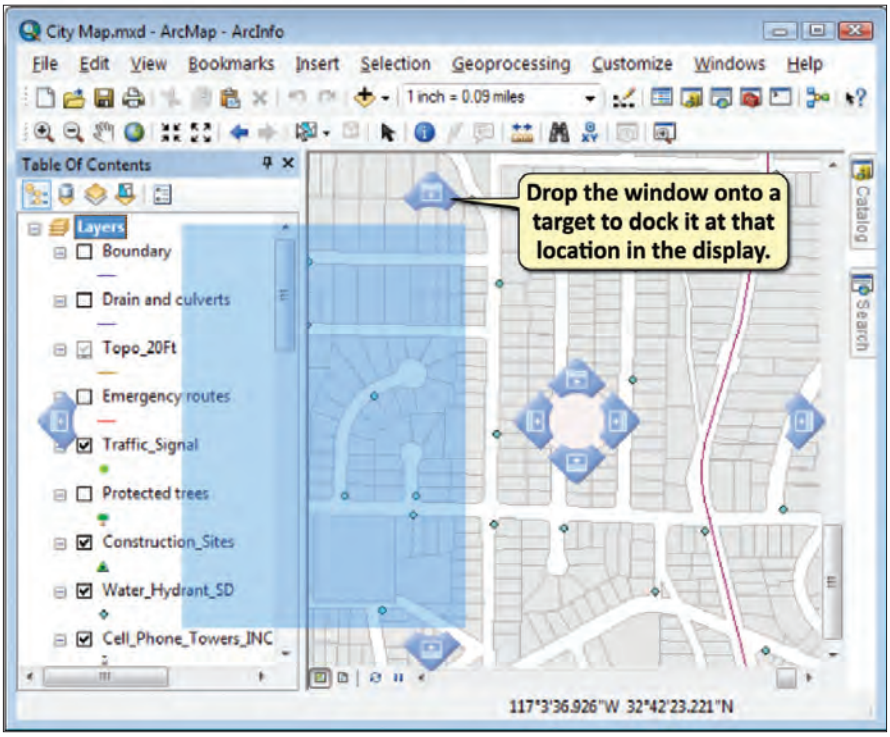
By Kristen Jordan, Jefferson County GIS Project Manager

Upgrade! Mapping and Sharing Is Easier with ESRI's Arc10



The docking guide shows users where a window can be placed.

Everyone appreciates a good map; how else will we be able to easily see our location information? The ability to create accurate, readable maps has become much more accessible recently with easy-to-use GIS mapping software. One company in particular, ESRI, has been providing the mapping community with GIS software for more than forty years. ESRI released its latest software upgrade called Arc10 in June 2010. The goal of this software release is to provide easier, more efficient ways to both make maps and share maps and data, two key components to making location information as accessible as possible to the people who need it. As with all major software releases, the look and feel of the program will be different, but there will be new functionalities and tools that will make everyday mapping and data sharing easier. Here are a few examples of what Arc10 will bring. For more specific information, please see http://help.arcgis.com/en/arcgisdesktop/10.0/help/.

ArcMap's appearance will change to show a few more rounded corners, less 90-degree angles and more graphics, making the appearance easy on the eyes. Inside ArcMap, optional windows such as the Table of Contents will now be dockable and pinable, meaning users can move around and stack windows while easily navigating between needed mapping functionalities. A docking guide will appear to help users place their windows.

Arc10 will also improve map interactivity by providing various selection types beyond the traditional rectangle such as a circle, polygon, lasso and line. This feature alone will speed up my mapping!

Map layers will be able to show data as an animated historical timeline. Features can now be time aware and a calendar tool will pop up for easy data entry for date fields, so it will be easy to create and view a historical progression of a city utility expansion.

Certain data layers can now include attachments, a functionality much like hyperlinks, but multiple documents and document types can be stored with a given feature. For example, a water meter could include attachments like an Excel spreadsheet of the billing history, a JPG image of repair work completed, and a PDF of

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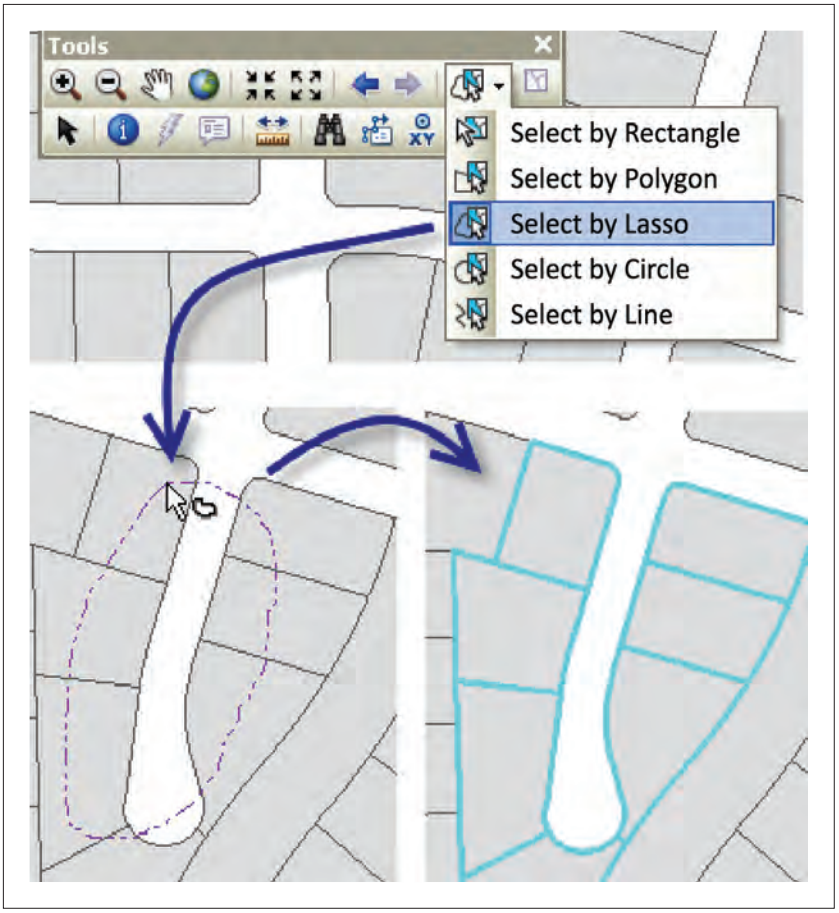
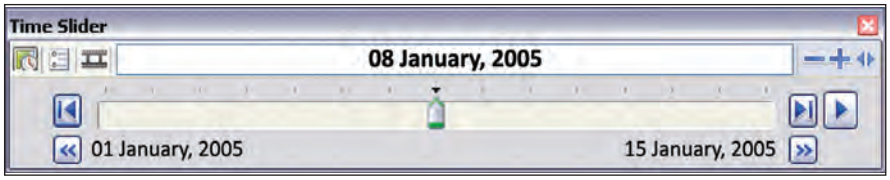
correspondence history. Attachments are the "easy button" of data management; all related documents are accessed by simply clicking on one single meter, water line or road segment.

For easy web mapping, ESRI is introducing a new online community called ArcGIS.com. Using an account setup much like Facebook or Twitter, ArcGIS.com allows users to create live, sharable maps using ArcGIS Server data for free; any data published as an online service can be combined with other data services and published as a map Web site. Yes, for free. Also on ArcGIS.com, users can share data through layer packages and map packages which carry all map data and symbology. Everything on ArcGIS.com can be either public or restricted to specific users or groups, but the goal of the online community is to make sharing maps easier. From a local government perspective, ArcGIS.com will be a breakthrough for mapping collaborations across Kansas since organizations will no longer have to worry about finding and supporting the technology required to

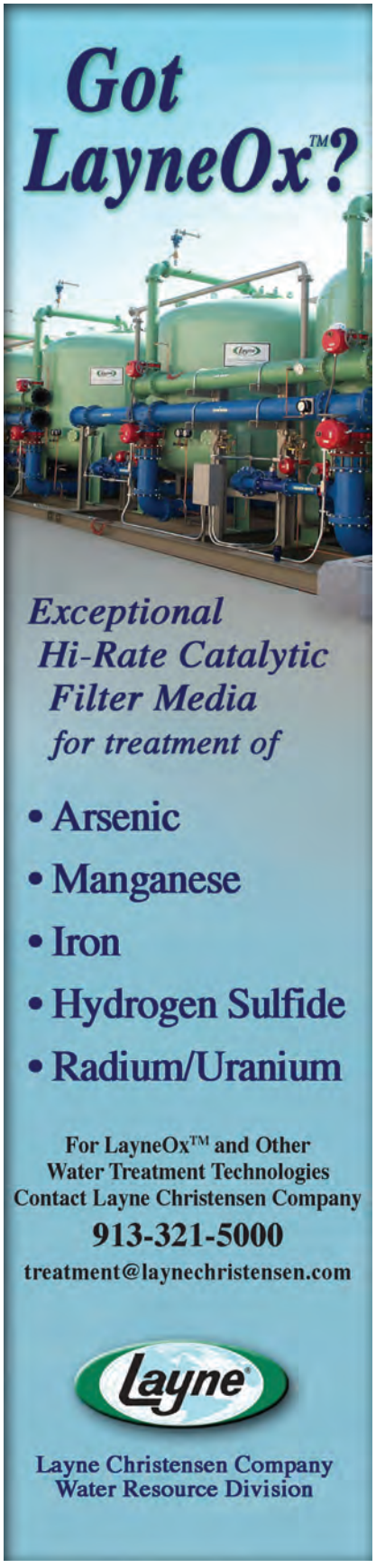


Selection types such as the lasso will make choosing features much easier.



The time slider bar will make viewing historical data easy.

publish mapping Web sites, but instead can rely on ESRI to provide that service at no cost to the user.

With each progressive GIS software release, mapping evolves into something more accessible to more users. While on the surface, Arc10 focuses primarily on improving desktop functionality and making map sharing easier, those small steps help organizations save money and improve the efficiency of their mapping projects. Through each mapping advance, the data that is used daily by decision makers and maintenance personnel becomes more accurate, more readable and easier to access. Although there will be some changes to get used to, Arc10 will allow mapping professionals to do their jobs quicker and more efficiently. Personally, I am very excited to try out Arc10, especially to see how ESRI's new tools can help me make location information easy to read and interpret, and the social-networking junkie in me can't wait to set up my own profile on ArcGIS.com!

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