Mapping

Engaging your readers with story maps

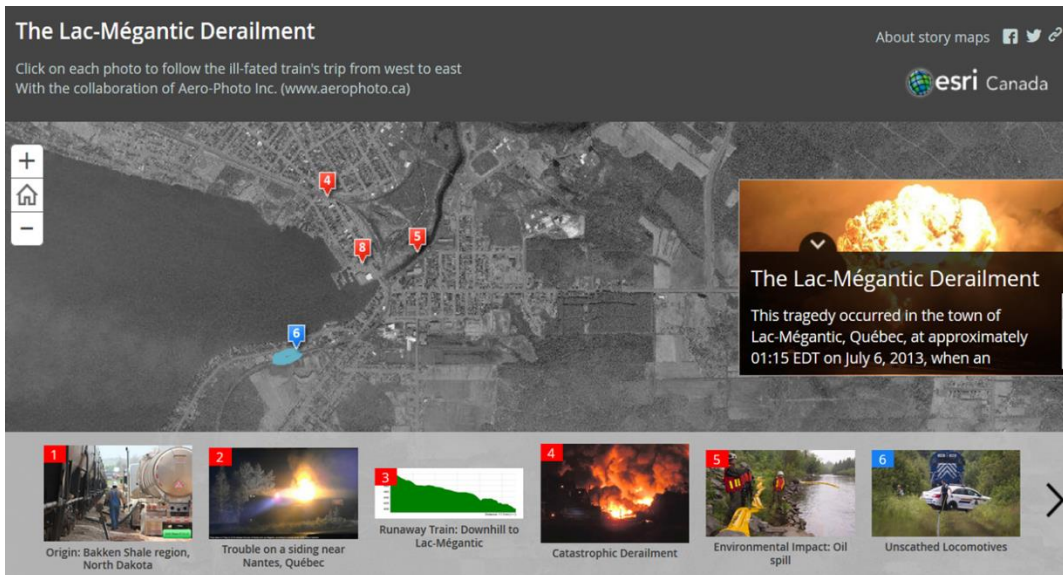## Learn how to incorporate multimedia content with maps to bring your stories to life.

By Esri Canada

It's been said that the human brain decodes visual information 60,000 times faster than text. For many, sight is the dominant sense. That's why we're seeing more and more journalists move beyond using text to answer the *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* in their stories to include images, charts, videos, infographics and maps. An effective way of bringing all these components together to tell a cohesive and compelling story is through a story map.
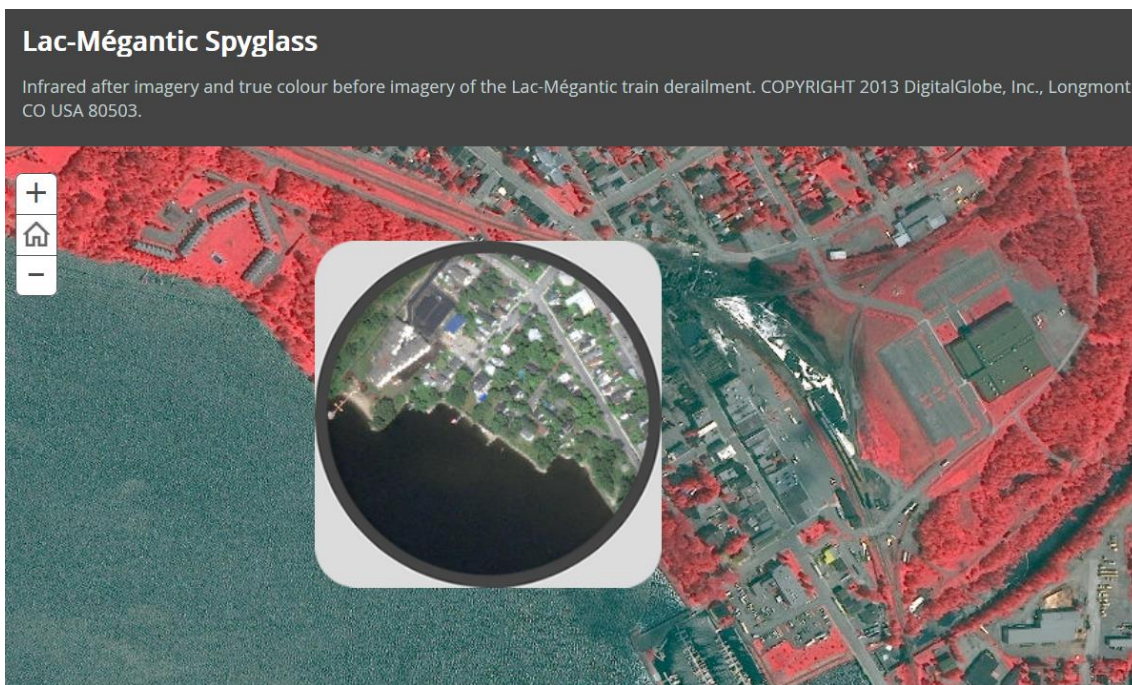
This new medium is very effective when you need to explain a story that happens across different locations and time periods. And it's easy to make, too. With no programming required, you can quickly make a story map using templates in ArcGIS Online, Esri's cloud-based geographic information system (GIS) solution. Let's take a look at a few examples.

Anatomy of a train derailment
On July 6, 2013, at about 1:15 a.m., a Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway (MMA) train carrying more than 7 million litres of volatile crude oil derailed in the town of Lac-Mégantic in Quebec. The disaster killed 47 people and destroyed much of the downtown core. Using story maps, you can convey the details of this story in many ways.

The Lac-Mégantic Derailment

Click on each photo to follow the ill-fated train's trip from west to east
With the collaboration of Aero-Photo Inc. (www.aerophoto.ca)

About story maps

esri Canada

The Lac-Mégantic Derailment

This tragedy occurred in the town of Lac-Mégantic, Québec, at approximately 01:15 EDT on July 6, 2013, when an

Origin: Bakken Shale region, North Dakota | Trouble on a siding near Nantes, Québec | Runaway Train: Downhill to Lac-Mégantic | Catastrophic Derailment | Environmental Impact: Oil spill | Unscathed Locomotives
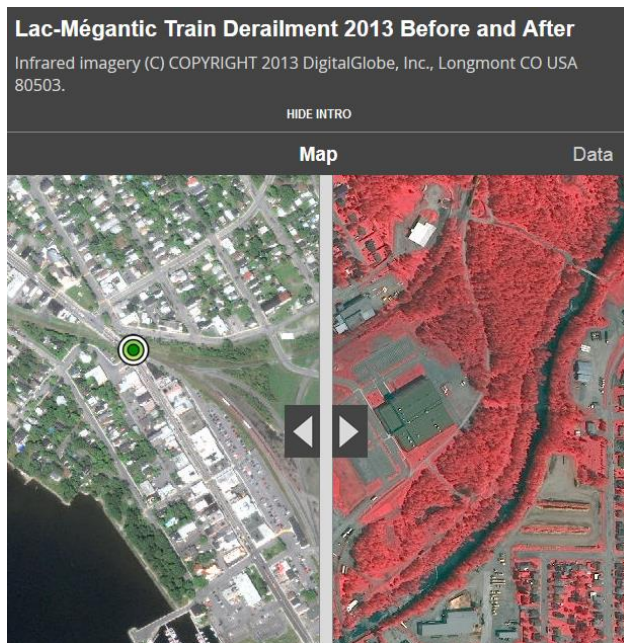
This story map allows readers to follow the journey of the ill-fated train that originated in New Town, North Dakota, but never got to its destination of Saint John, New Brunswick. It includes a Web map of locations where critical events occurred, a chart of the train's speed and vivid pictures depicting what happened before, during and after the tragedy. The story map was built using the **Story Map Tour** template. Explore this story map: http://arcg.is/1rnjUad

Lac-Mégantic Spyglass

Infrared after imagery and true colour before imagery of the Lac-Mégantic train derailment. COPYRIGHT 2013 DigitalGlobe, Inc., Longmont CO USA 80503.

To help readers understand the impact of the train derailment, you could provide them with a view of Lac-Mégantic before and after the tragedy. Using the **Story Map Spyglass**
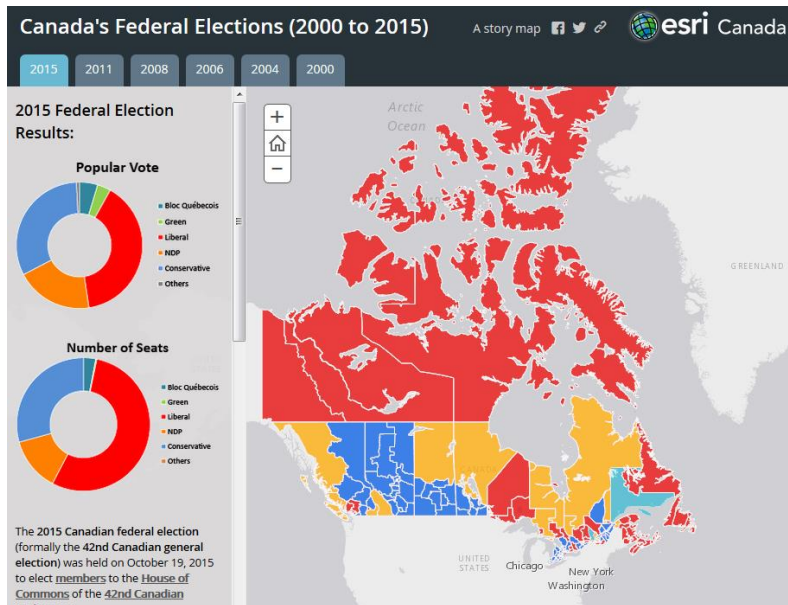
template, you can display two imagery maps of the town and allow readers to look from one map to another. Explore this story map: http://arcg.is/1VEzZ8e
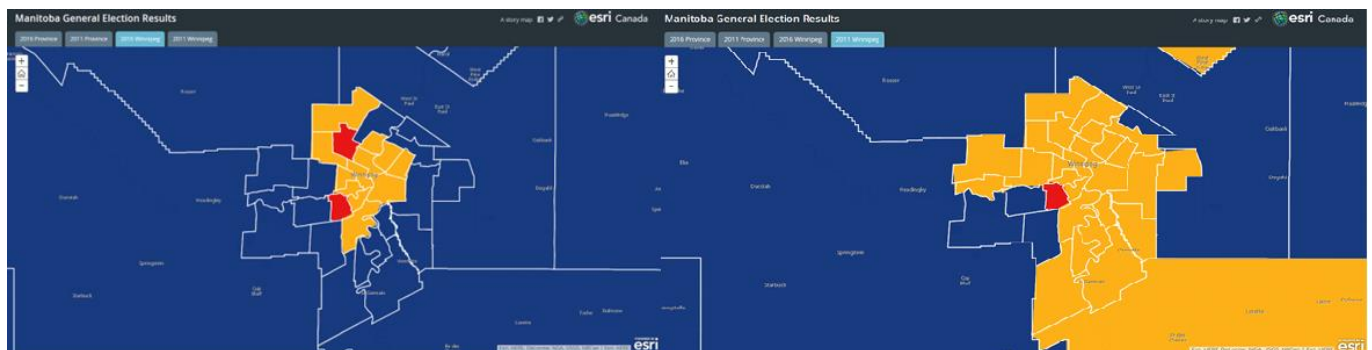

Another way to provide a compelling visual of the disaster's impact is to use the **Story Map Swipe** template. This allows readers to slide a swipe tool back and forth to compare imagery of the town before and after the train derailed. Explore this story map: http://arcg.is/1SDglDy

Visualizing the changing political landscape
A story map is an effective way of engaging readers in elections coverage. You can provide a historical view of how the population has voted by using the **Story Map Series** template. It allows you to present a series of maps and information via a set of tabs.

During the 2015 federal election, several news organizations used this Esri story map that displayed election results since 2000. With a striking colour scheme and interactive tools, including charts and popups with information on voter turnout and election results, this story map takes readers on a journey through Canada's political history. Explore this story map: http://arcg.is/1MgVTZC

Using the Story Map Series template, you can highlight specific provinces or cities where significant change in voter sentiment has occurred. This story map compares 2016 and 2011 provincial election results for Manitoba and allows readers to take a closer look at how people in Winnipeg voted in the last two elections. Explore this story map: http://arcg.is/1XvQL71

Why use Esri Story Maps?
Esri Story Maps allow you to combine authoritative maps with narrative text, images and multimedia content within minutes. Through easy-to-use templates, you can harness the power of maps and location to tell your story.

There's no programming required. Simply select a template based on the story you want to tell, follow the instructions for the story map you chose, and watch your story come to life.

Esri provides numerous [Story Map templates](#) to help you tell different types of stories. You can take readers on a virtual tour of the locations in your story or present your story as a countdown, playlist or shortlist.

Esri Story Maps are hosted in ArcGIS Online, so you don't need to use your own servers. After publishing your story maps, ArcGIS Online generates a link that you can share with others or embed to your news site.

Esri Story Maps are open source. You can download the source code for each template from [GitHub](#) and modify it to suit your needs.

Ready to build your story map?
To get started, simply sign up for a [free 60-day trial of ArcGIS Online](#). If you'd like to continue using ArcGIS Online beyond the free trial period, contact press@esri.ca to become a member of the ArcGIS for Media program. This program gives qualified journalists free access to ArcGIS software.

Learn more about Esri Story Maps at the 2016 CAJ Conference in Edmonton. Attend Paul Voegtle's session on Friday, May 27, and register for the mapping workshop on Saturday, May 28.

For more information, visit storymaps.arcgis.com.