

Using GIS to Hunt for Easter Eggs – Part 2¹

While writing GIS software is a big business and no laughing (or trivial) matter, ever since the early days of computer software programs, the authors have displayed their sense of humor, and creativity, by placing little “hidden features or Easter eggs” in their coding. Sometimes these hidden features would display the coders names when a special key sequence or click-pattern was detected. Other times, hidden features, likened to Easter eggs, would be revealed with key combinations. In this month’s column, I highlight two GIS Tips & Tricks that are hard-to-find and/or hard-to-remember.

HARD-TO-FIND TIP #1—YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE WAY YOUR MOUSE WHEEL WORKS

In ArcGIS-Desktop the default mouse wheel direction is to Zoom-OUT when rolling the mouse wheel forward, but in ArcGIS-Pro, the default is just the opposite; rotating the mouse wheel forward Zooms IN. Global Mapper’s default works like ArcGIS Pro. This can get very confusing and frustrating when switching between GIS programs, but there are options, albeit hidden, i.e., hard-to-find, in different menus.

FOR ARCGIS DESKTOP (10.X)

Use the Customize | ArcMap Options... from the Main Toolbar (Figure 1) and select the General Tab from the ArcMap Options dialog (Figure 2). Toward the bottom of the dialog are the options for the Mouse Wheel and Continuous Zoom/Pan graphic. Use the radio buttons to customize to your preferences.

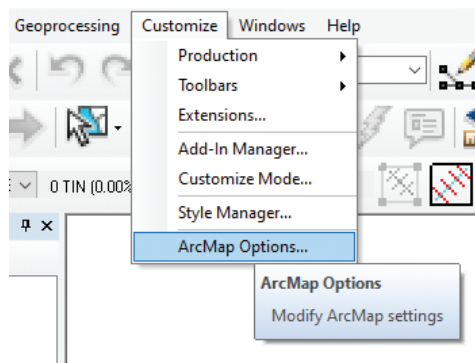


Figure 1. The Customize | ArcMap Options window in ArcGIS Desktop.

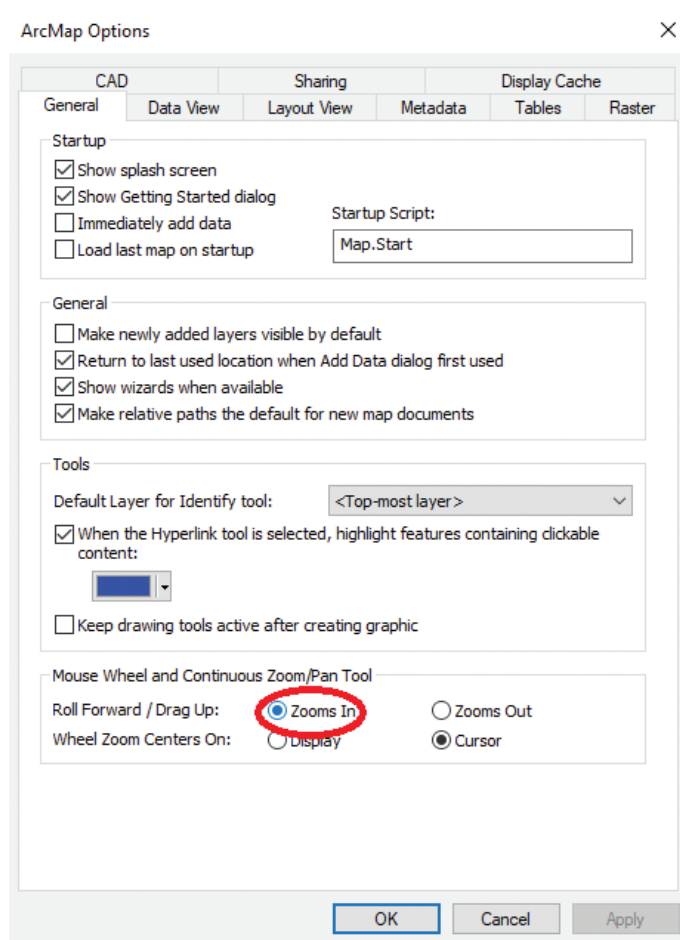


Figure 2. Change the behavior of the mouse wheel using the radio buttons

EXTRA HINT FOR ARCGIS DESKTOP

On this same dialog box, if you are planning on sharing your map document with others in your organization, it might be a good idea to check the:

“Make relative paths the default for new map documents” in the General portion of the dialog box.

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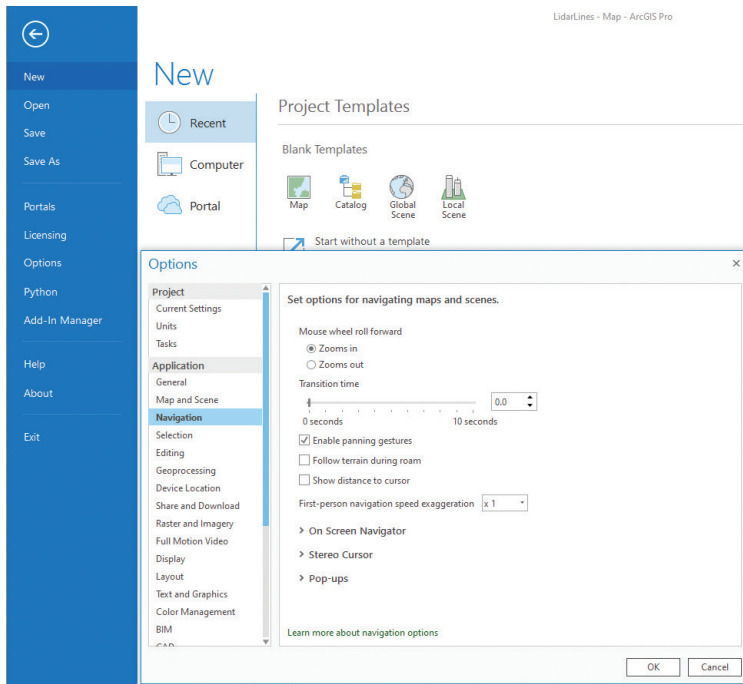


Figure 3. Use the Options | Navigation menu in ArcGIS Pro to modify the mouse wheel behavior.

FOR ARCGIS PRO (2.x)

Use the Project | Options and go to the Navigation Tab (Figure 3). On the top dialog, use the radio button to select your preference for the mouse wheel behavior.

IN GLOBAL MAPPER

The default is to Zoom-IN when rotating the mouse wheel forward. To change the behavior, use the Tools | Configuration Menu (Figure 4) and select the General tab. Midway on the General Tab is a checkbox to alter the mouse wheel direction (Figure 5).

BONUS MOUSE WHEEL TIP

While editing vector files, holding the <CTRL> key while “wheeling” may provide finer control over the zoom increment (thanks to Todd Waldorf of Dewberry for this one.)

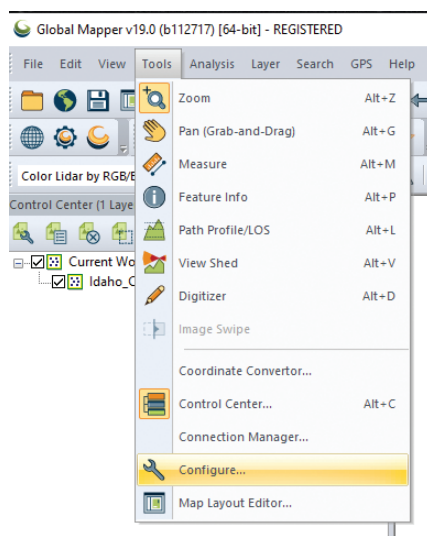


Figure 4. The Global Mapper Tools | Configuration options from the main menu bar.

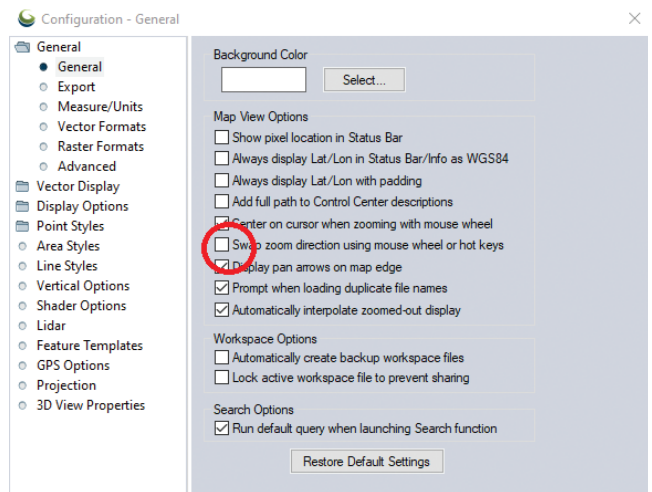


Figure 5. The “Swap zoom direction using mouse wheel or hot keys” checkbox in Global Mapper.

HARD-TO-REMEMBER TIP #2—ACCIDENTALLY CLOSING THE TABLE OF CONTENTS WINDOW IN ARCGIS DESKTOP

This is one of those newbie things that I allow my students to ask me 5 times before I start deducting points from their grade. And every semester, I have at least 20% of the class repeatedly ask... What happened to my Table of Contents? While the solution is actually not technically hidden, it is easy to forget.

IN ARCGIS-DESKTOP

To recover a closed Table of Contents, use the Windows | Table of Contents from the main menu (Figure 6).

You can also open the Arc

Catalog window and a Search window from this dropdown.

And that is all there is to a few simple, sometimes hard to find, GIS tricks.

Easter eggs and other hard-to-find tricks can be found in all software packages. Please feel free to share yours with us. Send your questions, comments, and tips to GISTT@ASPRS.org.

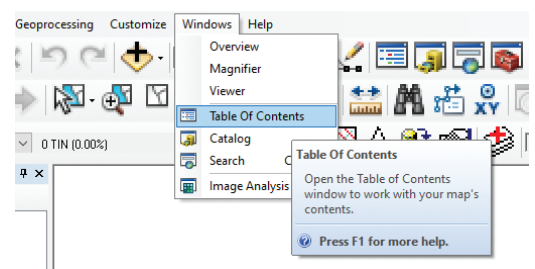


Figure 6. Opening the Table of Contents Window from the Main Menu bar.

Al Karlin, Ph.D., CMS-L, GISP is with Dewberry's Geospatial and Technology Services group in Tampa, FL. As a senior geospatial scientist, Al works with all aspects of Lidar, remote sensing, photogrammetry, and GIS-related projects.