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A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Contractors can wow their clients and up their productivity with aerial imaging software like Nearmap.

COMBINING THE FAMILIARITY of satellite imaging, but with high-powered camera systems in airplanes instead, Nearmap is changing the estimating and productivity game.

"Everyone is used to seeing satellite images," says Tim Frank, director of marketing for Nearmap. "But those images are low resolution and not often updated."

With their patented high-resolution cameras and processing software, Nearmap can populate up-to-date aerial images of approximately 270 urban areas, 70 percent of the U.S. population. As the images are updated multiple times annually, the footage is uploaded to a cloud-based server within days.

A NEW VIEW

Most people are no stranger to aerial images, and they are often used for making estimates and proposals. But images generated via satellite are often old and lack quality and detail.
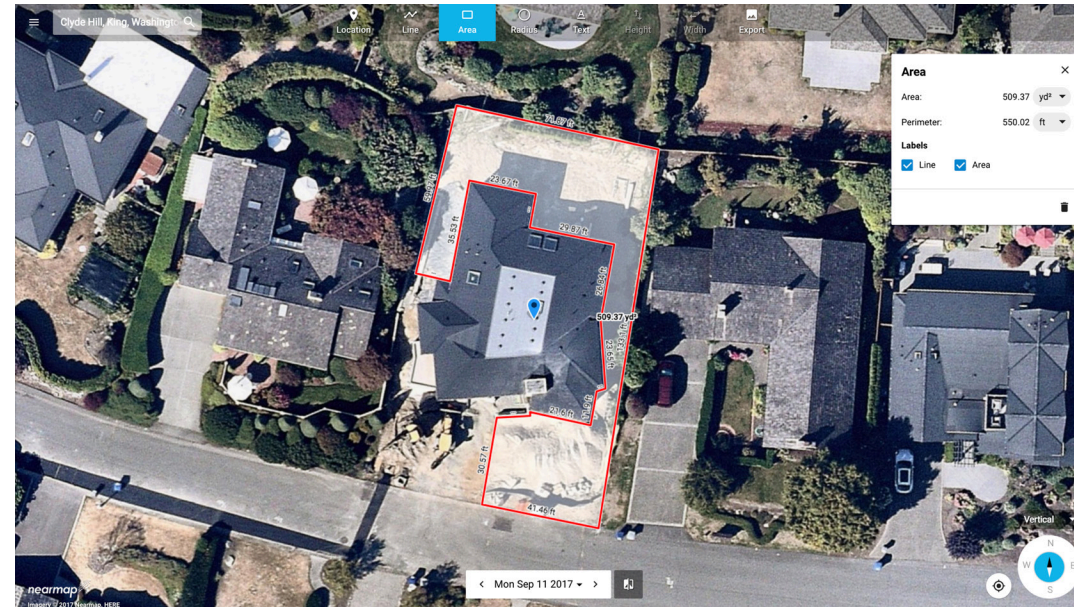
With Nearmap, users can view enhanced images of properties without the stylized and pixelated effects of satellite imaging.

PRECISE PROPOSALS

Contractors can use Nearmap to impress their clients starting with the proposal process. "Imagine this: an office manager receives a phone call from a potential client," Frank says. "That property can be pulled up during the phone call and measurements can be taken almost instantly."

The search function within the software allows the user to hone in on specific street addresses from coast to coast.

The browser-based software has features built in that allow the user to take line and area measurements in a variety of units, with accuracy down to inches.

Beyond that, images can be annotated. For example, a user can outline an area of land and add a note that indicates where new sod will be installed. The imagery can also be exported to be included in hard-copy proposals.

Nearmap offers multiple views of an area rather than just the top-down perspective. With the Nearmap Oblique view, images captured at an angle show different perspectives of the area. Combined with Nearmap Panorama, a seamless mosaic is created that allows the user to instantly pan around a property.

Using the oblique views, contractors can measure the height of a structure to get a better idea of what type of trees to plant on the property. They can use the panoramic views to plan out where to put new shrubs and other plants as well.

Lawn care professionals can quickly gauge how large a new jobsite is and use the data to estimate labor and materials needed, making for a quick bidding process.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

With the browser-based software MapBrowser, contractors can get a head start on jobs from their office. "There will be thousands saved in time and money," Frank says. "With lawn care bids, for example, you can pull up the property instantly."

On location, workers can use the "locate me" feature to populate the aerial image of wherever they're located. From there, they can validate and verify property features that are important to the project. "We're hearing feedback from subcontractors that Nearmap is far more accurate than similar software," Frank says.

Because the images can be pulled up instantly from the cloud, less time will be spent visiting the jobsite in the beginning phases of the project.

LEAD GENERATION

Through the MapBrowser, contractors can pull up an urban area and get current, high-resolution images, along with any historical captures. New construction can indicate a promising area for new business while saving the user from drive time.

"You can target those residential areas and look at the homes," Frank says. Users are able to scout new business near them with minimal labor time.

TRACKING CHANGES

With the historical archives within the software, users can view the history of an area over the past several years and view the changes as they were made.

"We also collect leaf on and leaf off images of properties," he says. This allows the user to view what the properties look like with full foliage and without.

Frank says contractors can sit down with their clients, and after some time, show them what their property looked like before any work was completed. This also helps businesses keep an eye on developing areas for marketing strategies.

FULL INTEGRATION

"A lot of small businesses will go straight to using the MapBrowser on their own," Frank says. But the software is compatible with many other third-party management programs, including an advanced option for CAD-based product integration.

"We're continually expanding in the US," he says. "We're focused on those urban areas that are population centers."

While businesses have other methods of capturing images, for example, drones, the footage is limited to smaller areas and takes time and resources to process and use. He notes that the Nearmap software allows contractors to focus on more than one project at a time. "With the rise in popularity of aerial images, we found a sweet spot that overcomes the challenges of satellites and drones," Frank says.