

Flash!

A NEWSLETTER FROM **MAPLight.org**

ISSUE 02 / SUMMER 2007

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WELCOME TIFFANY!

MAPLight.org welcomes Tiffany Poovaiah, our new research

assistant. Tiffany was our spotlighted intern in the last issue of Flash! She has added speed and efficiency to our federal research program and maintains the internship program.

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From The Executive Director

MAPLight.org has taken off! Since the last issue of *Flash!* we have launched our groundbreaking website highlighting money and votes in the U.S. Congress. We have been profiled by Wired.com and lauded in the *New York Times*:

"Nobody has ever revealed the relationship between money given and votes cast to quite such a startling effect." —David Pogue, *New York Times*

We won first prize at the NetSquared Innovation Awards, a contest for the best nonprofit technology project worldwide, earning profiles by *The Nation* and ABC News Now and significant international interest in our tools for money and politics transparency.

Here at home we have upgraded our servers to handle our increased traffic; started an adopt-a-state program with volunteer programmers putting money and politics data from several states online; improved our research system to be 30% more efficient; and researched and coded every significant piece of legislation that has come to a floor vote in either House of Congress. Going forward we'll have the money and politics data on our site within hours of votes taking place.

You invested in our vision and made this possible. In the months ahead we'll be launching our membership program and you'll be hearing from us about other ways you can get involved in transforming the way America understands politics. We look forward to sharing our growth and celebrating with you as we usher in a new era of transparency, accountability and reform. Thank you.

MAPLIGHT.ORG FOR CONGRESS GOES LIVE

On May 16, 2007, we launched MAPLight.org's flagship project, our groundbreaking web site tracking all money and votes in U.S. Congress.

At the National Press Club in Washington, DC Dan briefed reporters from major newspapers and national wire services about how they can use MAPLight.org's money and politics data in their stories.

Also at our DC press conference, the Sunlight Foundation, who funded our U.S. Congress site development, announced a grant to MAPLight.org of \$200,000 for the next year — the largest grant in our history. We deeply appreciate the Sunlight Foundation's support. We are thrilled to have this base of support to move forward and expand.



Dan taking questions at the National Press Club
(Photo credit: Tara Koslov)

GREAT NEWS COVERAGE

New York Times technology writer David Pogue wrote an excellent profile of our new site, putting us "on the map" for a large and influential audience. Pogue said of MAPLight.org, "nobody has ever revealed the relationship between money given and votes cast to quite such a startling effect."

Other noteworthy press coverage included a lead editorial in *The Examiner* newspaper, calling MAPLight.org "a giant step forward in making American democracy more transparent." We were also featured by the French newspaper of record, *Le Monde*. (You can find this and other news coverage at www.maplight.org/pressroom/coverage.)

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FUNDRAISING WIDGETS

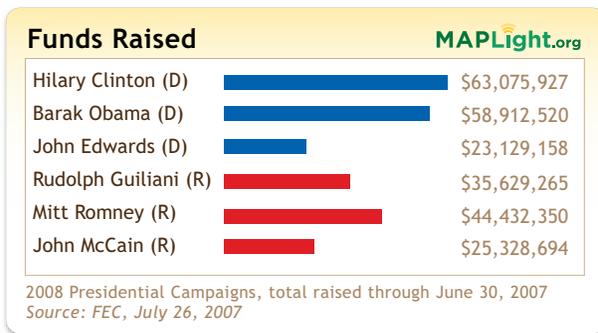
MAPLight.org breaks new ground again with our new Presidential Candidates Fundraising Widget.

With our widget, you can track the fundraising of each candidate on your own website or blog, updated automatically. We'll soon roll out widgets for House and Senate candidates, bills, and issues too.

On our widget-builder page (www.maplight.org/widgets), you can choose your favorite candidates, colors and other options to present the information you want in a way that fits right in with your website or blog. It's as easy as adding a YouTube video to your site.

Reflecting our commitment to open access to money and politics data, we have also opened up the source of the data so that anyone with programming skills can create their own widgets on any of the 1600 candidates running for office, for President and U.S. Congress.

MAPLight.org now automatically turns summary data from the Federal Elections Committee reports into a format called XML, which can be read, shared, and displayed easily by any website or



software program. We publish this data for every incumbent and challenger for the House and Senate for 2008, as well as the Presidential candidate. Opening up access like this will help illuminate campaign contribution data in political coverage across the web.

We are also making the source code for our widget available for free. Any person or group can use or modify it for any purpose, supporting our mission of spreading the word about our current money-dominated political system.

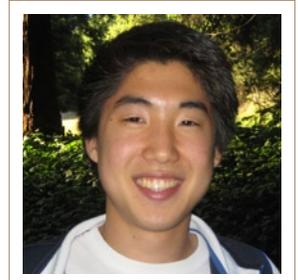
With these widgets and XML campaign data, MAPLight.org is again defining the new transparency paradigm. We are committed to supporting the burgeoning collaborative community that that expects transparency and accountability from our government.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT JAMES PARK

MAPLight.org's timely research on current bills in the U.S. Congress is central to our mission. MAPLight.org relies on our team of dedicated research interns to track down which special interests support and oppose each bill in Congress. This summer, our team of twelve interns has researched more than four hundred and fifty bills.

James Park chose the MAPLight.org internship because he "wanted to get research experience." He likes the small office environment and particularly enjoys the spontaneous discussions about current political events stemming from the

research done while at the office. James finds that his research for MAPLight gives him a deeper



understanding of classic political literature such as Madison's *Federalist* #10. "It's interesting to see what Madison predicted about interest groups and factions being manifested today in American society."

James says working at MAPLight gives you a good idea of "which special interest groups affect policy at the federal level." He believes that visitors to MAPLight's site will not only see that "money does have an influence on politics," but they will also be more informed about different groups' views on bills and issues. "These conflicts wouldn't be as easy to see if it weren't for MAPLight's work."

James plans on going to law school in the future, but may take a year or two off after graduating to participate in Teach for America or take part in the Peace Corps.

We are now accepting applications for fall internships. To learn more, give us a call.

MAPLIGHT.ORG WINS FIRST PRIZE!

In May, MAPLight.org competed in the NetSquared Innovation Awards, a contest for the best nonprofit technology project. Projects from around the world – more than 150 in all – were judged on social impact, technical innovation, and sustainability. MAPLight.org won first prize, and \$25,000.



Sean receiving First Prize on behalf of MAPLight.org at the NetSquared Innovation Awards (Photo credit: Eschipul)

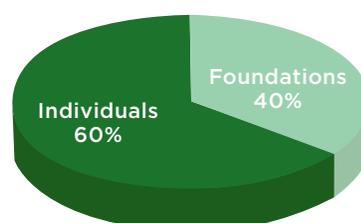
MAPFact:

Within 24 hours of the final vote on the Oman Free Trade Agreement, \$73,400 in campaign contributions flooded U. S. Senators' coffers from industries supporting the Agreement. One Pharmaceuticals Industry leader, GlaxoSmithKline, gave \$27,000 within twenty four hours of the House vote and \$16,000 within twenty-four hours of the Senate vote.

DONATE

MAPLight.org would have never made it this far without the support of individuals who recognize the fundamental problem of money's influence on American politics.

Please join us by contributing at: www.maplight.org/donate



Total Contributions to Date
March 2005 - September 2007
\$466,392

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For more information, please write to info@maplight.org or visit our website at www.maplight.org