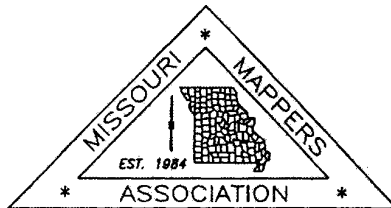


MMA NEWS

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ESRI UC 2000: ArcView's Transformation

By Bill Huber

As this year's ESRI User Conference comes to a close, two messages about the popular ArcView GIS software have emerged. The first is that ArcView will change dramatically. The second is that it will not change at all.

No, this is not some Zen koan: for a long time to come there will be two ArcViews, the new and the old. The new ArcView will have a different interface and different name but will provide the same functionality and has the same look to its output. Underneath, though, it is a completely new architecture.

"The majority of ArcView users," says one ESRI representative, "know their twenty clicks:" how to load their data, how to put a symbol in a legend, how to print, and so on. "It's a tool. For these users, once they get over the differences in GUI [graphical user interface], the new technology will be as good or better."

The new ArcView has been under development for five years, almost since ArcView 2.0 emerged as a powerful analytical tool for geographic

data in 1995. Back then ESRI architects foresaw the need to improve and isolate key parts of the code within independent "engines." There are now a grid engine, network engine, geocoding engine, print engine, and others.

These engines form the underlying code to ESRI's new "Arc" products: ArcMap, ArcCatalog, ArcToolbox. This fall, ArcView users will be given the choice to upgrade to this software suite. Word is that the upgrade will cost around \$600.

(ArcToolbox capabilities will be limited, to differentiate the new ArcView from the more expensive suite to be sold as ArcInfo 8.1. ArcMap and ArcCatalog, however, will be the same products sold with ArcInfo. Eventually, ESRI will also port many of its current ArcView extensions. Spatial Analyst has already been ported and the rest have been "prioritized" for porting.)

ESRI will still sell and support ArcView as it presently exists. Now in version 3.2a, it may soon see an inexpensive upgrade to version 3.3. Todd Stellhorn, lead developer for ArcView 3.x and its supplemental

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"extensions," claims this is a substantial upgrade. He cites support for AutoCAD 2000 files, improvements in some data and image readers, bug fixes, and a "couple of new Avenue requests." (Avenue is ArcView's scripting language. A new Avenue "request" can be thought of as an addition to a body of related subroutines built into this language.)

Many within ESRI are quick to point to the aging PC-ArcInfo product as an example of their software's longevity. That product is now several generations old but is still being used by many customers. ESRI has long ceased to improve PC-ArcInfo but they still sell it and support its users.

It appears that ArcView 3.x is headed in the same direction. ESRI recently released two new extensions—Image Analyst 1.1 and Model Builder—but has "no firm plans to further develop new extensions," according to Stellhorn.

ESRI representatives acknowl

(ArcView, con't.)

edge that many users are apprehensive about the changes. Off the record, they suggest user perception is related to change management. Some customers, they say, have been through major upgrades before; they have the resources to learn the new product and migrate their data and users to it without interrupting their work. Other customers simply "have no idea" what to do.

Third-party developers are in a similar position. They have had to learn the ArcView scripting language, "Avenue," which presently supports over 900 types of objects and over 2000 "requests"—executable procedures—for those objects. They can use this experience to develop products for an aging and shrinking base of ArcView 3.x users, or they can learn to program in the new system.

There are many ways to program in the new system, but none of them use Avenue. Programming will be COM-based, implying developers will have unprecedented capabilities and a choice of programming languages (Visual Basic and C++ will be the most popular). The scripting language will be VBA (Visual Basic for Applications).

Avenue's 900 objects have morphed into over 1200 classes in the new ArcView. ESRI programmers proudly point out this is "the largest COM-based application in the world." Thad Tilton of ESRI asserts, "If you can program this, you can program anything [in COM]." That may be small comfort to many developers standing at the bottom of this learning curve.

One ESRI programmer advises, "just get a book on programming VBA in Microsoft Office. Then you'll be all set." He acknowledges there are still the 1200 classes to learn, but at least it's a start while waiting for the new

software to be released.

For those users or developers trying to decide between the old and the new, there is another consideration. Despite its maturity, ArcView code still contains niggling bugs. The obvious ones are in the "geoprocessing" code. This is the code that compares and modifies map features by intersecting them, buffering them, and merging them. ESRI is working on fixing this, but for about two years to come, says a source within ESRI, "there will still be some ragged edges."

In the balance, though, the new ArcView has to be preferred. Its potential for further development, improvement, and customization is awesome. The improvements it has, even in its present "beta" test release, are substantial. The question for present users is not whether, but when, to upgrade. The old ArcView is dead. Long live the new ArcView.

Dr. Huber, principal in the GIS consulting firm Quantitative Decisions in Merion Station, Pennsylvania, has been among the most prolific contributors to ESRI's ArcView-L for the past four years. He is the founder of an independent ArcView discussion list, and is also on the faculty at Penn State University.

Don't Forget to Register for the Free GISolutions Seminar

*by Lavinia Ford
M.J. Harden Associates*

M.J. Harden Associates, Inc. will be presenting a **FREE** GISolutions Seminar before the conference on July 25, 2000 at the Holiday Inn Select in the Truman

Room. The seminar focuses on ESRI's new release of ArcInfo 8.0, data management, and tips for making your implementation easier to work with.

The one-day seminar schedule includes:

- Introductions and Overview
- Hardware, Software & Networking Requirements
- Navigating and Using ArcCatalog
- GeoDatabase Design and Development
- Implementating GIS with GeoDatabase Model
- Editing Features and Table in ArcMap

A complimentary continental breakfast and lunch will be served. Though the seminar is free, registering in advance is required. For more information, visit our website <http://www.mjharden.com> and click on the **GISolutions Seminars** icon.

Start Planning for GIS Day 2000

From South Central ArcInfo Users Group newsletter "Arc Files"

GIS users and vendors are invited to join the National Geographic Society, the Association of American Geographers (AAG), the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS), and ESRI in opening their doors for GIS Day 2000. GIS Day will be held Wednesday, November 15 during Geography Awareness Week.

Since 1987, the National Geographic Society has sponsored Geography Awareness Week to promote geographic literacy in schools, communities, and organizations, with a focus on the education of children. Geography Awareness Week will be held November 12-18, 2000.

MMA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
July 4	INDEPENDENCE DAY HOLIDAY	
July 25	GISolutions Seminars presented by M. J. Harden	Columbia, MO
July 26 - 28	MMA Annual Conference	Columbia, MO
Aug 9-11	ProMap Corporation Annual GIS Conference	Ames, IA
Aug (TBA)	GISolutions Seminars presented by M. J. Harden	Springdale, AR
Aug 19 - 23	URISA Conference	Orlando, FL (National Conference)
Sep 4	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	
Sep 20	St. Louis GIS Users Group Meeting at 1:00 PM	St. Louis County
Sep 28	GISolutions Seminars presented by M. J. Harden	Wichita, KS
Oct 1 - 3	MO Municipal League Conference	Springfield, MO (State Conference)
Oct 4	GISolutions Seminars presented by M. J. Harden	Springfield, MO
Oct 24	ArcFM for Water Seminar presented by Woolpert LLP	St. Louis, MO
Nov 19 - 21	MO Assoc. of Counties Conference	St. Louis, MO (State Conference)
Aug 1-3, 2001	MMA Annual Conference	
Aug 7-9, 2002	MMA Annual Conference	

GIS Day is a grassroots event that formalizes the practice of geographic information systems (GIS) users and vendors of opening their doors to schools, businesses, and the general public to showcase real-world applications of this important technology. The event is principally sponsored by the National Geographic Society, the Association of American Geographers, University Consortium for Geographic Information Science, and ESRI.

Last year more than 2,400 organizations hosted GIS Day events in more than 91 different countries. Through the combined efforts of GIS Day '99 participants, over 2.4 million children and adults were educated on GIS technology through geography. This year the goal of GIS Day is to educate 3 million children and adults on GIS technology through geography. Join us as we celebrate GIS Day 2000! For more information, visit <http://www.gisday.com>.

Missouri Mappers Association Quarterly Treasurer's Report June 23, 2000

Beginning Balance (March 17, 2000)	\$9,290.51
Revenue:	
Interest Earned	\$26.51
Ad in Newsletter	\$25.00
Membership	\$105.00
Annual Meeting	\$4390.00
Total Revenue	\$4546.51
Expenses:	
Annual Meeting	\$2187.62
Mileage	\$374.40
Miscellaneous**	\$184.00
Total Expenses	\$2746.20
Ending Balance (June 23, 2000)	\$11,090.82

No Activity in West Central Account - Balance \$180.00

** PO Box Rent; Ad in Assessor Program

This space is available for your ad in MMA News!

Business Card	3 issues – \$25.00
Less than 1/4 page	3 issues – \$50.00
1/4 page ad	3 issues – \$100.00
1/2 page ad	\$50.00 per issue
Full page ad	\$100.00 per issue



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Submissions to MMA News

Your business card or digital artwork can be published in the next three issues of the MMA News for only \$25.00! I also need articles about your county or company news. Please send your articles by September 15, 2000 for the October issue of MMA News. Please send your ads, articles, or corrections to:

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