

AIMS Coordinators Meeting – AIMS

July 14, 2016

ArcMap Release

Dan Steen from AIMS led off the meeting by surveying the group to ask what version of ArcMap everyone is currently working on. Most people said they are running either 10.2 or 10.3. He then asked what migration plans everyone had and whether anyone was considering moving to 10.4.1 or 10.5 right when they come out or if they plan to hold off. A couple of organizations indicated they were planning to skip 10.3 but would not move to 10.4.1 until all the bugs are fixed. A few people that attended the Esri UC said that it was stressed that all future dot releases of 10.x would be to correct bug fixes and all new development will be done in Pro. There was then some discussion on how ArcGIS Server 10.5 is supposed to be a major release.

Pro Usage

Dan then surveyed the group to ask what kind of ArcGIS Pro users they are. Only 1 person answered that they were using as they could but still preferred ArcMap, 10 people said they have tested it but don't use it regularly, and 3 people said they don't like change. Based on the number of people testing he then asked if there were any reasons why people haven't moved to production with it. Some people said they were waiting to hear about others moving first to learn from their experiences. Not enough time was cited as another reason for why people have not moved to it. Doug Hemsath from Shawnee mentioned that they work a lot with their stormwater network and Pro has not supported network datasets on versions 1.2 and earlier. WaterOne said the same thing. Shannon Porter from AIMS mentioned that one of his frustrations is that you can't just open a single scratch project to view a dataset without creating a full project workspace. A couple of people that attended the UC said they thought this was addressed and would be fixed at Pro 1.4.

Mike Nelson from OP said they were frustrated that they couldn't use existing database connections. A few people said that issue was corrected at 1.3. Shannon said he also doesn't like the absence of drag and drop functionality like you can with ArcMap to bring in a shapefile from a folder or file geodatabase. Doug said he did like the ability to record and replicate common tasks that can be shared with other users to ensure consistency across common workflows. A few individuals mentioned that hardware is another concern since Pro uses a lot of memory and outdated graphics cards can't keep up. Someone else mentioned the inability to open multiple projects at a single time. Dan reiterated that some shared training would be a good idea and more discussion in later meetings would help people understand Pro functionality. Steve Brown from OP mentioned that the online Esri training courses will now be free. This was confirmed that all non-instructor led fee based training classes would be offered for free come August.

Meg Shoffner from AIMS talked about all of the new features that are now supported in Pro 1.3. One of the main highlights is the Smart Mapping functionality you currently find in ArcGIS Online that makes symbolizing your data more efficient. She also talked about new Python support that makes updating Python scripts easier.

The focus of the conversation then shifted to licensing issues within Pro and how to handle named users. The vast majority of people are currently using the named users provided through ArcGIS Online.

Dan said most of the presentations he attended at the UC never addressed licensing or service credit consumption. This was a topic that clearly needs more discussion in order to ensure understanding across the board.

Plans to migrate to Pro

The next question asked when people planned to migrate to Pro. No one said they plan to move now but 6 people said they might plan to at the next version, 1.4. The main reason cited is because parcel editing and network datasets aren't currently supported. Seven other people said they have no plans to move to Pro.

Story Maps

Dan then asked what has been your experience with Story Maps. The answers were a little split between 7 people saying they have a little exposure to them and 5 people said they have 1-3 in production. One person said they have 4 or more and 1 said they don't have any. Most of the discussion on this topic centered on all of the new templates and how mature the product has become over the last couple of years. Most people in the GIS community are starting to employ them but knowledge among non-GIS'ers needs to grow. A few people talked about how this might be accomplished to help educate senior leadership across the various organizations present. Nearly everyone present mentioned that they have at least 1 in production but they were not getting a lot of external hits.

Portal for ArcGIS

After the break Dan asked a question about the web GIS model and Portal for ArcGIS. Most people said they understand the current model but there is still a lot of confusion around Portal. No one besides AIMS has installed portal. Dan said that Esri seemed to stress setting multiple instances of portal and that you need multiple servers.

Keith Shaw at AIMS asked if people would like to see AIMS set up a countywide portal and the consensus was yes. The main focus was that AIMS could host the portal and multiple users could post data to it. This could potentially help smaller entities that cannot financially support their own instance of ArcGIS Online. There was quite a bit of discussion on the very definition of Portal and how adoption has been slower than Esri had hoped. A few people expressed concern about how they would use Portal and how many servers it might take. However, there is still concern about how to set it up and license when dealing with multiple departments. It was ultimately decided that we'd need to speak with Esri to see how other county/regional entities are using it and creating a shared portal for their stakeholders and to see what that cost might be.

Other Discussion

Insights

The discussion then shifted to Esri Insights. Jason Hrabe from AIMS asked if others were using analysis tools like Tableau or SSRS (SQL Server Reporting Services). No one indicated that they were using Tableau besides AIMS. One or two people said they are using SSRS. The product should be released come August but costs are still unknown at this point. Someone mentioned that it might be free for people with an Enterprise License Agreement but Lenexa is the only city that has one.

Survey 123

Steve Brown brought up the Survey 123 application for mobile data collection. A few people indicated they had seen it but not really looked at it much. Shannon and Keith had mentioned that they had set up a few simple forms but there are quirks about how you set it up. One of them is that you can't have multiple maps in the same survey.

Wow Moments at UC

Dan then asked everyone what their big "wow" moment at the UC was this year. Travis Smith answered that besides Insights there were no other "new" products. Mostly that apps from last year have matured a lot and many new features have been added. Doug talked about ArcGIS and how the 3rd quarterly release each year will only be bug fixes going forward. That means new functionality will only be added 3 times a year. A few people talked about Pro and how it is the most stable release to date. Lots of new functionality has been added, even things like Smart Mapping. Mike said even more people are using AGO but now people are shifting their thinking to Portal.