

# Using Maps to deliver better Customer Service

A White Paper from SilverTin Ltd

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## Introduction

This White Paper sets out our thoughts, ideas and examples of how maps technology can add value to the CRM process in Local Government. The paper draws upon our observations and implementation experiences within the Local Government CRM community.

Map technology is now firmly embedded within many on-line applications. The powerful scan and search capability makes for an excellent user experience. This paper examines how map technology is being used within Local Government to provide real world value-add solutions. We will see how maps are deployed to pinpoint locations where there is no residential address, how maps can reduce the reporting of duplicates. We will gain an insight into how map technologies are driving Delivery Teams to work smarter and how some Councils are engaging with Community Champions for the recording of incidents. The paper touches on the Smartphone revolution and the exciting opportunities that this channel brings. The paper concludes with a look at Strategic Portals and the key role that these are playing in the strategic decision making process.

This White Paper is brought to you by SilverTin Ltd. SilverTin are the creators of SwitchCRM, an exciting and innovative CRM application designed specifically for Local Government. Our philosophy is simple. Challenge convention. Embrace innovation.

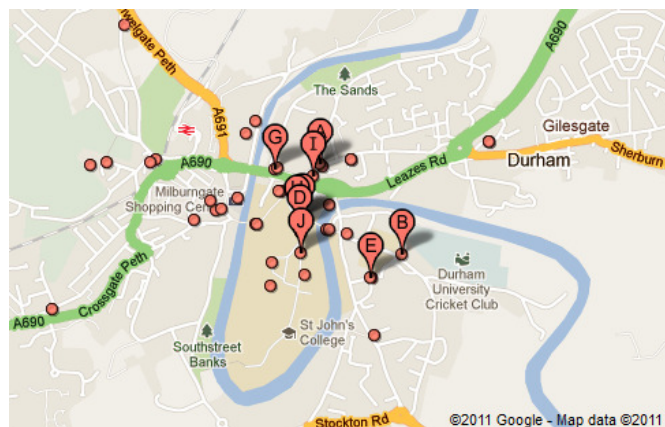
Our aim is to foster a community of innovative thinking around CRM in Local Government. Welcome aboard.

## Maps for the masses

Google Maps transformed the way that we use maps technology. Many of us will have seen the pre-match stadium zoom on Match of the Day. If you are in the process of buying a house or going on holiday the chances are you have checked it out using a Street View application. Almost every web site that we encounter now has a View Map/Location link.

Clearly, the technology has proven itself and is here to stay.

The challenge is how to make it add value to the Local Government CRM process.



### **Non-addressable data**

For customer interactions where the incident location sits on a non-addressable piece of land, being able to plot a dot on a map is a useful feature. Take Abandoned Vehicles as an example. If a vehicle is abandoned at the side of a road away from houses, it is far easier to pin point the location using a map than it is to try and tag it to the nearest residential building. Anti Social Behaviour is another great example where incidents can happen on waste ground/parkland away from residential property. Maps provide an excellent toolset for real time interaction with the customer, meaning that incident locations are reported with greater accuracy. We have also seen examples where clients have pre-loaded maps with other layers such as street lights and adopted roads. This makes it even easier to highlight the correct asset and to establish whether the council is responsible for maintenance in the first place.

### **Reduce duplicate calls and respond better in emergency situations**

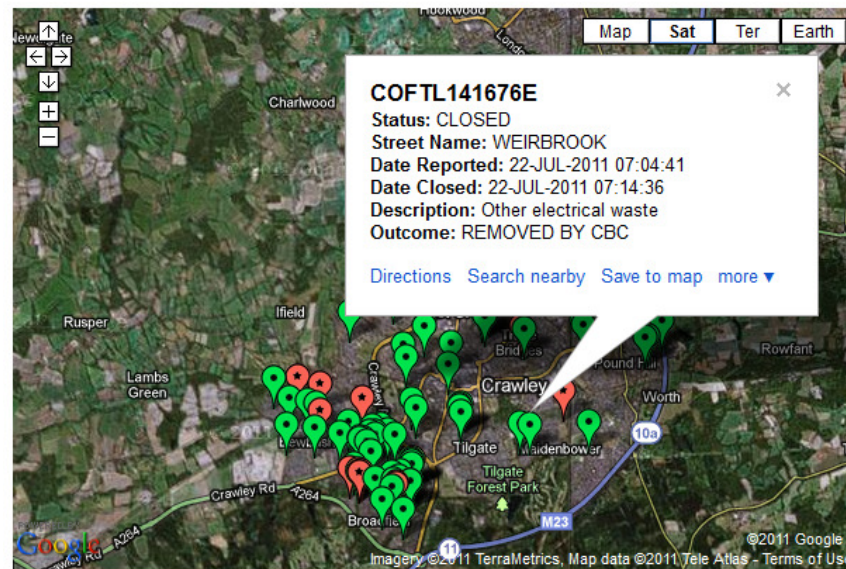
Using maps can dramatically reduce the number of duplicates reported on your CRM. Take the abandoned vehicle example above. No doubt a number of people will see the vehicle and report it to the council. If at the time of the call, the operator can see on a map that the vehicle has already been reported (with a hover facility to show date reported and summary information) the customer can receive a polite “Thank you for your call, we already have this reported”. The operator may even be able to provide information on when a recovery team plan to take the car away. The benefits in this scenario are that the customer receives the outcome that they require and the council delivery teams are able to sort out a resolution without duplicate incidents clogging up the process.

This ability to see incidents already reported on a map has some powerful uses. One council suffered flash flooding during the summer. After the event they looked at the lessons learned from the experience. They immediately enhanced their Emergency Incident procedure with the use of their CRM and maps technology. Emergency Incidents reported by the public are now recorded on CRM and immediately displayed on maps. This identifies emerging hot spots and helps the operational teams to best allocate resources during the emergency. Coupled with tracker technology the operational teams know precisely where all response vehicles are and can plan their next move with greater confidence.



## Citizen self service/Community Champions

Taking this concept further is to push the touch point back to the customer. Why not engage with customers and encourage them to actively report incidents? Crawley Borough Council have an excellent Do It Online 'Report a Problem' facility where residents can click on a map to report visible problems such as Fly Tipping, Litter, Graffiti. Existing reported incidents are also displayed with a hover facility to provide an update on progress.



Red points = problem has been reported. Green points = problem has been cleared.  
Click on a point for more details.

The result is that citizens feel much more empowered to engage with the council to keep the community tidy. Plus it means that they will check on-line before making an (expensive) phone call or visit to the council. Publishing this type of information on maps is an excellent and innovative way of improving the customer's experience and reducing costs.

## The Smartphone revolution

The emergence of Smartphones takes the capture of incidents to another level. All Smartphones are now fully equipped with excellent maps functionality. Suppliers like mycouncilservices.com and fixmystreet.com have developed excellent free iPhone and Android apps for citizens which allows users to click a location on a map, take a photo, fill in a form and send it to the council. The benefit of this process is that good quality information is provided at the point of capture. This information could flow straight through to Delivery Teams for fulfilment, again reducing the need for expensive contact with Customer Services.



Recent uptake of Smartphones has been incredible thanks to the versatility offered. In a single, portable device the user has a phone, email, internet, camera and sat nav. New, innovative apps appear every day (many of them free or incredibly cheap). There are already a number of tracker applications available on Smartphones

which provides another interesting opportunity. Tracker apps could be switched on for services such as Street Wardens, Highways planned inspections. Not only can this provide valuable feedback to Operational Managers but could also be used as evidence to Scrutiny Committees showing the extent of routes covered.

We have seen excellent use of maps and tablet applications long before the iPad was born. One council used a tablet loaded with a map application for planned nightly street light inspections. Street lights were loaded as an asset layer on the map complete with street light number. Inspection crews were easily able to report a fault by simply clicking on the asset in question and recording details of the type of fault. This information was passed through to the parts ordering system ready for the maintenance crew to begin their work first thing in the morning.

### **Strategic Portals**

A number of councils are now using maps for strategic reporting. The Strategic Portal takes data feeds from source transactional systems such as CRM into a council-wide map-based reporting portal. This type of solution allows information to be plotted on maps over longer time spans. A good example is to plot the number of flooding incidents reported by residents over the previous year as a layer on a map. A second map layer can be introduced to show known flood plains. A third layer can be introduced showing council owned flood prevention assets. Pictures can quickly emerge. Perhaps the flood barriers have been really effective and could provide a business case for further investment and the support of a capital bid. Another great example we have seen is to display ASB incidents by Councillor ward. This allows Councillors to assess where the hotspots are in their area and can influence discussions with other partners such as Police and Community Health teams. With a Strategic Portal it is possible to view month on month, year on year comparisons of data to establish whether operational measures are having the desired effect.

### **Conclusion**

We have seen how maps can drive efficiencies by simplifying the CRM process, reducing customer contact and encouraging citizen self service. We learned how rapidly emerging Smartphone and Tablet devices offer exciting innovative opportunities to broaden the engagement with customers in a cost-effective manner. We witnessed how councils are using maps to inform their strategic and operational planning processes and to support bids for funding.

Maps technology has arrived and is here to stay. However, to derive maximum value it needs to be integrated with core systems such as CRM. SwitchCRM is delivered 'integration-ready' with web services to facilitate integration with Google maps or in-house GIS applications.

For further information on how SwitchCRM can transform your organisation please contact us [enquiries@silvertin.com](mailto:enquiries@silvertin.com) or fill in the form on our website <http://www.silvertin.com/contact.html>