VOLUNTEER MAPPER FLIES OUT TO ANTIGUA

Press release from the OpenStreetMap Foundation

OpenStreetMap, the Wikipedia-like website which is mapping the world, is sponsoring one of its volunteers to go mapping for a week on the idyllic Caribbean island of Antigua - an idea sparked by Ed Parsons of rival Google Maps.

At last year's State of the Map conference in Limerick, Ireland, Ed spoke about the recently-launched Google Map Maker, Google's process for getting the public to supply map data for them. The countries initially covered by Map Maker included many Caribbean islands, leading Ed to express sadness that fieldwork was not involved.

This off-the-cuff suggestion, and a spirit of friendly competition, caused Gervase Markham, an OpenStreetMap contributor, to set up a pledge on the PledgeBank website. People pledged to improve OpenStreetMap's coverage in the Caribbean themselves by tracing over available aerial imagery, and to donate £10 each towards sending one lucky mapper on just such a field trip.

74 people, including Ed Parsons himself, signed the pledge, raising £740 to fund teh expedition in order to significantly improve the OpenStreetMap data. One name from the pledgelist was chosen by a verifiable random process - Steve Chilton from Middlesex University, UK (who happens to be a professional cartographer, and is the driving force behind the look of the default cartographic styling for OpenStreetMap). The OpenStreetMap Foundation will be sponsoring him to travel to Antigua from 5th to 12th of June to add GPS traces, classify roads, and to add road names and points of interest, building on the work already done from aerial photos by the pledgers. He expects the weather to be marvellous.

"I am really looking forward to this fieldwork trip", said Steve. "I have contributed data to the map in many parts of the UK, and it will be great to contribute data in the Caribbean and add another little bit to this fantastic global project."

This year's State of the Map conference is in Amsterdam from 10th - 12th July 2009, and is open to all. Steve will be there, reporting back with details of his trip and, no doubt, making the attendees jealous of his tan.

OpenStreetMap was founded in 2004 out of exasperation that the Ordnance Survey, Britain's national mapping agency, charged such high fees for its map data of the UK. The project now has 30,000+ active volunteers worldwide who, between them, have mapped over 33 million kilometres of roads, footpaths and cycleways. They do this by tracing over aerial photos, or more often by using GPS devices to track their footsteps. The resulting data and maps are free for anyone to use in creative, productive and innovative ways.

If your local street, town or idyllic Caribbean island is missing from OpenStreetMap, the easy-to-use map editor means you can add it yourself immediately. To find out more, visit openstreetmap.org.

Further information

OpenStreetMap: http://www.openstreetmap.org/
The Fieldwork Pledge: http://www.pledgebank.com/osmfieldwork
The Choice Procedure: http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/OSMFieldwork/ChoiceProcedure
State of the Map 2009: http://www.stateofthemap.org/

Media information

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* Gervase Markham, petition organizer: +44 774 294 6199, gerv@gerv.net
* Steve Chilton, Gervase Markham and Steve Coast are all available for interview.
* Hi-res images to accompany this release are available on request.