



How Do Americans Know Who Produces National Atlas Data and Maps?

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is proud to lead the production of nationalatlas.gov, yet we can't do it without you. Strong support from many Federal organizations is the primary reason for the overwhelmingly positive response to the online National Atlas of the United States®. We encourage all Federal producers of geospatial and geostatistical information to take advantage of the National Atlas as a highly visible and accessible tool for reaching public and professional audiences. The National Atlas is a great way to tell people who you are and what you do. It allows Americans to easily discover your important information resources.

The National Atlas of 1970 was a traditional large book of maps in which the producing organization was credited on every map. The latest edition of the National Atlas goes far beyond that approach and ensures that the American public knows that you produced a map or dataset by linking it to your online information.

On Paper Maps

On our latest round of paper and softcopy maps, the producing organization is uniformly acknowledged. The universal resource locator (URL) for *nationalatlas.gov* is also given.

On the Web Site

The URL for the *nationalatlas.gov* Web site is "nondenominational" to indicate that the National Atlas is a Federal Government-wide effort and not just a USGS endeavor. This approach is consistent with the 1970 edition, an effort that was also led by the USGS, because the cover of the 1970 National Atlas bore the Great Seal of the United States and not the USGS seal.

A Web page describing the efforts of all Federal Partners is easily accessible. On this page, your organization has the opportunity to describe its mission and its most important programs and to link back to its own online resources to provide additional information and context.

In Catalogs and Data Discovery Services

All data in the National Atlas are documented in compliance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee's (FGDC) Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata. Any of your documentation files will clearly identify your organization as the originating source for accurate and relevant data, and entries in each metadata record can also include appropriate contacts for obtaining more information within your organization. We contribute this documentation directly to catalog services including Data.Gov and the Geospatial One Stop so that professional users of high-quality, integrated geospatial information can find, get, and use your data. You can choose to have the National Atlas serve your data and documentation, you may provide public downloads exclusively from your servers, or you can rely on the National Atlas as an alternative service for publishing your data.

We also publish something we call a "Map Layer Info page" for every dataset offered. This is a nontechnical introduction to a map layer, written for a public audience. We work closely with each data provider to ensure that each Map Layer Info page accurately describes data content. Just as importantly, we will work with you to ensure that the National Atlas presents your data and your identity most effectively.

In the Map Maker

The National Atlas Map Maker provides links to appropriate information supplied by each producing organization. When you produce a particular map layer for the Map Maker, users know who you are through three different identification avenues and links to your agency's Web site.

First, anyone who clicks on the name of a map layer to view its Map Layer Info page will see not only your contact information, but also your agency logo, a nontechnical introduction to the dataset, and links to your own information resources on the World Wide Web.

Second, your maps can link back to your own Web site. This can be done at both the dataset and individual feature level. For example, when someone points at a particular county on a cancer mortality map and asks, "What's this?" the atlas supplies basic information about cancer rates in the area and provides links to additional information. The user can view the mortality rate for the selected county, link to the producer's Website—in this case, the National Cancer Institute (NCI)—for general information about the Atlas of Cancer, or link to another NCI site for more specific information related to this particular county.

Third, producing organizations are identified when online map legends are displayed or printed. For each data layer that a user chooses to print, we include a legend that also identifies the producing organization. When used online, this citation links to that organization's home page on the World Wide Web.

In Data Downloads

Geographic information professionals can download all National Atlas data at no cost. The computing infrastructure of the Atlas hosts most, but not all, of these data. Your organization can opt to host its own data, and your agency may also choose to charge for its data. Regardless, anyone who downloads a dataset from the National Atlas can preview its Map Layer Info page and FGDC-compliant metadata, which is provided in five different report formats. When a user chooses to download your data, a text version of the metadata is automatically delivered with your data, thus identifying your organization as the original data producer.

For more information contact: Jay Donnelly
U.S. Geological Survey
jpdonnelly@usgs.gov
(703) 648-5395