

## ArcGIS 9.4 comes with many improvements

—Melinda Peacock

If you're an ArcGIS user, you will find the newest version—ArcGIS 9.4—greatly improved. Publishing maps to the server and sharing is likely to be a more productive experience due to improved quality and performance.

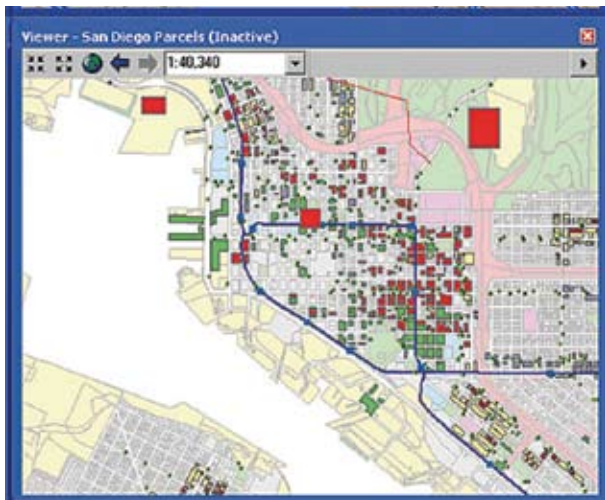
As a GIS cartographer who has been using ArcGIS Desktop suite (ArcInfo, ArcEditor, and ArcView) at work, I'm particularly pleased to see that the refresh rate in v.4 is much faster, making it possible to move or pan the map and then view it within seconds, instead of having to "move and wait."

Another cool improvement is that one can open an integrated Arc catalog window inside ArcMap, add a feature or symbol, and then close with a fast re-draw rate. I also like the version 9's dynamic table of contents which changes with the map's scale, and its new Query layers which will enable users to quickly access data—including spatial data—stored in relational databases via standard SQL and Oracle Spatial.

Attribute tables (the attributes of a river may be line thickness, line length, color and font) will be displayed in a dockable window that auto hides. With ArcGIS 9.4 it will be possible to display multiple attribute tables at the same time, and side by side if one so chooses, then hide them when they are not needed.

A new Search tool in ArcMap will let you locate maps, data, and tools quickly, and once you've added the information to your map, you can make use of a new Report tool to create a report from the data, save it on your desktop, and print it.

Search & Rescue executes faster thanks to enhanced Location/Allocation modeling of possible locations for the



From Version 8.1 onwards, ESRI has used the term ArcGIS to cover its GIS products, including ArcInfo and ArcView. The ArcGIS Desktop includes a suite of integrated applications: ArcMap, ArcCatalog, and Arc Toolbox. Between them, the three applications cover mapping, data management, geographic analysis, data editing, and geoprocessing.

search. The geoprocessing framework in ArcGIS 9.4 now makes it possible to run searches in the background, while you continue to work on other projects in ArcMap.

A new layers tab has been added which acts like a "smart legend." With this tab, one can show the symbology in the legend to the features within the current visible map—i.e., as one pans, the symbology changes with the features viewed on the map. The layers tab can turn on or turn off layers, select imagery, and identify selectable layers in the table of contents.

If you want to avoid browsing through all the possible symbols that are available, use the new search field in the symbols menu to change symbols dynamically. Time laps or temporal maps have been enabled to visualize changes to an area such as forest or burned out land. When a new base map layer is created, you will be able to pan and scroll over the map with a continuous refresh rate—an excellent improvement which will allow you to show your work to clients in a seamless focused view.

These are just a few of the many improvements to ArcGIS 9.4 noted in the plenary session of this year's ESRI User Conference in San Diego. The future is coming ... are you ready?