



August 2005 Monthly Newsletter

How-To Videos

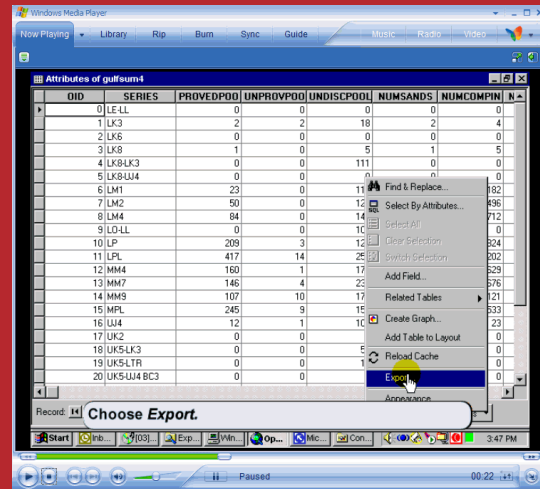
An original design goal for the GOM³ system was to make data on the Gulf of Mexico, and the analytic tools of GIS, accessible without extensive training or experience in geographic information systems or software. This led us to centralize all of the main functionality in both 2-D and 3-D into the ESA Hotlink Tool. It is also why we mirror all of the data, reports, charts and well log images in our GOM³-Online system, which has a much simpler interface than the main component, GOM³-ArcView, built on ESRI's ArcGIS.

To help answer frequently asked questions on procedures in GOM³, we have developed a series of "How-To Videos," which show users how to accomplish commonly-used functions. The "How-To Videos" are accessible by hitting the **Help Button**, the red question mark, on the GOM³ Toolbar (see upper picture). Then push the button with the movie camera. This presents our current list of about two to three dozen 30-90 second movies on questions from *How to Add Layers to A Map* to *How to Download Well Log Images?* (Click on movie titles above to view step-by-step instructions and the movie.)

After clicking on one of the questions, the written procedure of what will be done is shown; for example, under *How to Export to a Table* the seven steps are listed. Under that list is a movie camera button. When pushed, it will play an .avi file in Window's Media Player that are moving



Above: The GOM³ Toolbar with the Help Button highlighted in the black circle.



Above: The GOM³ How-To Video: How to Export to a Table.

screen captures of each of the steps required to export data to a table. As you see the cursor move across the screen, a caption at the bottom of the screen (see lower picture) explains what is being done within ArcGIS.

Some of the procedures are fairly simple. The movies can be used for a **quick refresher** of how a task is accomplished. However, others cover complex tasks requiring, in the case of *How to Create a New Shapefile*, two dozen steps. Even with such an involved procedure, by playing the whole video over, or even short portions of it, it becomes clear what buttons are clicked

and what dialog choices need to be made to accomplish what you want.

We add new "How-To Videos" to the GOM³ Help section as we develop new functionality. However the majority of them came out of suggestions from our users. They are relatively simple to make and **we strongly encourage suggestions** for further video topics. Because of their ease of preparation and effectiveness, several of our clients have adopted this format to augment the help facilities in their own internal systems.

We have also put all the "How-To Videos" on our web site, www.earthsci.com. Please email or call if you have any ideas for new movies.

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