

# Captivate learners with Scoilnet Maps



The Swipe (above) and Spotlight (inset) tools on Scoilnet Maps allow users to overlay one type of map on another

Scoilnet Maps is now pushing the boundaries of teaching and learning at primary level. The web mapping website engages learners visually, interactively and with purpose in its provision of detailed OSi Maps, World Maps and GIS data layers.

## Eight activities capturing the curriculum

Easy-to-use yet sophisticated in its functionality, learners can attain several cross-curricular content objectives – particularly in Maths (area, length, shape, space), History (change, continuity, time, chronology) and Geography (sense of place/space, mapping and geographical investigation) by engaging in practical activities such as:

1. Measuring the distance between school/home or the area of the school grounds.
2. Exploring urban sprawl through aerial photographs, maps and census data.
3. Mapping local monuments/archaeological sites.
4. Reflecting and discussing types of maps, such as street mapping/aerial photographs.
5. Examining change over time through historical mapping from 1829 to 2010.
6. Calculating the total school population

in electoral areas.

7. Creating elevation profiles of a favourite walking route or local mountain.
8. Creating/saving your own data layer.

## Features

Scoilnet Maps also allows the learner to interactively work with layers of data from different public sector providers. Visible when placed over the base map, these data layers include census data, school location data, flood mapping data, and architectural heritage data from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Explanations for working with these data layers and other features are clearly explained in video tutorials.

## A teacher's viewpoint

Mark Boggins, a second class teacher in Rathcoole NS, claims that Scoilnet Maps is “a fantastic hub for all things map related. The OSi Maps are ideal to teach children about regions close to their environment while World Maps extend this knowledge. It has clear and appealing visual representations related to the

Olympics, the Titanic’s voyage, world population and carbon emissions. It’s a treasure chest of resources for teachers and a multitude of information for learners.”

## Access

Scoilnet Maps has been developed as a collaboration between Scoilnet, the Professional Development Service for Teachers and the Forward Planning Unit of the Department of Education and Skills. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, HEAnet, OPW and Ordnance Survey Ireland were also involved. It is freely available to all schools on the Schools Broadband Network. Some restrictions apply to viewing the OSi maps outside of school but teachers can gain access using their Scoilnet Account. Please note, all teachers can register for a Scoilnet Account at <http://accounts.scoilnet.ie/registration>. World Maps are accessible both within and outside of school.

## PDST and School Self-Evaluation

PDST will provide School Self-Evaluation seminars to all school leaders this term and there will continue to be a focus on teaching methodologies and learning outcomes. Schools will reflect on their strengths and their capacity to enrich school learning environments, giving priority to literacy and numeracy. Not only does Scoilnet Maps exemplify active teaching methodologies and assessment for learning opportunities, it is a tangible resource for improving learning in schools by targeting key skills such as questioning, reading, problem solving, data handling, reflection and analysis.

See <http://maps.scoilnet.ie/> for more information.

SHARON MC DONALD, PDST Technology in Education

## ICT COURSES AND SCHOOL PRIORITIES

PDST will schedule School Self-Evaluation seminars for all principals this term. All participants will be afforded opportunities to consider the use of ICT in teaching and learning as part of the self-evaluation and school improvement process.

The CPD service of free ICT courses for teachers, which has been provided by the NCTE to date, will be continued by PDST Technology in Education, as

the former NCTE is integrated into PDST. These courses have a strong focus on literacy and/or numeracy, in line with current school priorities. Further ICT courses aligned with national priorities will be developed during the school year.

New face to face courses this autumn include:

- ✦ Creating ICT Resources in the Infant Classroom,
- ✦ An introduction to Scratch in the Classroom,
- ✦ Recording, editing and using Sound for Learning,

See [www.ncte.ie/courses](http://www.ncte.ie/courses) or your local education centre, which runs the courses, for details.

Enrolment is also open for some free online courses, including:

- ✦ Podcasting for Learning,
- ✦ Using the Interactive Whiteboard to Support Literacy (online).

See [www.ncte.ie/onlinecourses](http://www.ncte.ie/onlinecourses) for more.