issues you may encounter as you gather information and publish your work. The guide is intended for use by citizen media creators with or without formal legal training, as well as others with an interest in these issues.”

Track and get involved with cutting edge thinking on new tools for journalists by following:

Knight News Challenge: <http://knightfoundation.org/funding-initiatives/knight-news-challenge/>

Knight-Mozilla News Technology Partnership: <https://drumbeat.org/en-US/journalism/>

Media Shift | Knight Projects IDEA Lab: <http://www.pbs.org/idealab/>

Nieman Journalism Lab: <http://www.niemanlab.org/>

If you have reviews to share or additional resources to add to this collection please post to SEJ-TALK, or email to bparke@sej.org.

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