Sometimes small improvements and useful tips pay off big in terms of time and convenience, especially when using geospatial software in a production mode. Small icons, crowded onto toolbars, can confuse new users and infuriate long-time users. Then, some software products require the user to hold down multiple keyboard keys and/or a combination of mouse buttons to navigate the interface. This is the case with the Terrascan MDL (MicroStation Development Library) application that runs within MicroStation. While Terrascan MDL with MicroStation is the “industry standard” for lidar editing, here is a tip to update Terrascan MDL user interface.

When loading the Terrascan MDL Application into MicroStation you have a small docked window with 16 icons to choose tools from. The standard method requires a combination of (1) continuous firm pressure (push down/click) with the left mouse button on each icon, to (2) activate all the sub tools that can be opened. Then, (3) you have to move your cursor down the row of tools, making sure not to let up with the left mouse hold to select the tool you want to use, as in the “standard” sequence, Figures 1-4. Throughout this process, a user may need to search through several options to find the desired tool.

This Terrasolid “active workflow ribbon” library allows the Terrasolid toolbar to be viewed in the typical MicroStation/CAD ribbon format rather than the “standard” Terrascan mode. The new active workflow ribbon is accessed by clicking on the “standard” Terrascan ribbon button located in the typical MicroStation/CAD ribbon sequence, Figures 5-8. Each tool is clearly described and the user can see the tools across the ribbon as in the ribbon sequence, Figures 5-8.

Tired of looking at tiny icons in Terrascan? Here’s a solution...

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Figure 1: Step 1—Standard Terrascan interface – no ribbon.
Figure 2: Step 2—Standard Terrascan interface – mouse-click to open panel of icons.
Figure 3: Step 3—Standard Terrascan interface – tool panel opens after additional mouse-click.
Figure 4: Step 4—Standard Terrascan interface – after dragging the mouse through the interface, the selected tool activates.
icon symbol ready for you to click and open the tool. This streamlining results in fewer click and drags, and eliminates searching through multiple levels of interface. The active workflow ribbon library does not replace the “standard” interface, so if you still prefer the standard interface, both options are available on-screen.

For additional installation instructions, Geocue has a support document at: https://support.geocue.com/terrasolid-design-library/.

And it is that easy to update the Terrascan interface!

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