Hmm,
where was
that happening?

Better navigation solutions for your festival or event

BY JERRY WADDELL

W e all know there are many challenges for today's festival and event planners, but none may be greater in the 21st century than being able to provide instant and detailed information to the thousands of visitors planning to attend. In its first stand alone measure of smartphone ownership, the Pew Internet Project finds that one third of American adults – 35% – own smartphones. The Project's May survey found that 83% of US adults have a cell phone of some kind, and that 42% of them own a smartphone. That translates into 35% of all adults. Visitors are now planning by using their laptops and mobile devices to get directions, find out about performances and venues, or learn about vendors. The challenge is in providing that information in a simplified and easy to use application.

This past June attendees to the 30th annual Riverbend Festival in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, discovered that not only could they find their way around the event on their "smart phone", they could also find out where and what acts were performing, the location of vendors and concessions, as well as parking and first aid areas. PointsMap, an online interactive mapping software program that was utilized by the Riverbend Festival made it easy for their visitors. (www.PointsMap.com/RiverBendFestival) Every point on the PointsMap contained descriptions, pictures, directions, websites and multimedia links, even PDF files.

Chip Baker, Executive Director of Friends of the Festival said - "Visitors could visit www.PointsMap.com/RiverbendFestival from their desktop computers and "plan" their evening - even creating their own custom agenda. Once they got to Riverbend they could use their smart phone to access PointsMap and get "up-to-the-minute" information. They could even scan QR codes, which would automatically take them to Riverbend information directly within PointsMap. It was easy for them to find performers, link to performers bios, videos and websites, performance stages and their schedules, location of concessions, shopping and even parking. Thousands of visitors took advantage of this incredible technology on their desktop computers and mobile smart phones."

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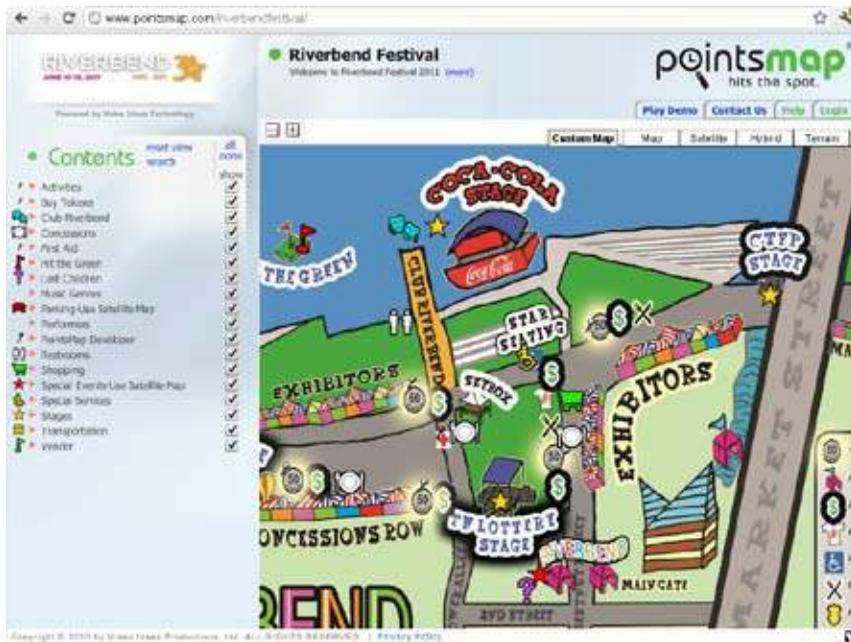
Above: Riverbend Festival with "Fun Map" showing different activities of the event.

MANAGE YOUR MAP

PointsMap is an extraordinary online software that allows administrators and editors to add points and categories on their own customized Google map. When a visitor makes plans to attend an event they can go to the event website and find a link to the PointsMap. In many cases, PointsMap is embedded within the events website. The visitor then views a Google or custom map that is branded with the event logo and can even be greeted with a welcome message or video about the event. PointsMap utilizes all the features of Google maps including street maps, satellite images, panning and zooming into details on the map.

When a point on the PointsMap is rolled over, it displays a pop-up picture and short description. When the point is selected, it displays a detailed description, pictures, GPS coordinates and even custom menu buttons that offer links to websites, street-by-street directions, PDF files with schedules, coupons, menus, etc., multimedia files, or additional helpful information about the point. All the points on the map are organized into categories in a table of contents and each category and sub-category can have their own custom icons that make them easier to locate on the map. When a viewer selects a category in the table of contents, all of the points in the category are highlighted. Points can be listed under more than one category and the viewer has the option to turn on or off different categories to display on the map, making it even easier to personalize their map view. Visitors can use the search function by typing in keywords and can even search for keywords within a certain distance. PointsMap can even be set up to send a text message directly to a visitors phone when the visitor enters their mobile number. The built-in distance finder allows the viewer to find out the distance from any point selected to another point on the map down to tenths of a mile.

PointsMap even offers a unique "GO INSIDE" feature, which gives visitors the option of taking a virtual tour of any point on the map. Sub-maps linked to the point allow them to see floor plans with seating charts, vendor locations, entrances and exits, restroom facilities, and more. Submaps can be illustrated "fun" maps, photographs or diagrams. If the event publishes a fun map for visitors, from the minute the map is printed, things change and the printed map is no longer accurate. PointsMap takes that fun map and makes it interactive and accessible on smartphones and kiosks for visitors to use and changes to locations and venues are immediate and up-to-date.
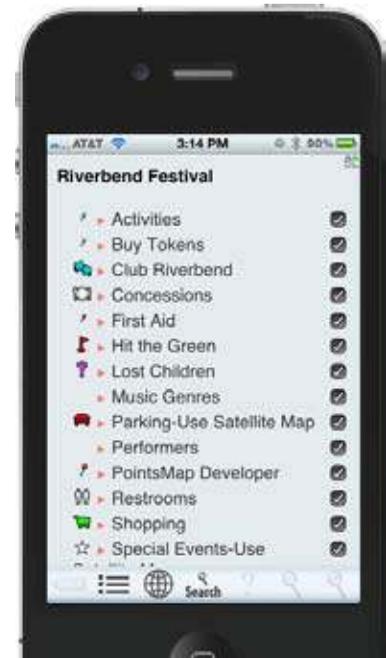
Above: Riverbend Festival on PointsMap showing categorized areas of interest.

REAL-TIME POINT TRACKING

All of these features were very beneficial for both players and spectators to the recent Children's Hospital Classic PGA Nationwide Tour Golf Tournament. (www.PointsMap.com/CHC) Visitors to the PointsMap could use the satellite image to take a virtual tour of the golf course at Black Creek Mountain in Tennessee. By clicking the icons visitors could see photography from the tees, fairways and greens, as well as the tee yardage of every hole on the course. There was also a

> **" *During the tournament, the leading players were tracked on the course using a companion for PointsMap that updated the Players location on the map in REAL-TIME* "**

detailed description of the holes and caddie tips for playing them. Bios of all the players in the tournament were available with photos and links to PGA information as well as video clips. During the tournament, the leading players were tracked on the course using a companion for PointsMap that updated the Players location on the map in REAL-TIME. By using their "smart phones", spectators on the course, as well as viewers on their desktop computers, could see exactly where a particular player was on the course. Spectators used this to navigate around the course as they followed their favorite players and tournament leaders throughout the 3-day tournament. Mickey McCamish, tournament director, gave PointsMap high marks

"Spectator navigating technology is so critical to producing this successful high profile community event that not only receives local recognition but also national and international media coverage . . .. PointsMap provided an easy navigating experience for those watching at home or those at the Black Creek golf course ... with a smart phone, iPad or computer, users could easily follow their favorite pro golfer, find restrooms, first aid locations, parking areas and numerous other points

of interest that were added to the Google Map."

As easy as PointsMap is to use it was the simplicity of being able to add and edit his own points and categories that attracted IFEA member Barry McNamara, Director of the WINTERSUN Festival in Australia. (www.PointsMap.com/WinterSun) "When I saw the demonstration of Points Map at the 2011 IFEA Conference in Dallas my first thought was this is the product I have been looking for, my second thought was this is too good to be true." Barry said. "The offer of a free one hour training session really helped seal the deal. However, so far I have not needed the training session as I have found PointsMap so easy to use."

PointsMap administrators and editors are setup with their own User ID and password. They can then login with their computer from anywhere that has Internet access and make changes and additions to their PointsMap. Adding points to the PointsMap is extremely simple using address information, GPS coordinates – or administrators can create points on their map by simply clicking on the map where they want to put the point. It can't get any easier than that. This allows them to make up to the minute changes and additions as they occur!

Barry has been so impressed with Points-

Above : A PointsMap on the IFEA website provides visitors information about Festivals and Events all over the world.

Map that he wrote – "In test marketing before launching a brand new web site the map has received by far the highest positive comments. Its simplicity, ease of use and depth of information all rated highly. My Board of Management is most impressed. I am really looking forward to the reaction of our customers, host venues and sponsors, I am sure they are all going to be delighted. After working on Pointsmap I can only say that my first reaction was correct and in fact the product has exceeded my expectation." Custom icons were even created that Barry used on the Wintersun Festival PointsMap.

MANY SOLUTIONS, MANY ADVANTAGES

PointsMap can be used as much more than just a festival map. Attendees to trade shows and conventions always wanting to know where the closest restaurants, hotels, and attractions are for their "free" time as well as where the meetings are being held and what is going on. Meeting planners have found the online software to be perfect for displaying floor plans of the exhibit halls and conference rooms. Points-Map shows them the available parking and shuttle areas, and display points for nearby attractions, lodging and dining. Points on the sub-map floor plans contain schedules of meeting times in each room, bio's and photos of guest speakers Attendees can even use the "Itinerary" feature to create their personalized schedule and print it, save it, or have it emailed to them.

PointsMap has even been utilized as a source of revenue by allowing "point
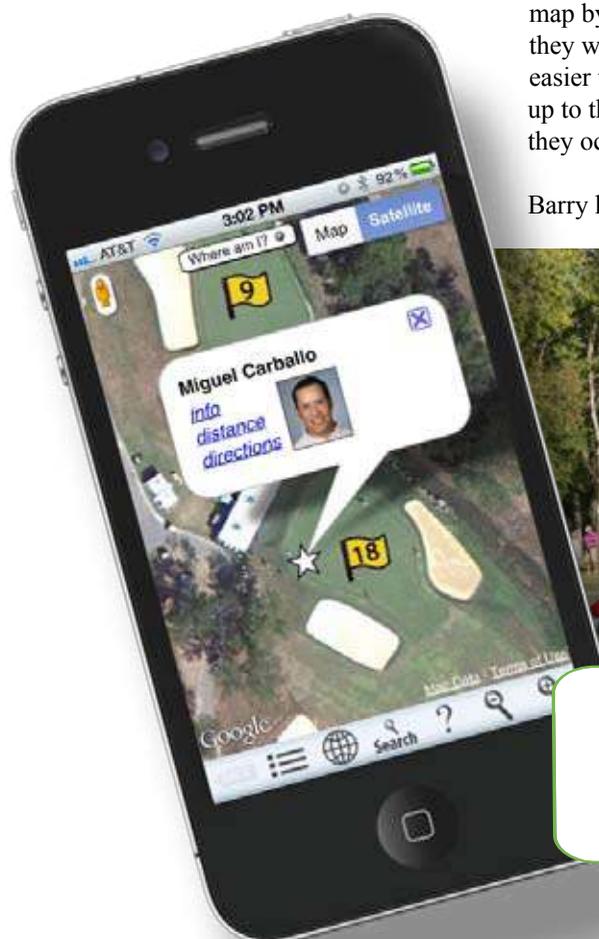
Above: PointsMap used on smartphone to track CHC golf player Miguel Carballo on hole 18.

editors" to access their individual points on the map. The event organizer can then offer a vendor or exhibitor an "enhanced" point. For a fee, the "point editors" can have their own username and password to access their point and add a description of their business, pictures, links to their website and video files, and links to PDF files that can have brochures, menus, coupons, or other documents that the visitor can download and print.

Because PointsMap is so simple and easy to use – and so affordable, parks and recreational areas can use it to show locations of scenic views, historic monuments, hiking and driving trials, picnic and camping areas. Theme parks can now display locations of rides and attractions, entertainment schedules, operating hours, parking and transportation all directly to the smart phone of the park guest. Museums can now offer self-guided tours of their exhibits right to the visitors smart phone with points containing information about their exhibits. Educational facilities are also finding PointsMap is a great way to create interactive campus maps, with the ability to use the GO INSIDE feature to show classroom and office locations with class schedules and links to teachers and administrators. Retail shopping malls can use PointsMap as an interactive store directory that can offer sales specials and coupons directly to the consumer.

The customers who have used the PointsMap online software are not only satisfied, they have become willing endorsers and refer the program to others.

Barry says, "I would be delighted to speak to anyone in Australia / New Zealand who has an interest in your product and would be more than happy to endorse and recommend Points Map and the service behind the product." Barry McNamara, WinterSun Festival

*"PointsMap allowed Riverbend 2011 to provide our visitors with truly state-of-the-art technology and moved Riverbend into a new level of excellence as a premiere Chattanooga event. I highly recommend PointsMap for use by any event, festival, concert or convention and any other use where mapping and location service information would be beneficial.
Chip Baker, Riverbend Festival*

"As a result of Video Ideas providing PointMap navigating technology to the Children's Hospital Classic, it is with much appreciation that the Classic says 'thanks" for a job well done and the Classic would be most pleased to serve as a reference for any company considering navigation technology." Mickey McCamish, Children's Hospital Classic

"We're so fired up about our second year with PointsMap. We have time to play and explore, the possibilities are endless! If you can dream it, they can make it happen!" Amy Morrow, Public Relations Director, Friends of the Festival / Riverbend

For the festival and event planner it cannot only assist their visitors in finding the exhibits and venues, it also aids the exhibitors and vendors in attracting these visitors. PointsMap is a powerful tool in the arsenal of the festival and meeting planner that wants to enrich the experience of their event.

Jerry Waddell is president of Video Ideas Productions, Inc., the author and creator of PointsMap. Video Ideas Production, Inc. (www.VideoIdeas.com) is a production facility and agency in Chattanooga, TN and has produced award winning media for customers all over the U.S. for 25 years and is an IFEA Member & Business Partner.

Visit www.PointsMap.com for more information. As an IFEA member, you can have paid access to add and edit your information on the IFEA PointsMap, add photos, brochures, links to websites and videos about your event and even link to your own Virtual Tour PointsMap. PointsMap offers discounts for Virtual Tour PointsMaps to IFEA members.

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