

Connecting Collections and Communities with ArcGIS Story Maps

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While museums function as repositories of scientific knowledge and discovery, they struggle to share exciting stories to the public in an inclusive way. The problem is often compounded by perceived limitations of their ability to broadcast information beyond the physical walls of the museum. This is especially the case for students in under-served, typically socioeconomically disadvantaged, communities. This poster will demonstrate how the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHMLA) has partnered with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) teachers and California State Dominguez Hills' California STEM Institute for Innovation and Improvement (CSI³) to create lesson plans about the natural history of Los Angeles. Because the CSI³ program trains and deploys teachers to schools of greatest need within LAUSD, this partnership has allowed the NHMLA to more inclusively expose students to the museum's collections and "behind-the-scenes" activities.

Utilizing Esri's Story Map platform, the NHMLA is able to develop easily accessible web resources that are cost-effective for both the museum to create and for teachers and students to use. This ensures that the product will be tailor-made for the classroom and will immediately find a real-world application for students of greatest need. A key motivation for these Story Maps is to connect the museum collections with the communities from which those collections originated. This is achieved through compelling story-telling, diverse and captivating media, and Esri mapping products that allow for exploration of pertinent data and local neighborhoods within the greater Los Angeles area. Here we discuss the process of forming partnerships with local educators and explore how other museums can take advantage of Esri's web platform to develop educational material, increase digital engagement, and reconnect communities with their natural heritage.
