

● 21.06.11 - Mapping the nation

Tuesday 21 June 2011 marked [220 years](#) since the establishment of Society Corporate Benefactor [Ordnance Survey \(OS\)](#), Britain's national mapping agency.

Though the way in which maps are presented may have changed significantly over that time, with geographical information now largely available and used in digital formats rather than the paper of old, maps and mapping data continues to play a hugely important role in everyone's daily lives.

From its military beginnings, mapping the south east coast of Britain for fear of invasion by Napoleon, the Ordnance Survey is now a £130 million-a-year government owned business using state-of-the-art technology to produce [mapping products](#) and geographic data that plays a role in everyone's daily lives.

Digital mapping not only underpin how we get about, whether for leisure or business, for example in-car sat navs or mobile phone applications ([a recent study has shown google maps to be the most used mobile phone application in the UK](#)), but are also used widely by national and local governments, and industry. For example, maps and geographical data are used to plan how and where everyday services are provided, to manage the movement of people, goods and information, or to assist contingency planning by the emergency services and national security.

The Society and Ordnance Survey share a substantial common interest in [geography](#), particularly in the development, applications and users of geographical information (GIS). As a Corporate Benefactor, Ordnance Survey currently supports the Society's work across a range of activities, especially in promoting and strengthening the value of geography in [education](#) and in encouraging wider public understanding of the

subject. Our joint work includes promoting the use of maps and GIS in schools.

More information is available on the [BBC News website](#), along with a short video clip.

An image of the [first map](#) created by Ordnance Survey, in 1801 is also available to download.



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