

# EndOfLife

## End of life for Community Mapbuilder

We, the Mapbuilder Project Steering Committee, have agreed that the time has come for the Community Mapbuilder project to gracefully retire. We will release a final, stable 1.5 version of the software, and afterwards there are no planned enhancements to Mapbuilder. The web pages and code will be kept alive, a few bugs might be fixed and we will likely continue answering user queries, but we expect Mapbuilder will gradually fade away into history.

### Why?

Mapbuilder is a stable, feature rich, standards compliant, fast, webmapping framework with a strong developer community. Why has it come to the end of its life?

The browser based webmapping space has become crowded and other webmapping clients have increased in functionality and attractiveness to users. In particular, Openlayers is simpler to use, has attracted an incredibly strong developer community, has good quality control and development processes, and has developed most of the webmapping functionality previously only offered by Mapbuilder. Basically Openlayers is attracting the majority of the users and developers that previously would have used Mapbuilder. One day someone will write a compelling paper on the history of the two similar projects and analyse the key differences and decision points which led to one project outshining the other.

### But we are not crying

Well, maybe we feel a twing of loss for the Mapbuilder project we started years ago, but in the bigger picture, we see the retiring of Mapbuilder as a good thing. It will allow the greater web mapping community to consolidate and rally around the remaining webmapping tools - in particular, around Openlayers.

There has been significant collaboration between the Mapbuilder and Openlayers communities over the last couple of years. Mapbuilder has incorporated Openlayers as its rendering engine and fetures have been shared between projects. In many cases, developers from both projects worked together on the same codebase (in Openlayers), then ported up to Mapbuilder. This was a deliberate move toward the merging of the two developer communities and most of the Mapbuilder Project Steering Committee have contributed to the Openlayers codebase.

So in essence, by changing our allegiance from Mapbuilder to Openlayers we take with us some of our code, we replace some features with equivalent Openlayers features, we take our community with us, and we gain an existing, robust and welcoming community.

### What should Mapbuilder users do?

Users have a few options. You already own the source code, so you are welcome to continue maintaining and extending the Mapbuilder code for as long as you like. At some point, users will likely want to upgrade, and at that point we suggest considering Openlayers for your application. It now provides the majority of the fuctionality that was previously only offered by Mapbuilder.

### What about Mapbuilder's standing with OSGeo?

Having a graduated OSGeo project retire might be seen as an embarassment for OSGeo, however, I'd argue it is a strength. It shows two projects growing together under the OSGeo umbrella and eventually merging into a stronger, more focused community.

However, it does raise a dilemma with regards to what should be done with a retired project. Some of the key

OSGeo criteria, like "Community Backing" and "Best of Breed Software" will gradually be lost, so we should not continue to promote Mapbuilder. Still, we wouldn't want to erase Mapbuilder's history with OSGeo as our community has documented valuable lessons learned during the graduation process.

I suggest a new "retired" category be created which keeps track of retired projects.

## **Thanks**

We, the project steering committee, have derived a huge amount of pleasure building Mapbuilder and working with the Mapbuilder Community. For many of us, Mapbuilder has been a launching pad into a fulfilling Open Source and/or Geospatial career. We'd like to thank all the users, developers and supporters of Mapbuilder we have met along the way.

The Mapbuilder Project Steering Committee, (in order of appearance):

- Cameron Shorter
- Mike Adair
- Patrice Cappelaere
- Steven M. Ottens
- Matt Diez
- Olivier Terral
- Andreas Hocevar
- Gertjan van Oosten
- Linda Derezinski