Birmingham
Balsall Heath
Jewellery Quarter
Phil Jones
Antonia Layard
Chris Speed
and Colin Lorne
This project was led by Phil Jones (Geography, University of Birmingham), with Antonia Layard (Law, University of Birmingham) and Chris Speed (Architecture, University of Edinburgh). The researcher on the project was Colin Lorne (Geography, University of Birmingham). The app was developed by Chris Blunt of Plymouth Software.

The project was undertaken in collaboration with Chamberlain Forum, MADE, Joe Holyoak, Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Forum and the Jewellery Quarter Neighbourhood Forum.

MapLocal was developed as part of a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the Connected Communities programme.

If you had any queries about MapLocal, or if you want to set up your own community map, get in touch with the project leader, Dr. Phil Jones at maplocalproject@gmail.com and see the MapLocal website (maplocal.org.uk)

This booklet was printed in June, 2013.
Central Mosque is of huge importance, not just religiously; culturally, it’s a hub of all sorts of different activities with regards to the Muslim community in Birmingham. It’s a landmark known, probably, nationally and if my understanding is correct it’s one of the first Mosques in Birmingham. Anyway, it’s known really well across Birmingham and it’s seen as, you know, where it all began really.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How-to-guide</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MapLocal // Birmingham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balsall Heath</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery Quarter</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So if you look at the photograph I think that speaks for itself, but I think this area here is a complete eye-sore and crying out for redevelopment. It’s extremely close to the city centre, it’s on the periphery of the Jewellery Quarter and it’s just a wasteland.
MapLocal is designed as a tool to help communities gather information about their neighbourhoods. The idea is that people walk around their neighbourhood taking photographs and making voice recordings using our smartphone app.

The pictures and audio clips are then uploaded to a central map which can be accessed on the MapLocal website (maplocal.org.uk). As more people from the local area take part, more and more information about the neighbourhood appears on that community’s map, building a detailed picture of the area.

MapLocal can be used for different purposes, for example, gathering information about a local area in preparation for the production of a local plan which communities in England and Wales have been empowered to make under the provisions of the Localism Act, 2011.

It could also be used for local campaigns to highlight issues in a neighbourhood that need addressing or as a means of recording the history of an area that is about to be radically changed as part of a regeneration scheme.

This booklet has been produced to show how the app was used by two communities in Birmingham, Balsall Heath and Jewellery Quarter. It includes a selection of their words and images. Yet this booklet also acts as a ‘How-To-Guide’ to help show other groups how simple the app is to use.

The words and images have been produced by the people of these two neighbourhoods. MapLocal was developed as part of a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the Connected Communities programme.
This section will help show you how to set up and use the MapLocal app for yourselves.

Download the MapLocal app

To download the MapLocal app for free, please go to the Google Play online store (play.google.com or Google Play app on your android handset). Search ‘MapLocal’ and install the app. MapLocal is currently only available for Android devices. In some circumstances we may be able to loan smartphones to your community group to get you started making your map.

Contact MapLocal admin for your own community map

Get in touch with the MapLocal project leader, Phil Jones, at maplocalproject@gmail.com. He will set up your own community map. You will also be provided with a password to use this map.
Log in to your community map

Once downloaded onto your device, open up the MapLocal app. You will be met by a screen with a drop down list of different community maps. Select your map which has been provided by the project leader, enter your password and sign in.
Locate yourself

Make sure that you have enabled the GPS settings on your device and that you have internet data so that you can run the app whilst moving around. You should see a map of your area; you are located by the blue circle.

Your map may initially take a moment to load. If you’re inside, don’t worry if your location isn’t precise. Once outside this should be corrected.
Start mapping

Before you start mapping, it is important that you click the ‘sync’ button. This is highlighted by the blue circle in the diagram below. You can use the ‘re-locate’ button next to the ‘sync’ button to centre your map back to your current location.

There are three tools you can use to help you collect and map your thoughts, ideas and issues:

1. **Record audio clip**

   Recording a voice clip is simple. To do so, click ‘Record Audio Clip’. It will count down from 3. Then, starting speaking. Once you are happy, click ‘Finish Recording’. Your voice clip will now be mapped. This is represented by a red pin point. Click on this pin to listen again to your recording or to delete your comment.

2. **Take a photo**

   To take a photograph, click ‘Mark Place’. This will load up a screen with several options. First, either click ‘Take Photo’, which will load your device’s camera allowing you to take a photo, or ‘Choose Photo’ where you can select a photograph that you have already taken or uploaded to your device. Once you are happy with this, next you can add a text comment.

   Simply click on ‘Add your comment’ and start typing. Next, you need to indicate what it is that you have photographed. There is a dropdown list of possible categories. If your category is not in the list you can add a new one. To do so, select ‘Other…’ and add your new category name. This will now be added to the list.
Please note, you must give your photograph a category in order to save it. Finally, scroll down to rate the place in your photograph, use the sliding scale going from positive to negative.

If you are happy with your photograph and comments, click the tick in the top right corner. A blue pin point will show up on the map.

If you would prefer to add a voice comment over your photograph, first record your voice clip (as above), then take your photograph and add your category. As all your data is mapped to your location on the map, the photograph and voice clip will be next to each other.

3. **Mark a boundary**

You may also want to mark out a boundary. We used this to mark where people perceived the boundaries of their neighbourhood to be.

To do this, when standing on the edge of the boundary you wish to mark, click ‘Walk Boundary’, then ‘Start Walking Boundary’. A blue line will trace your movement. Once you have finished your walk click ‘Finish Walk’. Your boundaries do not need to meet, you can do as many walks as you want. You might, for example, want to trace the main routes of transport through your area.
Now, the Chamberlain Building here, I’d quite happily drop a nuclear bomb on. What we have in succession here is a Subway, a Coral Bookmakers, a Tesco Express, a Gregg’s and a Dhillon’s Fish Bar. It’s horrendous. It’s almost a parody of a crap high street.
Upload your data

Once you have finished your walk, click the ‘sync’ button again. This will upload your data from the phone to the central map where you can see everyone else’s photographs, comments and boundary lines.

View your community map

Go to the MapLocal website at maplocal.org.uk
Click on ‘Sign into map’. Find your community map from the dropdown list and then enter your password provided by the MapLocal administrator (maplocalproject@gmail.com).

This will display all the data that has been crowdsourced by everyone who has synchronised their MapLocal data for this map. When viewed from afar there will be circles of intensity visible, whereby the ‘hotter’ the colour the greater number of places mapped. Zoom in and you can click on each pin point to reveal the data.

You can toggle the boundary data on/off by checking the ‘Show Tracks’ box.

You can review all the data by type by clicking on the links for Places, Audio Clips, Comments and Categories at the top of the page.
Invite others to MapLocal

MapLocal is a useful tool for mapping your thoughts and issues whilst in place. It works best when you gather lots of people’s views and ideas. Invite others to take part in the community mapping, providing them with the map name and password.

Over time, you will start to build up a wealth of data about your community. In this instance, we have used this tool to help Neighbourhood Forums prepare for the production of a local plan as the map brings together a range of different views for discussion.

Why not look at the pilot study of two communities in Birmingham who used MapLocal?

Go to maplocal.org.uk and select ‘Balsall Heath & Jewellery Quarter’ map. The following section provides a snapshot of some of the things that people mapped from our pilot testing of the app.

Over 1000 photographs, 626 audio clips and 182 boundary lines were gathered by participants as part of the pilot study across two neighbourhoods: Balsall Heath which is quite advanced in drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan; and the Jewellery Quarter, an area yet to develop a Plan.

Therefore, only a small fraction of all the data collected can be represented here. This has been created by Colin Lorne, the researcher who has worked closely with all fifty of the people who took part in the project, and designed by Rosa Nussbaum.
Balsall Heath
“The Edgbaston Cricket Ground, very plush, not sure it benefits the local community in the sense of affordable housing, but it looks very nice and it’s all part of the redevelopment of the far end of Balsall Heath, possibly, joining Edgbaston.”
There are two swimming pools, which one is closed at the moment. It had to be closed for some time, with the help of the residents it was refurbished.

Next to the bath is a Church which has been turned into a community centre and Mosque. The Moseley Road Methodist Church has been turned into a culture hub and a student house. So there is a lot of this religious identity changing around here as well.
...recently, this pub has been closed down and is up for sale and most likely I think some restaurant will take over, they’ll turn it into a restaurant and they’ll include this in the Balti Belt.
This is a Saheli Women’s Group Adventure Hub. Now this little area used to be really derelict and it was known for prostitution. It’s now got a women-only gym and it’s got the South Birmingham College. Once they found that the women were all attending the gym, they turned it into a women-only centre and they get even more women doing education now. Not only health has improved in the area, but education has improved in the area.
At the moment, I am at George Street Park. Well, it’s a very nice, quiet, small park in the winter but in the summer, some very bad things can happen. Like there’s beginning to be a lot of drug selling and drug dealing in this park during the summer.
This is Birmingham’s Central Mosque which actually... comes under Highgate. But I thought I’d add this because it is visual from the Balsall Heath side, or the boundary of what I perceive to be Balsall Heath. It’s a really iconic Mosque built in the 70s and serves a huge purpose to the local community.
...it’s a subway which connects the Alexandra Estate with Highgate and it goes under Belgrave Middleway. But it is so dangerous to use. The steps you cannot use. The lighting is very bad and especially, even at night, you’re scared to go underneath it because it’s not very safe. There’s a possibility of you being robbed, or mugged, or being attacked.
Jewellery Quarter
So, just taken a photo of a bin, which is a weird thing to take a picture of as something I like about the Jewellery Quarter. But it has a JQ on it and I think it’s little touches like that which really personalises this part of Birmingham that makes it a special place to live as well.
St. Paul’s Square is just a really nice place to be whatever the weather. In the summer there’s loads of people out sunbathing, reading, doing their work, there’s music playing, you often see weddings or ceremonies in the church in the middle. It gives you a real sense of community, even though people keep themselves to themselves.
Over the road from it is a line of two, quite attractive but derelict buildings. I think they’re owned by the University. Just going to wreck-and-ruin. You know, they could make really nice offices and apartments but it just looks shoddy, like most of the periphery.
There’s a weir here which is completely open. Unfortunately, two years ago a young lad who had been out on the town, very drunk, **fell into it and lost his life**. It’s a very **exposed** and accessible piece of waterway and it **really worries me** that it’s not fenced off at all. It’s adjacent to some wooden decking which gets very slippy when wet.
The rumour goes that it was actually based on a piece of urban art that was commissioned by the Birmingham City Council but never produced. Maybe the artist did this just to cock-a-snoot at them, I don’t know. But I think it’s quite nice.
So can’t be certain what goes on inside Libra Parlour, but there’s rumours it’s a massage parlour and I don’t like the idea of that sort of thing on the edge of where you live. I’m sure it goes on everywhere but it seems pretty blatant and pretty unnecessary.
I’ve now definitely reached the stage when I’m going to put this piece of kit on the floor and trample all over it...

The previous pages are just a small selection of the words, photos and walks produced by the people of Balsall Heath and Jewellery Quarter. We would like to thank them all for helping us test and improve the ‘MapLocal’ app which is now available to download for free on Google Play.
MapLocal was developed as part of a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The team would like to thank all the people who took part in the project. This includes the Balsall Heath and Jewellery Quarter Neighbourhood Forums who helped with the development of the app. Particular thanks go to Abdullah Rehman and Mike Mounfield. We would also like to thank Joe Holyoak, Chamberlain Forum and MADE* for their support.

The project is led by Phil Jones (University of Birmingham) with Colin Lorne and Antonia Layard (University of Birmingham), Chris Speed (University of Edinburgh) and Chris Blunt (Plymouth Software).

Finally, thank you to Rosa Nussbaum for helping with the design of this flipbook.

To set up your own map, or if you had any other queries about MapLocal, please contact the project leader, Dr. Phil Jones at maplocalproject@gmail.com