Contributing to OpenStreetMap

1 Overview

Contributing to open data projects is an easy way to get "your feet wet", so to speak, in the world of open source software. The *OpenStreetMap* Project (`https://www.openstreetmap.org`) is an open source, open data project whose purpose is similar to *Google* maps, but not proprietary. Its mission is to map the entire world in as much detail as possible. It depends upon ordinary citizens to assist in this project. This is a good first project because

- it will give you practice in learning to use a new API (the map editor),

- it will give you practice in interacting with a community of global contributors, and

- you will be performing a positive, beneficial service.

How could that be a bad thing?

2 Learning How to Edit the Map

To start, you need an account on *OpenStreetMap.org*, which you should have before starting this activity. Anyone with an account can contribute to *OpenStreetMap*. In this activity, you will make at least five contributions. To do so, you need to learn how to edit the map. There are four different editors that you can use. They are the *iD* editor, *Potlatch 2*, *JOSM*, and *Merkaartor*. The instructions below are for using the *iD* editor.

The *iD* editor has a built in interactive tutorial. You should begin by running the tutorial. To access it, do the following:

1. Login on the *OpenStreetMap.org* homepage using your username and password.

2. Start *iD*: on the *OpenStreetMap.org* homepage click the "*Edit*" button or, if you have set another default editor in your user preferences, click "*iD*" inside the "*Edit* " menu),

3. Click the "?" icon located at the bottom of the right-hand side panel over the map; this brings up a pop-up window with a "*help*" item. Click on the *help* item.

4. A window will pop up, or slide out. At the bottom of the window, click the large "*Start the Walkthrough*" button below the list of help chapters.

The walkthrough is an interactive webpage that steps you through the basic of editing the map, using an imaginary place. It does not have to be done in one sitting; you can return to it whenever you want. The entire walkthrough might take about one hour to complete. Once you have completed it, you are ready to do some mapping. You can always get more help by using the help button at the top of the map in the toolbar, or by typing H.

3 Details

Your job is to make some useful edits of the map. The easiest way to do this is to pick the geographic region that you know the best, which is usually someplace in which you have lived for a while. When you are in

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editing mode, there is a toolbar on the right hand side that has several buttons. The one that looks like an arrowhead centers the map on your current location, based on what your browser sends to OpenStreetMap. For whatever area you choose, zoom into it at a high enough level of detail so that you can see the roads, parks, buildings, and so on, with their associated names and tags. Look for things that are out of date, or that you know have changed and have not been updated on the map. These might be useful changes such as filling in details about a shop or business that you frequent.

Make your changes and submit them. If they get approved, you have made a contribution.

3.1   Blog Post

In your weekly blog for this week in which you do this activity, describe what you did in this exercise. Have fun; be creative, and be expressive. This is all about doing something interesting and useful and learning in the process. If you get frustrated, or are bored, say so. Be honest.

Every user's contribution history is publicly available. To see it, you enter the URL

`https://www.openstreetmap.org/user/username/history`

into your browser's address bar, where the word `username` is replaced by the actual username in which you are interested. Because I need to see your contributions, I can access this history in the same way. But to make it easier for me, you are also required to put a link in your blog to your own history page.