

Copying GIS Data Layers from CDs or Tufts Network Drives and Making them Writable

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Sometimes you need to edit existing GIS data (for example: add an attribute field, define a projection, or add a new building footprint to an existing building polygon layer). If you are using data from the Tufts network drives (e.g., the M or S drives) or if you are using data from an archive, the data sets are READ-ONLY and you can't change them. **To make edits you need your own copy of the data set that is writable.**

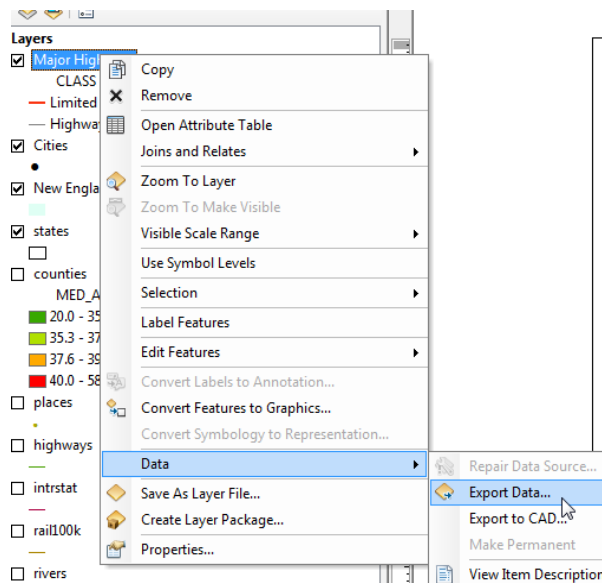
There are two general approaches to creating your own copy of a data set:

- Exporting from an open data layer in ArcMap – this is the recommended approach, since there is no problem with READ-ONLY data layers
- Copying and pasting a data set using ArcCatalog.

Creating a copy by exporting in ArcMap

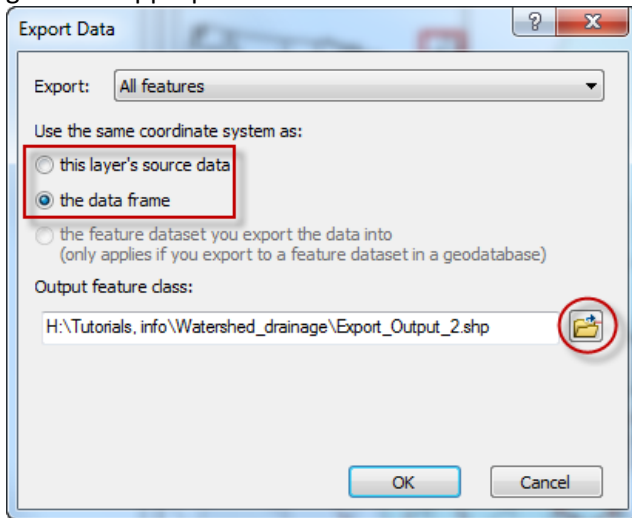
This is the easiest option, especially if you already have a data layer open in ArcMap and on the screen.

1. Simply **right-click** on the data layer in the *Table of Contents* and choose **Data → Export Data**. This is like the “save as” of data!



With this option, you can also specify to put the exported data into its existing coordinate system or into the coordinate system used by the data frame – the latter is useful for getting all your data layers into one coordinate system (you set your data frame to the target coordinate system, then export all the data layers into it)!

2. When the Export Data menu comes up, navigate to the location where you want the copy of the data set and give it an appropriate name in that location.



Note that using this Data Export method, you can also create a smaller sub-set file of a larger file. Select the features you want to export prior to the export process. Then when you export, it will export only the selected features.

For more information, see the Tufts GIS Tip Sheets for:

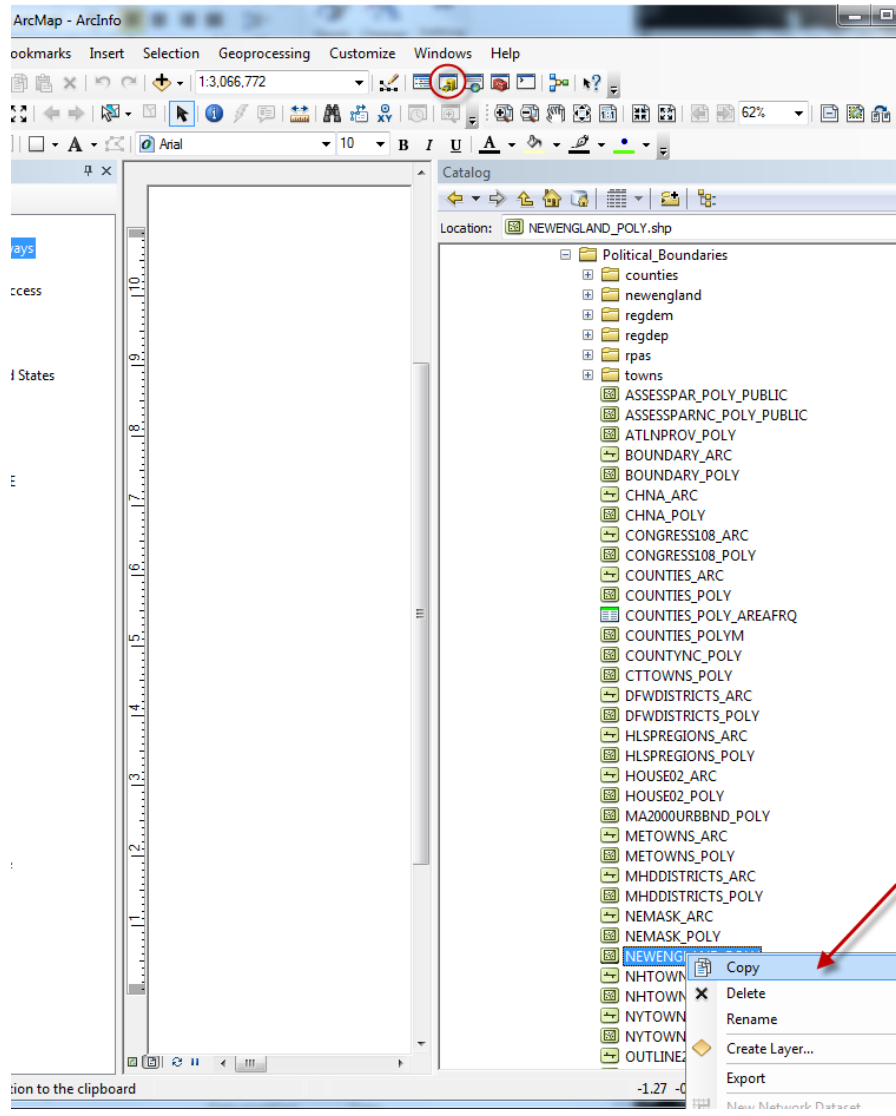
- [Creating a Smaller Data Set From a Larger Data Set – Vector Data](#)
- [Creating a Smaller data Set From a Larger One – Raster Data](#)

Copying and Pasting Data using the Catalog Window in ArcMap

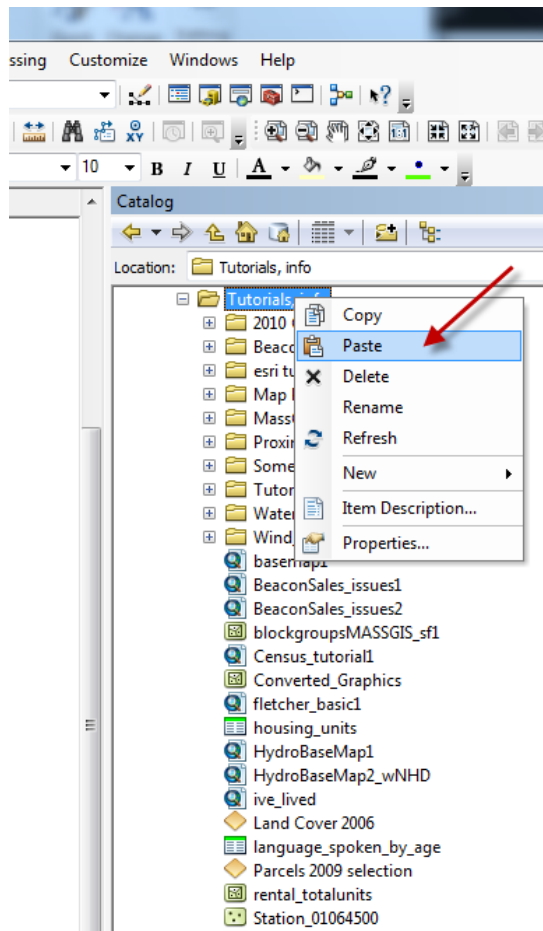
It is now possible to use the ArcCatalog window inside ArcMap to copy data sets. This process is simple because it does not require you to close ArcMap.

Keep in mind that if you use the ArcCatalog application outside of ArcMap, you must make sure to close ArcMap before copying data.

1. In the **Catalog** window in ArcMap, navigate to the data layer you want to copy, right-click, and choose **copy**.



2. Next, navigate to the folder on your H: drive where you wish to move the data. Right-click and select **paste**.



You now have the data on your own personal drive.

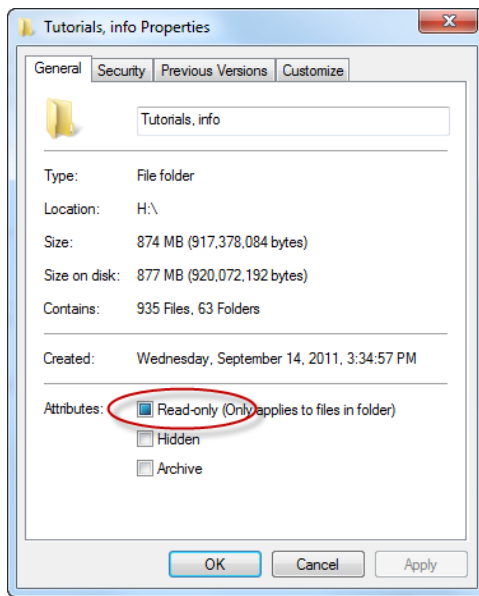
BUT: This data is pasted as and will remain READ-ONLY and you still cannot edit it.

Making copied data writable

You must follow these steps to ensure that your newly copied data is writable.

1. Use the Catalog window in ArcMap to navigate to the new data folder on your H: drive that holds the copied data. NOTE: This can also be done in the ArcCatalog application, however to do so ArcMap must be **closed**.
2. Right-click on the folder containing the copied data and choose **Properties**.

3. Under the General tab, **uncheck *Read-only***:



4. Press **OK**, and when offered a choice, make sure the action applies to all files or subfolders.
5. You may now edit your newly copied data as needed.

For more tips and tutorials, please visit our [website](#)