6. Get Help Faster

This topic is dedicated to making sure you find the answers you need to your GIS-related questions as quickly as possible. UWF provides many information resources; knowing where they are and when to utilize them is key to a successful experience with GIS at UWF. We would recommend keeping this page readily accessible.

Cooler Heads Prevail - Steps on Effective Troubleshooting in GIS

We expect students to become familiar with many new and complex software tools in a short amount of time. Tools such as Canvas, ArgoApps, ArcGIS Pro, ERDAS IMAGINE, Photoshop, etc. can feel overwhelming when you first encounter them. These tools are built to handle complex tasks that often require complex steps to complete. It can be frustrating when you follow each step appropriately and the software still behaves erratically. When you experience issues with these tools (really any software or application), take a moment to calm down before taking steps necessary to solve the problem. Remember that there are many people here to support you during those frustrating times. *Know that there is a solution and you will find it soon enough.*

Make sure to have as much information in your possession as to what the issue actually is before reaching out for help. This entire process works most efficiently if you are armed with as much relevant information as possible. The following shows the order in which you can come to a solution to your query; most of the time, you will find that completing the first two steps will lead you to success.

- **Review steps you made that lead to the error / issue**
  - This is not only good for you to get a better understanding of what occurred, but if you do need to reach out to others, you can provide them with step-by-step instructions on how to recreate the issue.

- **Review provided course documentation**
  - As we navigate through many complex GIS concepts and projects, our brains may poorly catalog the sometimes dense visual information we are provided, especially if we have other concerns in our lives. Acknowledge this lack of focus, refocus yourself, start at the beginning of the section and walk through each step slowly. Verify each step is completed properly before moving on to the next. If this does not work, refer to textbooks or other online references to help guide you.
  - Also make sure to review any announcements or discussion topics from the course instructor, TA, or fellow students. A solution or work around to the problem may have already been found.

- **Refer to software help documentation / online searching**
  - ArcGIS has a massive help section available to you, regardless of the version of the application you are using. They also have a very useful forum community called GeoNet; once accepted you will be able to find answers to questions, post questions to the developers themselves, etc.
  - Performing a well-constructed Google query will take you to any number of GIS forums from across the world; StackExchange's GIS forum is a common endpoint for many GIS users (even professionals).

Having issues with ArcGIS Pro crashing on Argo Apps? Here are a few tips to try:

- **Hardware** – A PC or laptop is required to work on GIS projects/assignments from Argo Apps. If you are working from a tablet, chrome book, surface pro, or similar, then this is likely the source of any issues.
- **Internet connection** - A wired, cable or faster internet connection is optimal. Wireless connection is possible but more likely to encounter slow processing and potential crashes. Often, a poor or intermittent internet connection is the source of the issue.
- **Network drives** - Ensure your GIS project file and data are stored on the S drive. While it's possible to work from your Google drive or H drive, it will have slower processing times and issues. The S drive is the "local" drive on the virtual machines used in Argo Apps, meaning the software will work optimally when data is being processed on that drive.
- **Features and layers** - Only have layers needed checked/turned on in the map project when running analysis and creating map layouts. Additional layers will slow down processing.
- If you are given an error code, follow the link to the error code for troubleshooting tips via **ArcGIS Pro Help**.
- If you're given the **ESRI 99999 error code**, you're doomed. Just kidding! The tips for this error are pretty useless. There are a few things you can try mentioned in these **Troubleshooting Error 999999 in ArcMap** and **ArcGIS and Death, Taxes and the Esri ArcGIS 999999 Error: How to Fix It** articles.
- If there is still trouble resolving the issue, then contact the instructor of the course using the guidelines in the next section.

Troubleshooting Argo Apps

If you are having issues with Argo Apps performance or crashing it can be helpful to review the following steps to see if they can resolve the issues.

- **Browser Client vs Citrix Workspace** – If you are having issues with either the Argo Apps Browser Client or Citrix Workspace App, it may be useful to see if the problem persists on the alternate form of Argo Apps access.
- **Reinstalling the Citrix Workspace App** – Sometimes uninstalling Citrix Workspace App then installing the latest version can resolve some issues on Argo Apps.
- **Accessing programs through the start menu** – Sometimes the desktop shortcuts on the Argo Apps virtual machines can cause performance issues. To avoid this, make sure to access the program from the Windows start menu.

Where to Get Help

Discussion Boards

When reaching out to your fellow classmates, you should have gone through the first couple steps provided above; this means that you are prepared to provide a coherent query for others to explore in order to collectively come to a solution to the issue you have presented. The discussion board should be your first stop when seeking help about a lab question.

- A topic / thread title that clearly defines the issue in 5 - 10 words
  - Example: "Section 1, Step 6: Cannot complete Buffer Analysis"
- A coherent representation of the issue, along with screenshots
- Provide step-by-step instructions on how to recreate the issue. Also, provide as many relevant screenshots as necessary (see video below for how to take a screenshot and edit it for use within the Discussion Boards).

Contact your GIS Instructor

When you are ready to reach out to your instructor(s), just as in the Discussion Boards, present your issue with only the relevant information, steps, and screenshots.

- Subject line should be short and to the point. Include your course section.
  - Example: "GIS4043L online - Lab 4 - Sect 1 Step 6: Buffer Analysis Error"
- If it is time-sensitive, make sure to put [IMPORTANT] or [URGENT] in the subject line
  - Example: "[URGENT] GIS4043L - Family Emergency"
- Attach or link to the lab assignment document
- Within the body, provide step-by-step instructions on how to recreate the issue, including relevant screenshots (refer to video above on how to take / edit screenshots).
- Detail which layer files were on and what you were doing when the issue occurred
- Provide links to methods you have tried to solve the issue via online research (Google, GeoNet, etc.)

Contact UWF ITS Help Desk

Building 79, Phone 850.474.2075, Email   helpdesk@uwf.edu

If the issue you are experiencing is not methodological in nature, it may be a hardware or software fault that is outside of your capabilities to mend. This is when you should contact the UWF ITS HelpDesk. Here are some common issues you may encounter that would require help from ITS and not your GIS Instructor:

- Logging into ArgoApps, Canvas, or Confluence
- Network connectivity issues, including ArgoAir
- Your UWF Student Gmail account access
- Microsoft Office 365 software glitches and random shutdowns
- Google Drive

When contacting the UWF ITS HelpDesk, you will need to be able to succinctly describe the issue you are experiencing; again, this is why the first two tips on troubleshooting are so vital - focus on these will make the rest of the steps so much more rewarding in the case you must use them. Besides a strong grasp on your experience of the issue, have the following available when contacting ITS:

- Your UWF user name
- Contact information
- Previously provided ticket number (if you are returning)

Details to report to IT that will be helpful to resolve the issue or experience include:

- Date and time the issue occurred
- Error message and any associated error code - this can be a screenshot
- Computer type (laptop or PC) - Again, if you're using any other type of device, you can expect issues and there is not much we can do to help.
- Operating system (Windows or Mac)
- Internet connection type and speed - wired or wireless, run a speed test and note the values

Be prepared that the IT staff may need access to your local machine through remote methods; make sure all unnecessary windows and applications (including messaging apps such as Google Hangouts) are closed down if you do not wish them to be viewed.

Pages on this Topic

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