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Getmapping Puts New Contour Map Online

Getmapping has added countrywide digital contour mapping to its impressive online offering of aerial photography, Ordnance Survey mapping and digital height data. The contour dataset is the most accurate, consistent and up to date, 2D representation of the British landscape ever created and is derived from the NEXTMap Britain™ survey.

The digital contours will be of particular interest to engineers, architects and planners who need to be able to carry out an initial site assessment or to create a visualisation of a project.

Areas as small as ¼ a square kilometre can be ordered online for immediate download from as little as £50.00 and delivered in either DWG or DGN file formats. DWG is the format used by AutoCAD the computer-aided design/drafting (CAD) program and DGN is the format used by Bentley Systems' MicroStation, CAD program suite. Both formats are widely used by architects, engineers and contractors.

Contours are essentially a 2D representation of 3D data, so in a plan view it is very easy to see what is happening with the terrain. Engineers using CAD systems may well find the new digital contours easier to use than 3D gridded data. Whilst the latest 3D software allows terrain data to be combined with aerial photography to provide a real-world viewing experience, contours still have a valuable part to play. For hard copy maps and presentations, contours remain the most effective way of displaying the rise and fall of the land.

Already supplied to over 100 Local Authorities and in use by engineers, environmentalists and planners the contours in this dataset are resolved at 5-metre vertical intervals and are quality assured to ensure the highest accuracy. The underlying NEXTMap Britain data is accurate enough to produce a more accurate 2-metre vertical contour dataset, which may become available should there be sufficient demand in the future.

Contour lines connect a series of points of equal elevation or height and are the most efficient way of illustrating topography or relief on traditional maps. Every point along a continuous contour line is at the same elevation with closely spaced lines representing a steep slope, while lines that form a 'V' shape indicate a ravine or where they cross a stream. Concentric contour lines indicate a hill.

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