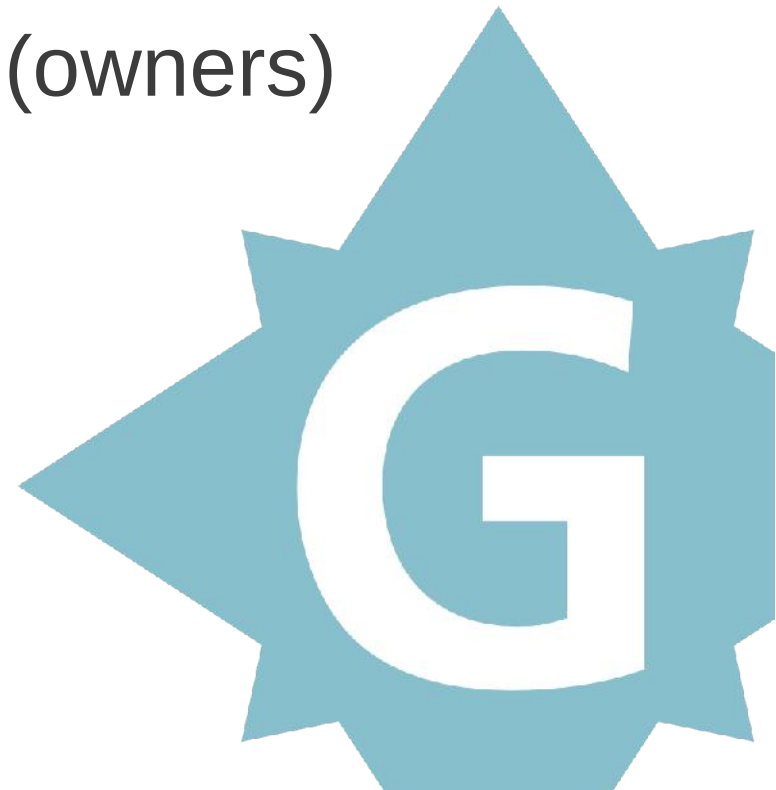# Open for Business

What it is like to earn a living with OpenStreetMap

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State of the Map US
San Francisco, June 9th, 2013

This is an updated version of a similar talk held at State of the Map 2009.

About Geofabrik

– started end of 2007

– sells consulting and other services

– two "full time employees" (owners)

– couple part time staff

Why this talk?

- commerce has discovered OSM

- responsible OSM "consumption"

- best if insiders act as a bridge
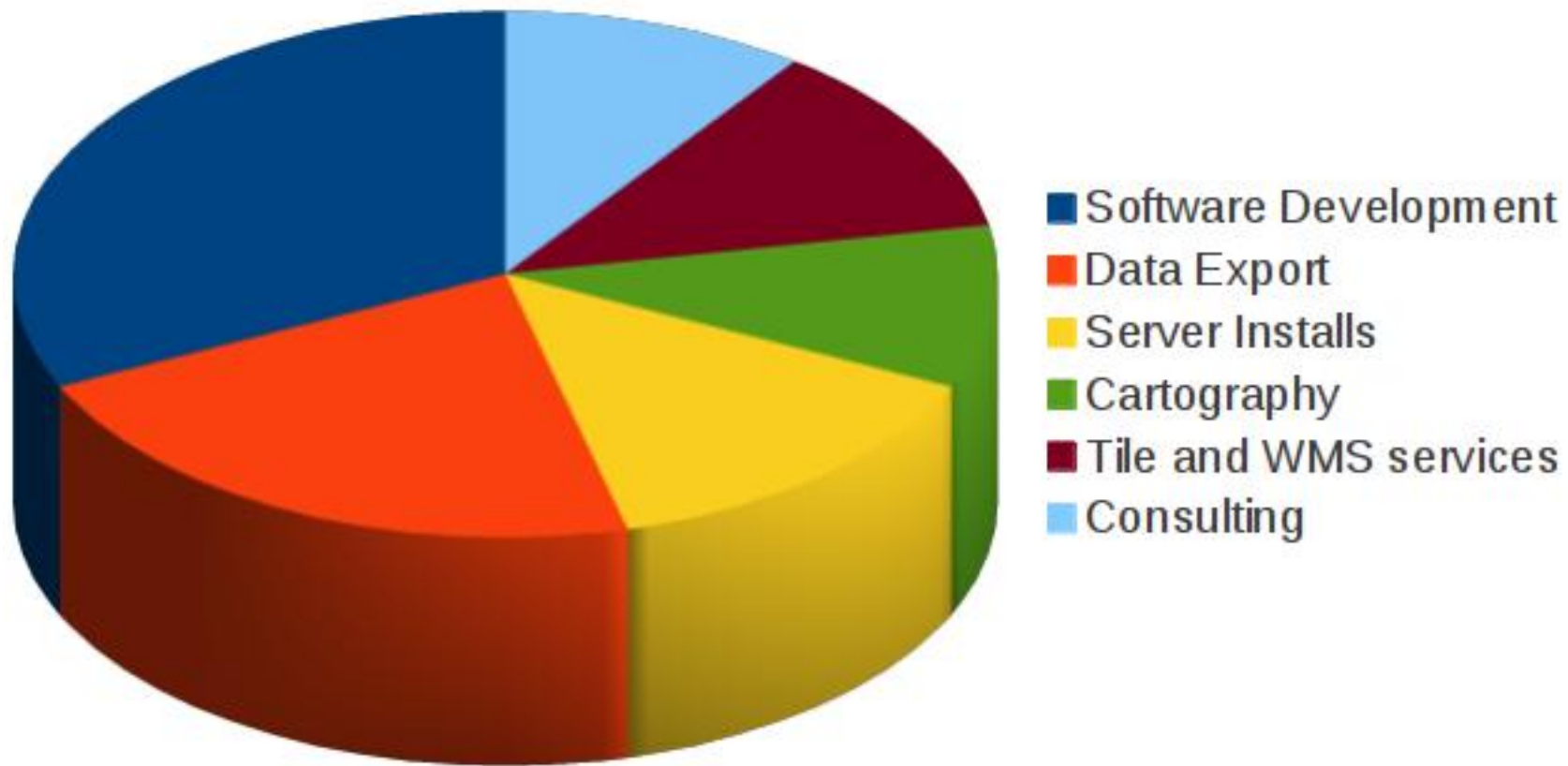
- encourage others to do what we do

Why this talk?

("rising tide lifts all boats")

Geofabrik Business

- Software Development
- Data Export
- Server Installs
- Cartography
- Tile and WMS services
- Consulting

Software Development

Often web site with some map interaction, database component, just a few simple pages – not always something specific to OSM.

Sometimes opportunity to have client pay for Open Source development.

Data Export

- mostly shape files
- fancy splitting
- language issues
- often requires tagging expertise and/or statistics
- sometimes algorithms ("residential areas")

- sometimes people ask for an export but it turns out they need something completely different

Server Installs

- tile servers
- Nominatim servers
- routing servers
- Overpass
- servers doing all of the above

- directions for all of this available online
  (and we tell people so!)
  however many prefer to pay someone.
- no two installs are the same.

Tile and WMS services

- very standardised "product":
  we run servers and rent them out

- regular income
- but: requires server administration

- people often come asking for a WMS
  service because that's all they know
  but they need something completely
  different.

Consulting

- people have a project in mind and want to know their options with OSM
- or have very concrete issues like fixing a broken setup

- sometimes difficult to separate from "sales call"

And the other half of the time...

- community interaction

- flyers, posters

- telephone calls from random people

- download server & similar

it's a nice job but...

- context switching uses up time/energy

- paperwork (offers, tenders etc)

- SLAs

- explaining why "small" things are difficult

- hurts to be expensive

Products vs Services

Geofabrik is essentially a service company - means we won't "get rich quick", attract VC, or get bought out by Google.

However, having at least some "product" or a standardised service makes things easier.

Even if the product is free, potential clients can use it to start a conversation.

Business Ethics in OSM

- don't "shield" customers from OSM

- be clear about the license

- credit whom credit is due

Thank You

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now:
Andy Allan

(When this talk was held, Andy Allan continued with a couple of insights from his own OpenStreetMap business.)