

COURSE IN FOCUS: Mastering ArcGIS

The Mastering ArcGIS on-line course is a comprehensive online training programme covering all the software's major functions as well as the more complex data analysis functions. It is designed to follow on from the GIS247 Beginner and Intermediate Guide to ArcGIS courses, but can be suitable for new users as well as experienced, as long as they have basic operating system skills. The course provides an ideal learning pace to engage the user, further building knowledge and understanding, and delivers an extensive overview of the software's capabilities. This article outlines the experience of Louise Shakeshaft, Waterway Administrator from the Canal and River Trust, who has just completed the Mastering ArcGIS course.



The Mastering ArcGIS course focuses on all the key functions of the ArcGIS software and also covers in detail the further advanced spatial and attribute analysis functions. Some of the course topics include; how to add, display, create, edit, query, manipulate and analyse spatial and attribute data to produce layouts and layout templates. Louise Shakeshaft from the Canal and River Trust has recently followed the Mastering ArcGIS course; this is her experience of GIS247s' e-learning:



“I joined the Canal & River Trust as a South East Waterway Administrator in the summer of 2009. Studying GIS for a third year module as part of my Geography degree is where my interest in GIS started. My line manager and the GIS team at work have always known that I am interested in a GIS career and have always supported my development in the area. I have regular training sessions with the GIS team, make maps which benefit the South East Waterway to practice and improve my skills, and I attended the Esri conference in London with the GIS team last year.”

“In September I decided to return to studying and am currently reading for a masters in GIS, part time. I was so excited when my colleague, Zoe Briggs, then won the GIS247 AGI conference competition to win free GIS training and she offered me the prize! I jumped at the opportunity to undertake the GIS247 Mastering ArcGIS course.”

“The GIS247 training has consolidated skills I already have and developed my practical skills further. The two courses I am doing complement each other – GIS247 is developing my practical skills and through the masters, I have learnt the theory and literature behind GIS, for example: the history of GIS; Spatial Data Infrastructure; Standards and regulations in particular metadata standards.”

“The GIS247 course allows me to go into greater detail than would be available from a one-off hosted training session. The course gives a clear, step by step guide to each tool learnt, covering all aspects about each. There are no time restrictions like there would be on a 'face-to-face' training day, and so the videos last as long as they need to cover all tools in necessary detail. By doing the course online by myself it means that I can go at my own pace, and go back over anything I struggle with. The ability to repeat presentations is really helpful when completing the assessments too, when I get stuck on a specific topic I can refer back

This article has been put together in collaboration with Louise Shakeshaft, Waterway Administrator at the Canal and River Trust.

to the in-vision videos – the contents on the video makes it easy to go to the exact topic that I am stuck on and refer back to.”

“As all the GIS247 courses are available on-line I can get access whenever and from any location. So I can easily fit the training around work and other commitments - I can watch the videos from any computer and I can complete the assessments on my home laptop and work computer as they both have ArcGIS 10.1 installed.”

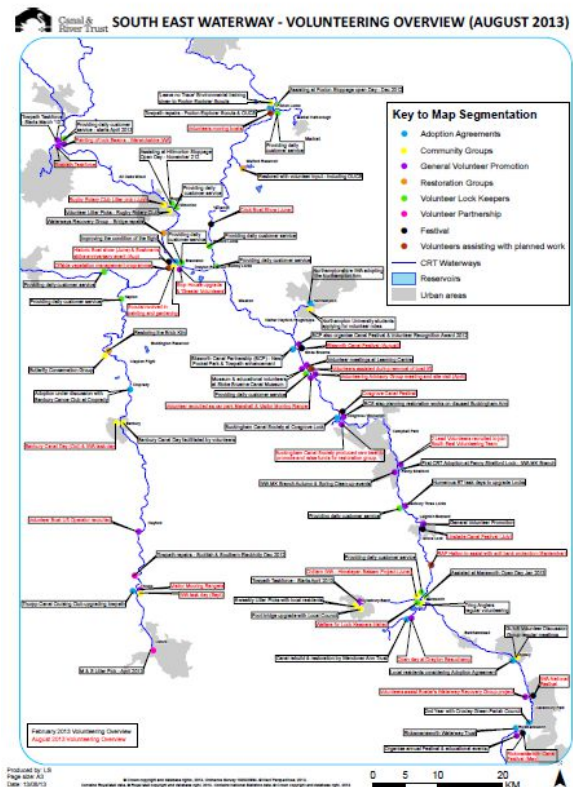
“To keep me on track I aim to try and complete a module a week - I usually make sure I have enough time to watch the video in one go without being interrupted. I then complete the assessment, referring back to the video if need be. I do the course at work at my desk, balancing it with my day job - the course flexibility means I can pick it up and put it down around other work and as and when phone calls come in etc. If I have a quiet day I may watch a training video, or complete an assessment. If not, I will work on the course in lunch breaks. I have watched some of the videos at home, but all the assessments I have done at work.”

“It has been great to implement GIS skills that I have learnt from doing the GIS247 training in my work. I have used the data driven pages tool to produce a map for each tree within the South East Waterway that is a ‘high priority’ – high priority trees are determined by a surveyor as needing attention.

I have also created a map illustrating all the different volunteer activities, at different places that take place in the South East. This involved importing data from a csv file, creating permanent layers, changing layer display and using the editor tool bar.”

“The exercises at the end of each section have definitely helped me. I really enjoy completing the practicals and like how clear the instructions are, with a step by step guide provided to completing each task.”

“I have thoroughly enjoyed the GIS247 e-learning experience, the length of both the training and assessments means they are great to ‘pick up and put down’. The information is presented in a logical format and is very user friendly. The training and assessments are to a high standard.”



An example map showing volunteer activities around the South East Waterway

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“I am excited to have just recently been offered a secondment in the Canal & River Trust, working as a Graduate GIS Specialist and I am sure that it is because of my masters and completing the GIS247 course that I have been offered this great opportunity. The new skills I have learnt are all transferable and really applicable to ‘real-world’ GIS and will be very useful when I move to the GIS team and am working with GIS all day every day. The skills that I have gained will keep me in good stead to start my career in GIS!”

**Canal &
River Trust**

Louise has completed the GIS247 Mastering ArcGIS course, further developing her GIS knowledge and technical capabilities. She has submitted her assessment for the Mastering ArcGIS course and has achieved a distinction. Well done Louise!

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