

Have It Your Way with ArcMap Templates

by Monica Pratt, ArcUser Editor

In ArcMap, you can produce a series of maps with a minimum of duplicated effort, share data, and tailor the ArcMap work environment for specific tasks—all by using map templates. Map templates, ArcMap documents with an .mxt extension, store not only map layouts but also data layers and ArcMap interface customizations so that these items can be used over and over again. Introduced with ArcInfo 8, map templates are available in all versions of ArcMap in ArcGIS.

Creating a Standard Look

By automatically incorporating previously specified page orientation, title format, text fonts, and other map elements, templates increase productivity and standardize the appearance of maps generated by an organization. The eight map templates that ship with ArcMap are stored in <your drive>:\Program Files\ESRI\ArcInfo\bin\Templates and are available for use anytime you start a new map. You do not have to copy a project file in order to reuse a layout. Simply save a map you would like to use as a template. The sample templates and any other templates you create that are stored in the default directory appear in the New Map dialog box. Creating a subdirectory in the Templates folder will cause that subdirectory to appear as a tab choice on the New Map dialog box. However, map templates can be stored in and accessed from any directory on your computer or network.

When you start a new map, ArcMap reproduces the selected template in a new ArcMap document while keeping the template file intact. If no other template has been specified, ArcMap reads its default characteristics from the normal.mxt file. Although you can change the characteristics of a new map document, you cannot apply a different template to an existing map.

To create a map based on a template, start ArcMap. In the Startup dialog box, choose Create a New Map Using a Template and click on Start Using ArcMap. If you are already in an ArcMap session, choose File > New from the menu. In the New dialog box, normal.mxt will be highlighted. Select the desired template. ArcMap will load the template and display it in a Layout View.

Produce a Series of Maps

If you want to make a series of related maps that use the same dataset, you can add data layers to an ArcMap document with the desired look and feel and save it as a template. Starting with this template standardizes the appearance of all the maps and ensures that the same dataset is used for each map in the series. Other members of an organization can use both the data and the layout simply by copying this ArcMap template file.

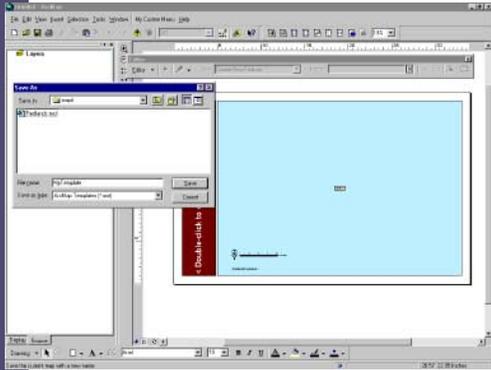
Customize the Working Environment

You can modify the interface and functionality of ArcMap without programming and make those customizations available every time you work in ArcMap or on demand. You can also share menu items and toolbars with others just as easily. Any customizations saved to a template will be available any time a map is created from that template. To make customizations available every time you start ArcMap, save these changes to normal.mxt, the default template ArcMap uses when no other template is specified. The following steps will create a new template that incorporates a customized toolbar. In ArcMap, simple toolbars can be created without programming by dragging and dropping interface items.

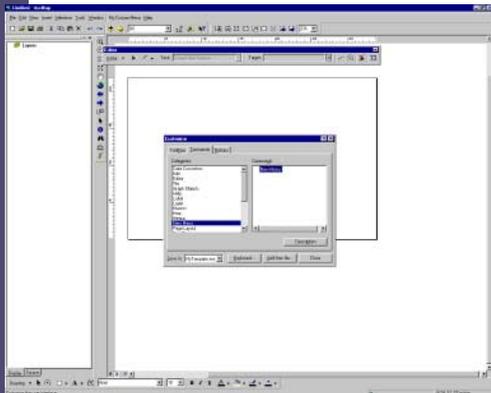
1. Start ArcMap. Choose File > New and add the elements needed for a new map.
 2. Choose Tools > Customize from the menu. In the Customize dialog box, click on the Toolbars tab. Click on the New button. In the New Toolbar dialog box, name the toolbar MyTools and save it as Untitled rather than normal.mxt. Click on OK.
 3. A new, blank toolbar called MyTools appears. Not only can you add buttons to this toolbar by dragging and dropping them but any item from a menu can be dragged to a toolbar. This can be especially helpful for menu choices you frequently use that are located one or more levels down in a menu.
 4. When all items have been added to MyTools toolbar, click on Close. Choose File > Save As and navigate to <your drive>:\Program Files\ESRI\ArcInfo\bin\Templates or wherever you are saving map template files. Name the template and choose ArcMap template (.mxt) in the drop-down box next to Save as Type.
- Adding a custom toolbar and saving the map as a template will give you the toolbar and any layout or data saved to the template every time you start a map using that template.

Styles Work with Templates

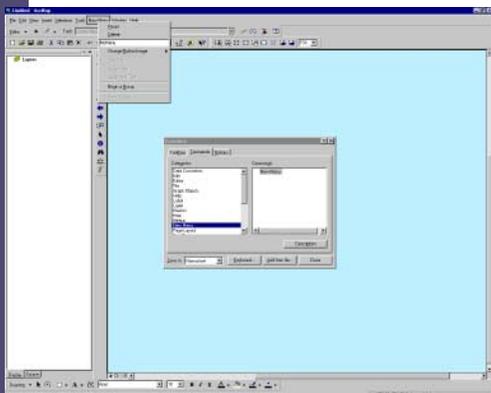
The efficiencies of templates can be further leveraged by using styles and templates together. Styles give you an easier way to organize and control colors, symbology, text, and map components. ArcMap ships with a robust selection of industry based styles that can be modified. Alternatively you can make entirely new styles and save them. See the ArcUser article, "Map Making with Styles," that appeared in the April-June 2000 issue for more information on using styles. This article is also available from the ArcUser Online Web site (www.esri.com/arcuser). For more information on using map templates, see Chapter 8, "Laying Out and Printing Maps," in the *Using ArcMap* manual. **AU**



Any templates stored in the default directory appear in the New Map dialog box. Create a subdirectory in the Templates folder to have a subdirectory appear as a tab choice on the New Map dialog box.



Choose Tools > Customize from the menu and click on the Toolbars tab. Begin the MyTools toolbar by clicking on the New button. Save MyTools as Untitled rather than normal.mxt.



Add buttons and menu choices to the new toolbar by dragging and dropping them. Frequently used menu choices located one or more levels down in a menu can be added to the toolbar.