Global Mapper Adds Improved 3D Viewing and Visualisation Tools

Blue Marble Geographics has announced the immediate availability of Global Mapper version 18.1. This upgrade to the version 18 release includes numerous functional enhancements throughout many areas of the software and it introduces an array of new tools, upgrades to existing components, performance improvements to increase efficiency and productivity, and support for several new formats and online data sources.

The release of version 18 of Global Mapper in September of last year introduced a completely redesigned interface with significantly improved layer and workflow management as well as dramatically enhanced 3D display. Building on this foundation, version 18.1 further improves the 3D experience with a new option to freeze the 3D View while working in the adjacent 2D view, speed improvements when rendering raster or 3D model formats, and improved functionality for creating 3D fly-though visualisations. For Lidar Module users, a new data QC tool is now available for adjusting point cloud elevations to match surveyed ground control points.

The importance of 3D data

The release of version 18.1 offers numerous enhancements that are a testament to the ever-increasing importance of 3D data. Global Mapper's 3D view, which introduced the ability to display an "infinite view" of all loaded 3D data in version 18, now offers the option to pause the 3D rendering when interacting with the 2D map. This streamlines workflow and significantly improves memory usage by eliminating the need to continually refresh the display. The rendering speed for 3D raster layers as well as 3D models has also been drastically improved. When creating a 3D fly-through visualisation or recording, the flight parameters now include bank angle, to more realistically simulate a pilot's eye view, and variable velocity, allowing the flight speed to be adjusted between segments.

Other enhancements in version 18.1 include a new option to calculate a summary of the colour statistics in a raster layer within a defined area; faster loading and display of large vector files such as shapefiles; support for many new formats, including exporting of LandXML and importing of RMaps/MBTiles and BPF Lidar files; and expanded online data options including the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO).

Points

Users of the optional Global Mapper Lidar Module, which provides advanced point cloud processing tools, can now perform precise quality control of their data against established ground control points. This allows the elevation values associated with each point to be adjusted to conform to the surveyed elevations at these locations.

With more and more data having a height or elevation component, the importance of Global Mapper's 3D viewing capability is underlined, stated Blue Marble's president, Patrick Cunningham. For several years, the development priority has been to optimise the user experience when interacting with Lidar, DEMs or other 3D layers and with the release of version 18.1 we are seeing some of the results of that effort with more display control, improved 3D interaction, and stunning 3D visualisation, he added.

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