

Air Tracker shows pollution's localized path

First-of-its-kind technology is supporting efforts to cut air and climate pollution for people and the planet.

The air we breathe is polluted by many different sources from cars and trucks to household energy use. Today, air pollution is the 2nd leading risk factor for death around the world. Pollution respects no boundaries and is moved around communities by shifting wind and weather patterns, making it hard to identify the sources. And when we don't know the source of pollution, we can't address it.

Air Tracker is changing that. EDF and partners created this advanced online tool to help users learn more about the air they're breathing and allow them to pinpoint where it's coming from. Air Tracker runs on real-time, trusted scientific models — combining air pollution and weather forecasting data — to help communities and local governments visualize potential sources of emissions, and get the information needed to take actions that reduce emissions and protect the public's health.

Air Tracker allows users to drop a pin on an interactive map and learn the likeliest source area of the air they're breathing.

The tool is currently available in 9 U.S. locations and 2 Brazil locations, with more on the way:

- Beaumont, TX
- Birmingham, AL
- Boston, MA
- The Bronx, NY
- Houston, TX
- Lake Charles, LA
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Vallejo, CA
- Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil



PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

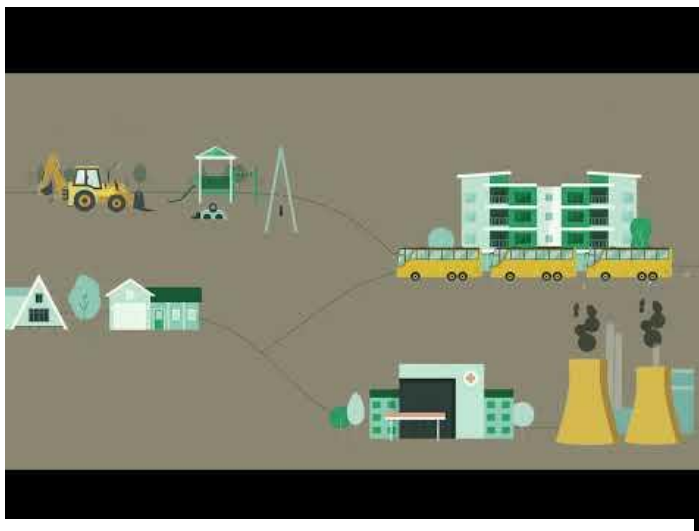
Air Tracker has proven to be a valuable asset to our environmental management — especially in emergency response and in the rapid identification of communities impacted by critical pollution episodes — strengthening our management and response capabilities.

Rafael Campos
Air Quality Manager,
State Environmental Institute
Rio de Janeiro

City Spotlight: Houston

In Houston, air pollution is highly unevenly distributed across the city. Heavy industries and polluting facilities sit adjacent to residential neighborhoods and schools. Many polluted communities and neighborhoods now use improved air quality monitoring to show the impact of industrial polluters, but without insight into the sources of pollution, accountability and action gets stalled.

Consider the Settegast neighborhood in northeast Houston where churches and schools are nestled near a local railyard as well as other industrial sources, such as a steel fabricator, a metal recycler and nearby truck yards. Residents of Settegast have long complained of poor air quality, but pinpointing the various sources had long been a challenge.



Click this screenshot to see our introduction to Air Tracker video on YouTube.

The regulatory air monitor in the area regularly records PM2.5 levels that are much higher than monitors in other parts of the city. The community wanted to know what sources might contribute to these elevated pollution levels. Air Tracker was used to look at specific days of elevated pollution and found different industrial sources impacting air quality at different times. The tool pointed to source areas originating in areas to the west and southwest of the monitor from nearby railyards and mapped industrial locations.

By pulling in data from regulatory monitors as well as low-cost sensors, communities can gain a better sense of the levels of pollution in their areas and sources of that pollution. With the ability to allow users to create time-stamped maps, communities can share specific time and location information with government officials.

Expansion to new cities across the globe is underway

Air Tracker is increasingly available internationally, starting in Brazil. In addition, EDF partners in China, in collaboration with researchers at the School of Environment at Tsinghua University and other partners, have developed a localized version of Air Tracker that is currently active in 14 cities across Hebei Province. Air Tracker's technology is helping these cities identify hot spots and enforce air pollution standards.

Air Tracker continues to expand to other cities around the world, helping communities and governments turn air quality data into actions that deliver clean air. Explore the Air Tracker tool and learn more about its development and the partners behind it by visiting edf.org/air-tracker.

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