

Meet Duane Wilkins

Published on LEARNZ (<https://www.learnz.org.nz>)

Job:

Geographic Information Advocate at Land Information New Zealand.

Job description:

My work at LINZ is about helping others to understand geographic information systems, and how they can use them to improve public services like where to locate new schools, hospitals, and how to download satellite imagery, and make maps using the data LINZ has like property boundaries, rivers, lakes and hill contours.

Work background:

I have been working in geography and mapping for a long time. I've worked in health, managed a team of map makers at the department of conservation to manage parks and walks. I've worked with Maori groups on Treaty of Waitangi investigations, and a few years ago I even went to Iraq and Afghanistan to help local people work out how to map their roads, water pipes, power lines, and schools. You can watch a slideshow of **my work and Afghan friends in Afghanistan** here: <https://youtu.be/SfhxBUWAqPA> [1]

Here is a fun video that will give you a taste of **my work with Māori claimant groups** earlier too! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmM4QQaRpF4> [2]

Favourite part of job:

I really enjoy being able to get out and teach people how to use free easy mapping tools like Google Earth and MyMaps to help them share information about their work and to keep track of whatever project they're doing. Over the coming weeks I am working with a few schools to help them earn NCEA Level 1 credits, and I'll share that experience with others to help them get into it.

Least favourite part of job:

That would have to be timesheets, filing my receipts, and fixing jams in the photocopier and discovering new life growing in my favourite coffee cup after a week away.

What I am working on now:

In September I'll be travelling up to the far East Coast to work with schools there to start getting NCEA credits earned by the students that have been helping me out each time I've visited. In October I am going to visit Google HQ in San Francisco for a week!

A quick story about a job well done:

These videos were fun to make and combine thousands of photos into a timelapse

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of a “**day in the life**” of one of my earlier jobs: <https://youtu.be/02vBpzJ7Bu8> [3].

A (humorous) story about a job that went badly and what you learned:

In 2008 I was working for USAID teaching Iraqis how to use mapping software to track water pipes, electricity networks and city planning. We were at a city north-west of Baghdad called Baquaba, and after visiting the staff at the governance centre I was getting back up into a heavily armoured transport truck when I was hooked on the four tonne door by my body armour. Hilarious.

Once I managed to unhook and continue getting into the truck, a bad guy in a damaged and empty nearby building decided to shoot me in the back from a few hundred metres away. It was a great shot, right in the middle of my ceramic plate armour and smashed it.

It kind of hurt and was quite annoying getting shot. A few minutes later, the 4-storey building he was hiding in was hit by a missile dropped from a jet. I learnt you should not mess with the US Army! Here's a video of **my time in Iraq** showing a few funny things I saw: https://youtu.be/468mDQp8Q_8 [4].

Qualifications:

After I finished at Huntly College, I did a Certificate of Horticulture at Polytech, and then after a bit I went to the University of Waikato to study Geography, Environmental Science, and GIS mapping.

Interests outside work:

I love taking photos of things, here are some photos of **Jupiter's Moons, Mars, and Saturn**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=de2LjQ5F3HE&t=5s> [5].

I also have inherited some very old **guinea pigs**; you can see a few of their videos at <https://youtu.be/MzFX3UO87wE> [6].



[7]

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Duane Wilkins is a Geographic Information Advocate at Land Information New Zealand. Image: LINZ.

Source URL: <https://www.learnz.org.nz/location173/meet-duane-wilkins>

Links

[1] <https://youtu.be/SfhxBUWAqPA>

[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmM4QQaRpF4>

[3] <https://youtu.be/02vBpzJ7Bu8>

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[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=de2LjQ5F3HE&t=5s>

[6] <https://youtu.be/MzFX3UO87wE>

[7] https://www.learnz.org.nz/sites/learnz.org.nz/files/styles/picture_strip_240x180/public/b-lc173-duane-wilkins.jpg