

Florida Power & Light Company uses Google Maps to help keep customers out of the dark

FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT

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Posted By:

Kirk Suscella, Distribution Business Systems Manager for Florida Power & Light

Editors Note:

Today's guest blogger is Kirk Suscella from [Florida Power & Light](#). See what other organizations that have gone Google [have to say](#).

"FPL Power Tracker is a web-based tool that uses the Google Maps API to let customers search and report outages also. They can see details about outages affecting any of our customers, including when they were reported, what caused them and when power is expected to be restored."

—Kirk Suscella, Distribution Business Systems Manager for Florida Power & Light

At FPL, we understand how much our customers depend on electricity. When they flip the switch, they expect the lights to come on. We agree. That's why we're continuously investing time and resources to improve the service we provide to our 4.6 million residential and business customers.

Google Enterprise gives us the tools that let us easily use more than 100 data sets of information about the area we serve – that's more than 1 million data points. With these tools, we can better locate property lines, our trucks and equipment, customer locations, and even eagle nests and conservation areas - all important information when investigating issues or planning work.

With Google Maps, we have a single, visual interface to determine the smartest and most efficient way to restore and improve service to our customers. For example, our Restoration Spatial View, is a powerful Google Maps-based tool that allows us to monitor severe weather, pending customer requests, crew locations as well as the power our system is providing and which customers are without power. The information is plotted on a map so we can quickly identify and fix problems as they arise.

Each restoration crew has a laptop in its truck to allow them to quickly access this data and locate problems. Earlier this year, we expanded our restoration crews' access by equipping them with "smart tablets" to use even when they are outside of the trucks. We achieved our best reliability performance on record in 2012, and we expect technology tools like those provided by Google to help drive continued service improvements for the benefit of our customers.



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—Kirk Suscella, Distribution Business Systems Manager for Florida Power & Light

Our employees aren't the only ones who have information about outages. [FPL Power Tracker](#) is a web-based tool that uses the Google Maps API to let customers search and report outages also. They can see details about outages affecting any of our customers, including when they were reported, what caused them and when power is expected to be restored.

The screenshot shows the FPL Power Tracker web application. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'My Home', 'My Business', 'Environment', 'Community', 'About Energy', and 'About FPL'. A search bar and a 'Welcome, Log In' link are also present. The main content area is titled 'FPL Power Tracker' and includes a 'Map Legend' with color-coded triangles representing the number of customers affected: red for 'More than one outage in the area', green for '1 customer affected', yellow for '2-100 customers affected', orange for '101-500 customers affected', brown for '501-2000 customers affected', and dark red for '> 2000 customers affected'. Below the legend are buttons for 'Report An Outage' and 'Check Your Status'. A blue box displays 'FPL Systemwide Reliability Performance 99.97% of customers have power as of 01:29 PM'. A map on the right shows the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park area with a popup window displaying outage details: 'Outage reported: 08/29/13 12:29 PM', 'Estimated time of restoration: 08/29/13 02:30 PM', 'Customers affected: 1', 'Status: We will be dispatching a power restoration specialist to the area as soon as possible.', 'Cause: Under investigation', and 'Last updated: 08/29/2013 01:29 PM'. The popup also includes links for 'Zoom Here', 'Report an outage or check status', and 'Help'. The map shows various landmarks like St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park, Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, and Indian River Shores.

During hurricanes or severe storms, we switch the [Power Tracker into “Storm Mode”](#) and show broader county-by-county power outage numbers. We also show estimated restoration times so residents who have evacuated an area know when they can return home, and those who weathered the storm know when their power will be restored.

When the power goes out, customers want to know why, and our crews and technicians need to know the nature of the problem and its precise location in order to fix it. While storms in Florida may be severe, FPL has equally powerful tools to help us withstand them and keep our customers' lights on.

