ELECTRIC UTILITY

Customer
Seattle City Light

Partner
DataCapable

Challenge
Develop a proactive approach to engaging with customers before, during, and after power outages

Solution
ArcGIS℠ Online
GeoEnrichment℠
UtiliSocial

Results
The ability to geomine and analyze nontraditional data to generate actionable business intelligence, manage digital communications with customers in one place, and improve outage response

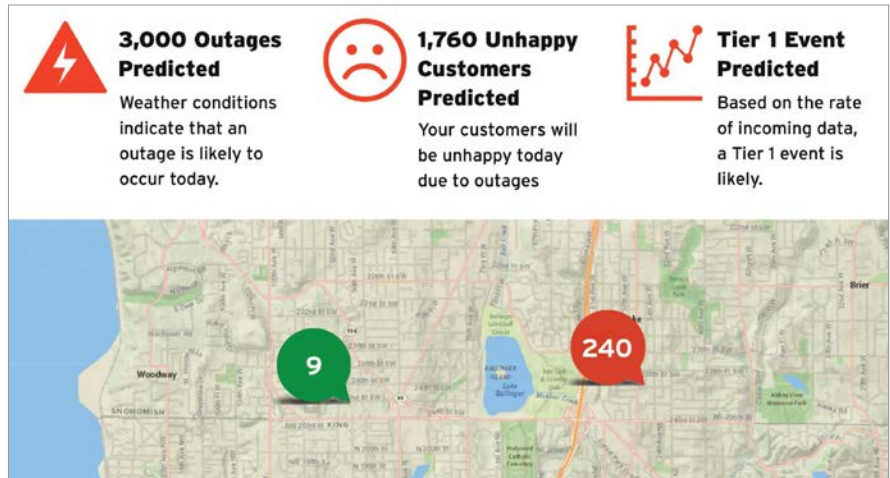# Social Media Powers New-Age Outage Reporting

Seattle City Light serves approximately 415,000 customers, making the utility the tenth-largest public power system in the United States. In an effort to improve reliability and strengthen relationships with residential and commercial customers, the utility constantly investigates new technology and enhanced business processes.

The Challenge

How can we connect with the modern customer? This is a question that the communications team at Seattle City Light asks every day. Like other utilities, the power provider serves dynamic customers whose preferences, technologies, and relationships with the utility are highly diverse. Enhancing these relationships requires a strong understanding of how customers want to communicate—especially during power outages. In an effort to improve two-way communication, Seattle City Light needed a solution to stay on top of grid events and customer concerns in real time.

The Partner

DataCapable builds and delivers software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions tailored for the utility industry. Its flagship product, UtiliSocial, is a social engagement platform that provides utilities with real-time aggregate outage reports, customer sentiment feedback, weather event data, situational awareness, logistics support, and analytics. When Seattle City Light asked for help in developing proactive communication software that would integrate with the utility's outage management system (OMS), DataCapable presented a cloud-hosted solution paired with Esri® ArcGIS® technology.

3,000 Outages Predicted

Weather conditions indicate that an outage is likely to occur today.

1,760 Unhappy Customers Predicted

Your customers will be unhappy today due to outages

Tier 1 Event Predicted

Based on the rate of incoming data, a Tier 1 event is likely.

The Solution

Empowered with the Esri GeoEnrichment service and ArcGIS Online, UtiliSocial gives Seattle City Light the ability to geomine social media data and generate powerful visualizations while engaging with customers. The platform combs social media channels for specific terms and topics related to the utility, such as grid reliability, the brand, smart grid, and renewables integration. When someone communicates via social media about any of these topics, staff get real-time notifications so that they can act fast.

The data is presented on a mapping dashboard, showing when and where customers engage with the utility. And it's not just social data—the platform also displays information ranging from demographics and consumer behavior statistics to natural environment datasets and sensors. The communications team is able to view and analyze this information and interact with customers via Seattle City Light's social media channels from the UtiliSocial platform. Outage information filters into the utility's OMS to help speed response.

The Results

When customers turn to social media to report a power outage, Seattle City Light is in the know and has the tools to respond and fix the issue faster. The utility can now visualize outage data, customer communications, and imagery from the field—in one place and in real time. Weather information helps the utility predict when outages will occur and notify customers in potentially impacted areas via their preferred method of communication.

Analyzing and understanding customer communication generates nontraditional datasets for Seattle City Light to use as a historical baseline. With this valuable information in hand, the utility is able to evaluate present-day events in comparison to previous outages and in combination with asset locations and other Esri visualizations. Staff can create maps, scenes, apps, layers, analytics, and data and share them with existing enterprise datasets. By analyzing all data—both traditional and nontraditional—Seattle City Light better understands customers' key concerns and drives faster outage response.

"DataCapable listened to our specific needs and developed the software that will add value to any utility looking to engage its customers with digital tools."

Scott Thomsen
Senior Strategic Adviser
Communications
Seattle City Light

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