MapLight’s Voter’s Edge reveals money behind ballot measures

This election, citizens from Boston Harbor to the Santa Monica boardwalk only had to look one place to decide their votes on ballot measures: MapLight’s Voter’s Edge. An expansion of our pilot guide covering California ballot measures, Voter’s Edge provided comprehensive, up-to-date information for voters in 8 states, 6 counties, and 9 cities.

Through partnerships with news outlets who curated pages for their local elections, Voter’s Edge let citizens access ballot measure summaries, impact analyses, funding data, news, editorials, and more on a single page, regularly updated to reflect breaking developments. We also unveiled additional features to help this crucial civic information reach more voters: Our customizable widgets displaying

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**Wired and MapLight track influence in the election**

**INFLUENCE TRACKER**

John Boehner (R)
Elected for House From OH
For 2012 ballot: Candidate for House From District 8, OH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions Received</th>
<th>$20,819,093</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank within House Candidates</td>
<td>2 / 1555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank Overall</td>
<td>10 / 1824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


MapLight teamed up with Wired.com again to launch our “Influence Tracker” widget in time for the 2012 ballot. The widget ranked federal candidates by their relative fundraising prowess, revealing the total number of dollars raised by each contender in the past two years, and their top 10 contributors.

Displaying silhouettes of the candidates imprinted with the logos of their biggest campaign donors, NASCAR-style, Influence Tracker helped over 70,000 voters see the top players in the election influence game. To investigate your candidate’s biggest sponsors, go to http://maplt.org/V51ciL.

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**Politicash 2012 app follows Obama and Romney’s top funders**

MapLight put the power to hold politicians accountable literally in citizens’ hands this election season with our new mobile app, Politicash 2012. Freely available for iOS and Android, the app tracked money flowing into the presidential race, making it easier than ever to know exactly who’s funding the candidates, including the shadowy sums going into the campaigns of their affiliated super PACs.

By election day, over 3,100 citizens had downloaded the app, which featured head to head comparisons of contributions to Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, graphs tracking money raised and spent over time, the top five contributors overall, and more. In addition, our “Two Cents” auto-tweet feature allowed citizens to deliver real-time feedback to Obama and Romney about their fundraising by tweeting the issues they wished the candidates would focus
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the latest top funders for and against each ballot measure allowed for easy embedding into online stories and seamless sharing via social media. We also created a mobile-optimized version of the website so voters could access this data anytime, anywhere.

In the months preceding the November election, Voter’s Edge received an astonishing 625,000 pageviews from over 93,000 unique visitors looking for the truth about ballot measures. In addition, Voter’s Edge data reached over 13 million people through 600 news stories in The Economist, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, Reuters, the Los Angeles Times, La Opinión, and many others, shining much-needed light on the interests vying to influence citizens’ votes.

MapLight is expanding Voter’s Edge to even more locations across the country. Interested in creating a Voter’s Edge guide to ballot measures for your own state, county, or city? Write to us at info@maplight.org.

Voter’s Edge was made possible by the Kaphan Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the Tides Civic Participation Fund. Voter’s Edge can be found at http://votersedge.org.

Polticash 2012 app follows Obama and Romney’s top funders

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U.S. Congress contributions data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets.org) and legislative data provided by GovTrack.us. California contributions data provided by the National Institute on Money in State Politics (FollowTheMoney.org). Wisconsin contributions data provided by the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign (WisDC.org).

New Board Member Spotlight

Shel Kaphan, Board Member, is President of the Kaphan Foundation and was formerly Vice President and CTO of Amazon.com, where he did much of the original software design and programming. Prior to joining Amazon.com, he held senior engineering positions at Kaleida Labs, Frox, and Lucid, designing hardware and software systems and services. Kaphan holds a B.A. in Mathematics, cum laude, from the University of California at Santa Cruz. He is based in Seattle, Washington.

Andrea Levere, Board Member, is the President of the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED), whose mission is to build assets and expand economic opportunity for low-income people and disadvantaged communities. Prior to joining CFED, Andrea was a director with the National Development Council. She also served as the chair of the board of the Ms. Foundation for Women from 2002-2005 and currently serves as the Chair of ROC USA (Resident Owned Communities USA). She holds a B.A. from Brown University and an M.B.A. from Yale University. She is based in Washington, D.C.
In a continuing collaboration with Tableau Software, MapLight launched interactive visualizations making the scope of super PAC influence on the November election more accessible than ever.

“The Five Million Dollar Club” (http://maplt.org/ NuLl1Je) compared the totals and geographic origins of contributions to super PACs that raised over $5 million. “Leaders of the (Super) PAC” (http://maplt.org/QXn0vJ) showed the top-funded super PACs (both candidate- and ideology-affiliated) and their comparative contributions received over time, broken down by weeks and quarters.

Our visualizations made super PAC funding information easy to see and share while providing powerful customization tools for journalists and others seeking more sophisticated analyses. MapLight’s super PAC data was cited in news stories by the New York Times, Politico, Roll Call, Mother Jones, the Dallas Morning News, the National Law Review, the Sacramento Bee, KQED, California Watch, and more.

Transparency victory in California

This October, California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law A.B. 481, a bill to expand disclosure and accountability for independent expenditures. Among its key transparency provisions, the new law:
• requires disclosure of the top two contributors on all ads paid for by independent expenditures
• mandates reporting within 24 hours of all independent expenditures ($1,000 or more) made in the crucial 90 days preceding an election
• establishes principal officer liability for law violations by independent expenditure committees, allowing for accountability even if the committee later disbands

As an early supporter of this measure, MapLight is thrilled to see our home state take important steps to advance accountability and transparency: vital components of healthy elections and a stronger democracy.
MapLight named a Best Free Reference Web Site of 2012

American Library Association

“The site is well-designed and easy-to-use, and is an excellent resource for researching the influence of campaign contributions and promoting government transparency and accountability.”

That’s the word from the American Library Association, who has honored MapLight as a MARS Best Free Reference Web Site of 2012. Our site was one of just 26 resources that made the cut after voting by member librarians from across the country.

We are deeply proud of this recognition and want to thank all of our supporters for helping spread the word about our work and mission. We vow to keep making patterns of influence easy for everyone to find and understand.

New MapLight data set makes FEC data more timely, accessible than ever

We are proud to announce the launch of our MapLight Money and Politics Data Set. This easy-to-access, downloadable database features MapLight-enhanced Federal Elections Commission campaign finance data and is available for free public use. The data set includes all federal contributions, independent expenditures, and candidate and committee totals, updated regularly with the most current data from the FEC.

Citizens, journalists, and programmers can now view, search, sort, filter, and visualize (with charts, line graphs, bar graphs, scatter plots, and timelines) federal campaign contributions using Google Fusion Tables. Our data can also be merged with outside databases, and visualizations can be easily embedded into blogs, media sites, and more.

We are excited to see what the web community builds with this continually-updated public data.

The complete MapLight Money and Politics Data Set can also be downloaded or accessed via API for free public use in websites, widgets, and apps.

To check it out yourself, visit http://maplt.org/PnT6wK.