



# Benfield DataComm

Case Study





## Overview

### Accurate, detailed diagrams save time and add value

The DataComm division at Benfield Electric Supply - a distribution company that specializes in electrical, data communications, control and power systems, and elevator equipment - focuses on supplying data and telecommunication products. Benfield's clients choose them for the expertise and service they provide to their clients. Products are delivered alongside the guidance and information that companies need to properly implement them in the DataComm division, there is an on-staff RCDD to assist with system design alongside subject matter experts who are qualified to assist with product selection and application.

DataComm's team frequently needs to provide their clients with amended or alternate systems drawings (as their clients often ended up with incomplete or missing designs) before projects are

approved. The tool they'd been using to create these drawings required a great deal of work and time; DataComm President & RCDD Josh Brite needed a better way to get this work done using a solution that was precise and automated - but which didn't come with a significant learning curve and wouldn't break the budget.

Brite explored various options, from AutoCad to newer solutions: ultimately DataComm selected netTerrain for its usability, capabilities, Cloud-based implementation, and affordability. Implementation was easy and Benfield was able to start using netTerrain right away.

Benfield now has a user-friendly and fast way to create or expand upon drawings to get plans ready for approval by the contractors with whom they work.



## Before netTerrain

### Time-consuming work, no adequate solution

The DataComm division is often handed designs that have passed through many sets of hands - for example: though a distribution of data pathways and systems for a clients' building may have been amended to the original architecture plans at some point, the designs often needed to be built out further. In some cases, no designs exist and must be built entirely from scratch.

The DataComm division then proposes an amendment or alternative design so that their clients can have detailed drawings of how the products should be implemented in the contractor's space, such as rack and cabinet layouts.

This is important for getting projects approved and saves their clients significant amounts of money and time

by not having to hire expensive consultants or risk making costly mistakes during installation.

Before netTerrain, Benfield would create these drawings using an Adobe product. It was time-consuming, cumbersome, and inefficient.

Brite knew they needed to make the process easier but they weren't aware of other options that would be suitable.

# Goal

## Simplified work, information-rich diagrams

Benfield wanted to replace the cumbersome tool and process they were using with an easy and efficient way to convey the value of their services and the expected end results, and best express the full scope of their services, put it on paper, and ship it off for approval so that production could begin.

They needed:

- beautiful diagrams
- insights and details on equipment embedded into diagrams
- no learning curve
- ability to customize the software as needed
- ability to deploy and use the software from anywhere
- not to get locked in to a complicated licensing structure

Benfield needed a tool that would be portable, that could offer them flexible licensing options, and which would scale up or down as needed. They needed something without a significant learning curve that would get in the way of their work. Because every job Benfield takes on is different, they would require flexibility, such as the ability to customize different parts as needed.



# Challenge

## Lack of software options

When the team first set out to find a tool that would meet their needs, there simply wasn't anything suitable on the market. Brite said there was a significant gap between what was available on the market and what they needed.

One popular solution, for example, was simply too confusing to use. AutoCAD, which many in their industry use, required too much of a financial and time investment to make it worthwhile: it was too difficult, wouldn't gain widespread adoption, and was overkill for what they needed to do. After two years of researching tools, they had come up with nothing adequate.

## Solution

User-friendly, customizable and Cloud-based mapping software

Finally, the team found netTerrain. They found netTerrain easy and straightforward to use without a huge learning curve. Because every Benfield job is different, there are many various parts that they need to add in and netTerrain's robust catalog, easy do-it-yourself modeler, and fast turnaround on custom part orders made it a perfect fit. netTerrain can be hosted as a Cloud-only solution if desired, which meant that Benfield wouldn't have to worry about where netTerrain was hosted when they were on the go. Licensing was straightforward and scalable, which was exactly what the team needed.

netTerrain is flexible, which works for Benfield. The team can upload any number of elements to a project and, when they're done, start over without having to pay additional fees for licensing. Additionally, there's room for expansion. Brite is, for example, excited to dive into netTerrain's wire mapping abilities.

## Implementation

Cloud-installation makes implementation easy

The team selected netTerrain's Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) offering so that the software could be accessed from any location, without concern for what's hosted where. This fit perfectly for a mobile team like DataComm.

Because netTerrain is easy-to-use and intuitive, the team was able to start using the software right away. Implementation was simple: because every job for Benfield is different, they have to start from scratch with each project they build out. With netTerrain, it takes just seconds to start building out and detailing design drawings. When they need a custom device modeled, a service that's included in netTerrain's SaaS or on-premise maintenance package, the turnaround has been fast.





## Results

Beautiful diagrams in minutes, embedded with information clients need

The division's days of creating time-consuming drawings using a cumbersome tool are over: DataComm now creates beautiful and easy-to-understand diagrams in a few clicks using netTerrain. They can drag in a 2-rack unit, such as a horizontal wire manager, and drop it into the diagram in seconds. Custom devices can be modeled in sixty seconds (or the team at netTerrain will do it for them in 1 business day). Their clients have been impressed by the quality and level of detail in the diagrams Benfield now gives them.

Beyond just diagrams, the team frequently uses netTerrain's ability to tally rack units. The ability to attach information to objects in the diagrams is a big plus: they can label objects, put in the panduit or whichever part number it's filling, and the rack units which is helpful for getting projects approved and ensuring their clients' have the level of detail they need to make approval decisions.

**“Nobody in my business knows about netTerrain yet but they should. I'm critical, but we've actually been able to solve all of our headaches using netTerrain. Our clients are impressed: they say they've never seen diagrams like these before.”**

- Josh Brite, RCDD  
President at Benfield Datacomm



## **Learn More**

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