

California Mapping Survey Results

This survey was sent out to independent agencies and districts that provide water, sewer, storm, and other vital services to communities and rural areas. You were contacted to take part in this survey with the promise of seeing the results and its interpretation.

Purpose: This survey was created to gain insight on industry mapping practices in the state of California.

Highlights:

The first two questions, of the survey, validates that critical information can be obtained from having a system-wide map of an agency's infrastructure. Of the sixty-three percent of those that had a district-wide map, less than half had it in a digital format. This means that only twenty-eight percent (28%) had a digital based ready for use with a GIS or other automated mapping system. (63% x 44%) The non-digital maps usually are wall hangings of the district or agency boundaries drawn up as part of a project some years previous. This result is verified by less than half of the respondents saying that they had a GIS.

1. Are you currently utilizing a base map to view the district at a glance?

Yes - 63%

No - 27%

Other – 10%

2. If you use a base map to view the district at a glance, is it in a digital format?

63% of respondents said yes

37% of respondents said no

3. Do you have a Geospatial Information System (GIS) or mapping system?

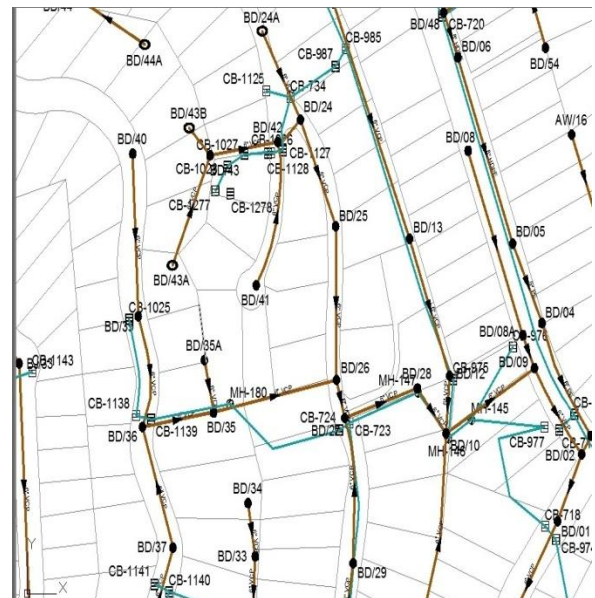
44% of respondents said yes

66% of respondents said no

4. If you have not used a Geospatial Information System, have you tried to create a GIS or mapping system?

17% of respondents said yes

83% of respondents said no



The last two questions, of the survey, show that those responding were aware of mapping and GIS technologies and some of the industry software providers. With over half of the respondents knowing about GIS and mapping technology but less than half actually having implemented at least some form of digital system begs the question of “why?”

One theory could be the lack of funds, but in the last fifteen years when this type of software became readily available we had both booms and busts, where money was more available than it is presently. Free GIS software is available as well as many grants and other programs to provide software to agencies and districts, but few have adopted this route as well. The availability of these options demonstrates that the lack of money is not the only reason.

5. Are you aware of available mapping software?

60% of respondents said yes

40% of respondents said no

6. Which providers have you heard of?

60% of respondents said Autodesk

0% of respondents said Bentley

30% of respondents said None

10% of respondents said Other

Quite a few people believe that acquiring software is the hard thing, but actually it is making the map. Many agencies have the time and manpower to maintain data, but not the extra staff time in which to do the initial map creation. California CAD Solutions and DLT Solutions are available to help with the creation of infrastructure maps to conduct surveys with GPS and traditional equipment. This has shown to be cost-effective and efficient. Once mapping projects are complete the outflow of funds end. Hiring someone on staff to create maps and trying to find additional work for them to do, after the project is complete, can be costly. This challenge can be overcome easily without committing to a long-term expenditure of funds, it cannot be the main reason for not having the benefits provided by a GIS or automated mapping system.

If it is not funding or staffing, then what could the issue be? Data combined with decades of GIS experience points to that of education. Not knowing how to take the first step is the crucial part missing. With software vendors shouting that their solution is the best with expensive prices, it is difficult for a small district to see which software, workflow or level of technology applies directly to their own particular situation. Knowing the first steps to make an informed decision is vital to the success of any venture or project.

DLT Solutions and California CAD Solutions educational webinar series – coming soon!

“How to make a Maintainable Map” - The first step in any GIS or automated mapping system is how to make a map. Not just a map, but one that is maintainable and will not cost a lot in terms of money or time to maintain. Strategies on acquiring needed reference information and how to structure the map for ease of editing and sharing.

“Putting the Map to Work” – I have a map, but now what do I do with it is a common question. This webinar will look at how to create utility field books that can be printed with a single click of the button.

“Sharing your Map with Others” - Printing to pdf and dwf formats so that others can use your data in a controlled fashion. We will also go over how to export the data for use with other GIS data repositories such as Oracle Spatial, MS SQL Server, MySQL Spatial, etc.

