

Sharing Routes using OS Maps Online

Many of us use digital mapping to devise walk routes. OS Maps and View Ranger seem to be the two most frequently used. Once you have gained familiarity with one or the other, strong loyalties can arise! You can read elsewhere about the pros and cons of each. This article is to help you in being able to share routes using OS Maps. It is also possible to share routes between an OS Maps user and a ViewRanger user. See accompanying article for guidance about sharing from ViewRanger.

Whilst we are restricted to walking alone (or in pairs at social distance or as household groups) it may be especially useful to share your favourite routes with friends and fellow Ramblers.

Once you have subscribed to OS Maps, you can use it on either a laptop (or desktop) computer or on a smartphone or tablet. The latter use the OS Map App (application). On a laptop computer you are working through the OS Maps website. The method of sharing differs between the two systems. We got stuck for some time until we realised this. Hopefully, this article will save you similar frustrations.

Another technical term to be aware of is GPX file. GPX is shorthand for GPS eXchange Format. It is a list of precise locations, in order, that make up a route. This route can then be placed on top of a map for printing or following on screen. It was originally developed for use on GPS devices. Most laptop computers do not have the software that allows you to open GPX files, they therefore need to be imported into a system such as OS Maps before they can be viewed as a route on a map.

Working on a laptop computer, with a larger screen, is much easier for plotting or editing routes. It also enables you to print off routes, or sections of maps, at either 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 scale. Those same routes will be visible to you on a smartphone in your Library of Routes through the OS Map App. You can also download a route to your phone so that it remains visible if you lose internet signal.

Sharing routes can be done either from a laptop computer or a smartphone. In both cases you are sharing GPX files. It is more easily done between smartphones (or other devices with the OS Map App). We shall now take you through each method, step by step.

Firstly, ensure the route you are sharing is saved as 'Public' rather than 'Private'. If it is saved as 'Private' follow these steps:

1. Click on the Route
2. Click Edit
3. Click Save
4. Click the Everyone option under 'Who can see my route?'
5. Click Save
6. You are now ready to follow the steps below

A1. Sharing a Route from a Smartphone

1. Open OS Maps
2. Click Menu then Routes
3. Click on the Route you wish to share
4. Scroll down and click Share
5. Click Email which will take you straight to your email service (this step may vary slightly according to the set-up of your Smartphone)
6. If your phone does not allow that you can click Export GPX and then click Email
7. Add the recipient's name, any covering message and Send the email

A2. Receiving a Route on a Smartphone

(Detail of instructions may vary according to model of phone, the same principles apply to all)

1. Read the email on your smartphone
2. Click on the attached GPX file
3. Click Import GPX (some phones may begin with Select option to View, click OS Maps; others say to Copy to OS Maps)
4. You will receive a message saying 'Success, Your route has been imported' (or you may receive a prompt saying press Save)
5. Click View to see
6. It remains then in your library of Routes, and can be viewed on any device

B1. Sharing a Route from a Laptop (or desktop)

1. Click on the Route you wish to share
2. Click Export GPX
3. The file appears at the bottom left of your screen as a Downloaded file
4. Compose an email, with recipient's name and any covering message
5. Attach the GPX file of the Route from your Download folder
6. Send the email

B2. Receiving a Route on a Laptop (or desktop)

1. Click on the GPX file you have received as an attachment to an email to Download (or Download by the usual method for your computer). The file will then appear in your Downloads folder.
2. Open OS Maps in another tab (or on a second screen if you have two)
3. Click Routes
4. Click Import GPX
5. Click Choose file
6. Select and Click on the file you Downloaded. Then click Upload (or Open and then Import Route)
7. The route then becomes integrated into your library of Routes

Hopefully you will now feel more confident in being able to share Routes with fellow Ramblers.

For more information about OS Maps online see [here](#). If you meet technical problems, please try their [FAQs](#); or contact OS Customer Services.

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