

# Public Works and the Cloud; Fact or Fiction?

By David Totman, Esri Public Works Industry Manager

The words, “Read my lips...” have been immortalized to stress a sense of conviction, urgency, and passion. So it is with these words that I proclaim in 2012; “Read my lips—Cloud GIS is here now, and is our future.” I’m not just talking about Cloud mapping, as you may encounter amidst the myriad consumer web mapping applications. I’m talking about ArcGIS Online, Esri’s Cloud-based, full featured-GIS.

Before I can address how ArcGIS Online fits into Public Works, I’ll ask a few more questions. How many of you have too much data to make analytical decisions? How many of you need to effortlessly share information across departments, amongst your peers, and with your citizens? The intelligent Web Map built into ArcGIS Online facilitates solutions to these challenges much more efficiently than ever before, and that is how ArcGIS Online fits in Public Works. Yet be assured, ArcGIS Desktop and Server remain more important than ever.

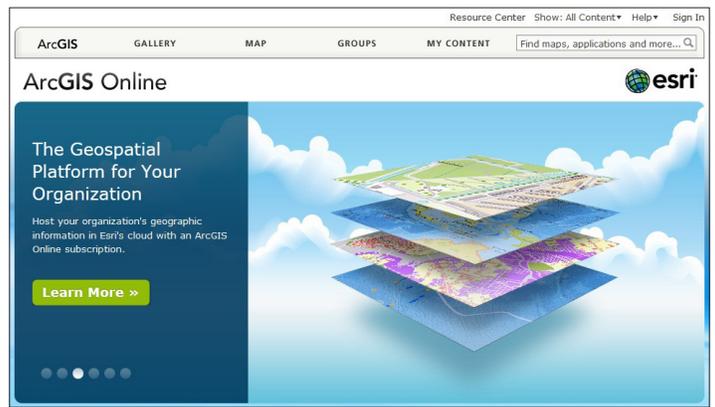
## “Read my lips.”

ArcGIS Online enables Public Works in three ways: 1) giving smaller departments an easy-to-use and affordable GIS for their basic needs; 2) providing an unprecedented level of access

to data for departments of all sizes and GIS maturity; 3) providing an IT architecture and communication vehicle to share information on any device, at any time, and in any location.

Until now, many considered GIS difficult and expensive. ArcGIS Online makes GIS as easy as ordering a book on Amazon. You can make a map with your own data and view your infrastructure, work orders, citizen feedback, or whatever intrigues you. Subscription pricing allows access to GIS for less than the cost of some basic office supply budgets. And, if your organization is already an ELA customer, you can simply leverage your existing subscription licensing to unlock GIS both internally and externally.

Prior to joining Esri, I was constantly faced with the task of defending my budget each year in front of management, or trying to make sense out of some of the asset failure data. I wished I had more readily available



www.arcgis.com

information to help. For these needs, the power of GIS is in its ability to visually organize multiple datasets until a clear pattern of cause-and-effect becomes clear. ArcGIS Online bridges that gap as the de-facto GIS wiki. When you need imagery or terrain models, ArcGIS Online provides 12 built-in basemaps, which include 4 imagery options and basic hill shading to highlight topographic challenges.

Some basic search examples in ArcGIS Online yield the following results; “weather” – 1,105 hits, “soils” – 805 hits, “100 yr flood” – 34 hits. These may be suitable for your particular organization to augment your decision-making process. The Esri Maps and Data group in ArcGIS Online hosts 130 feature classes available for use in ArcGIS Desktop, Server, Mobile, and Online mashups. And for demographic data, the USA Tapestry Segmentation dataset augments US Census data with some Esri-provided business data. Esri has defined 12 Life Modes and 11 Urbanization Groups, creating 65 unique Segments for you to use with your analytical needs. For example, suppose a Public Works Director needs to “go green” and figure out where to pilot a new recycling program. A good idea would be to figure out where local community members would most likely take advantage of recycling.

By looking at the Tapestry Segments, Group 22: Metropolitan seems to stand out, being tech savvy, eating organic foods, being environmentally conscious, donating time to volunteer efforts, etc. Perhaps a smartphone application using GIS to locate recycling centers and solid waste collection schedules would help this demographic contribute the city’s efforts to “go green.”

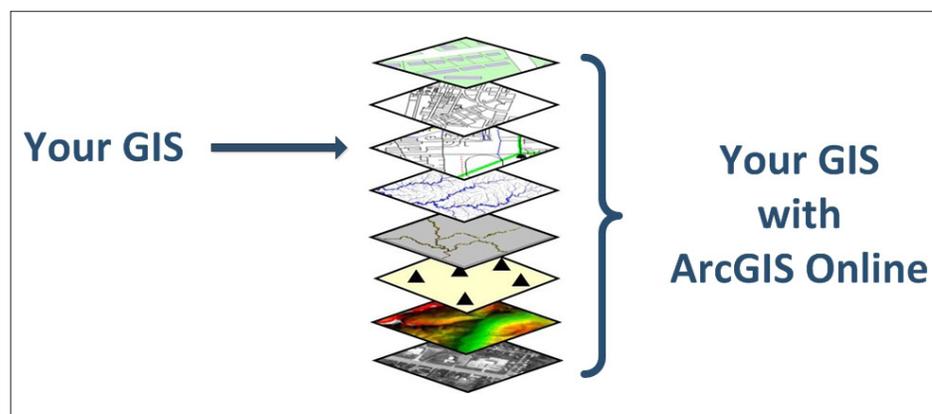


USA Tapestry Segmentation

This is one among hundreds of examples of how ArcGIS Online can facilitate innovative solutions.

While this article is not a white paper on Cloud technology, it is an affirmation that Esri has embraced the Cloud in a big way, and that Partners like Azteca Systems Inc. are in direct alignment with our future. Cityworks Server AMS and PLL are a natural fit into the ArcGIS Online (Web Map) architecture.

As excited as I am about ArcGIS Online, I once again reassure you that ArcGIS Desktop remains alive and well. And stay tuned for some exciting news about the integration of Microsoft Office with ArcGIS Online subscription services. Until then, stop by [www.arcgis.com](http://www.arcgis.com) and see what it’s all about. 



ArcGIS Online enhances your GIS