



GMS 10.8 Tutorial

Projections / Coordinate Systems

Working with map projections in GMS



Objectives

Learn how to work with projections in GMS, and how to combine data from different coordinate systems into the same GMS project.

Prerequisite Tutorials

- Feature Objects
- Rasters

Required Components

- GMS Core

Time

- 20–30 minutes

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1 Introduction

Coordinate systems and map projections provide information for locating data on the Earth (georeferencing). There are two types of coordinate systems: geographic and projected.

A geographic coordinate system uses a three dimensional sphere to locate data on the Earth. Data in a geographic coordinate system is referenced using latitude and longitude. Latitude and longitude are angles measured from the Earth's center to a point on the Earth's surface.

A projected coordinate system is two dimensional based on a sphere or spheroid. Unlike a geographic coordinate system, projected coordinate systems have constant lengths, angles, and areas across the two dimensions.¹

A PRJ file is a text file containing information describing the type coordinate system and other relevant data to position the related data on the Earth. This tutorial provides an overview of working with projected data in GMS through the following steps:

- Importing a TIFF file and assigning a projection
- Learning about the Display Projection
- Importing a CAD file and assigning a different projection
- Learning about "Project on the fly"
- Importing a shapefile with an associated projection
- Importing elevation data and edit points
- Creating a coverage and a 3D grid

¹ Information summarized from ESRI:

http://webhelp.esri.com/arcgisdesktop/9.2/index.cfm?TopicName=projection_basics_the_gis_professional_needs_to_know


2 Getting Started

To get started, do the following:

1. If necessary, launch GMS.
2. If GMS is already running, select *File* / **New** to ensure that the program settings are restored to their default state.

3 Importing an Image

Start by importing an image of an area where the model will be built. The image was downloaded from the state of Massachusetts.

1. Click **Open**  to bring up the *Open* dialog.
2. Navigate to the *Projections* folder for this tutorial.
3. Select “Images (*.tif, *.tiff;...)” from the *Files of type* drop-down.
4. Select “q233914.tif” and click **Open** to import the image and close the *Open* dialog.
5. Move the mouse around in the Graphics Window.

Notice that the lower right corner of the image is at x=233,000 and y=914,000 (which is where the file name “q233914” comes from). This image came with a TFW file (TIFF world file); the world file gives the location and size of the pixels in the image file. However, this image did not come with a PRJ (projection) file. Notice in the bottom right corner of the GMS window the text “No projection, Feet (U.S. Survey)” (Figure 1).




Figure 1 Projection information from GMS Window

No PRJ file was included with this image, so while GMS is able to read the world file and position the image at the correct coordinates, GMS is not able to georeference the location of the image. The projection of the image must be specified in order to georeference the image.

3.1 Setting the Projection

To set the projection in GMS:

1. Right-click on “ q233914.tif” in the Project Explorer and select *Projection* | **Projection...** to bring up the *Projection* dialog.
2. In the *Horizontal* section, select *Global projection* to bring up the *Horizontal Projection* dialog.

This dialog is used to select a projection and can also be used to export or import PRJ files.

3. Enter “1983 Meters Massachusetts” in the *Filter strings* field.
4. Select “NAD 1983 StatePlane Massachusetts FIPS 2001 (Meters)” from the list.

5. Click **OK** to exit the *Horizontal Projection* dialog.
6. Click **OK** to exit the *Projection* dialog.
7. At the prompt explaining that a new TIFF file will be created, click **OK** to bring up the *Save As* dialog.
8. Click **Save** to accept the default *File name* and close the *Save As* dialog.
9. If an error comes up advising that the global projection needs to be set, continue to step 10. Otherwise, skip to step 15.
10. Click **OK** to close the error message and bring up the *Display Projection* dialog.
11. Click **Set Projection...** to bring up the *Display Projection* dialog.
12. Select “NAD 1983 StatePlane Massachusetts FIPS 2001 (Meters)” from the list at the top.
13. In the *Vertical* section, select “Meters” from the *Units* drop-down.
14. Click **OK** to close the *Display Projections* dialog.

A new TIFF file named “q233914_exported.tif” is created in the same directory as the “q233914.tif” file, then imported into GMS, replacing “q233914.tif” in the Project Explorer. The projection information is saved inside the new TIFF file. Any time this TIFF file is imported into GMS (or any GIS application) the image will be georeferenced.



Any time the projection is set on an image, a new image will be exported from GMS with the projection information stored in that image.

15. Move the mouse around the Graphics Window.

Notice that the coordinates are the same as before, but now the latitude and longitude are displayed as the mouse moves. The current projection, also called the “display projection”, is visible in the bottom right corner of the GMS window (Figure 2).

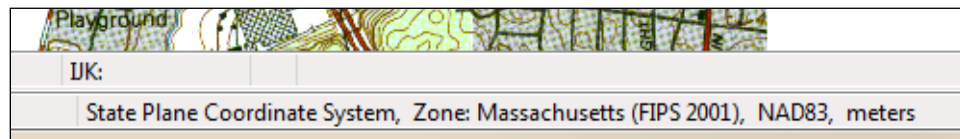


Figure 2 GMS Window with georeferenced data

When data that includes projection information is imported GMS, it will set the display projection to match the information in the file. The display projection can be changed to any supported projection, though some projections are not compatible. For example, data in State Plane, Massachusetts Mainland will not display in the Philippines Grid.

3.2 Setting Transparency

The transparency of the image must now be changed so that the other data brought into the project will be easier to see.

To do this:

1. Right-click on “q233814_exported.tif” in the Project Explorer and select **Transparency...** to bring up the *Layer Transparency* dialog.
2. Use the slider to set *Transparency* to “60%”.
3. Click **OK** to exit the *Layer Transparency* dialog.

The project should appear similar to Figure 3.

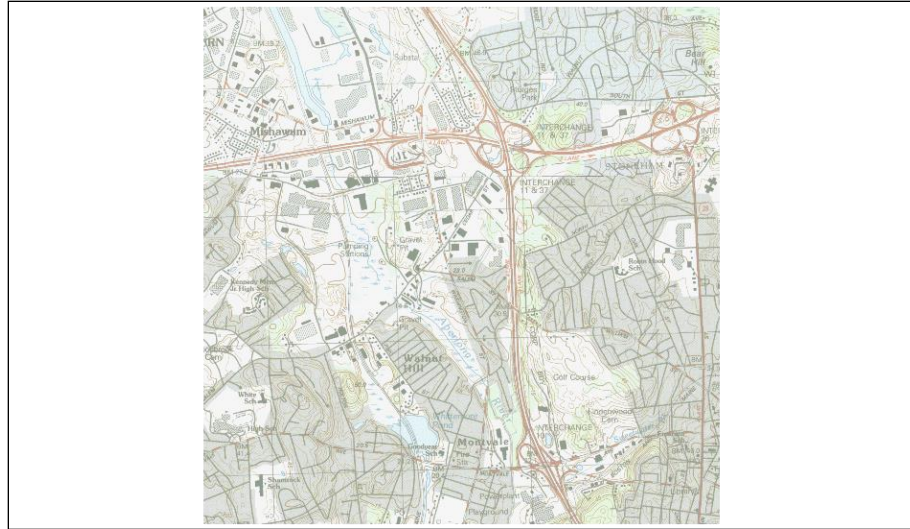



Figure 3 Map image with 60% transparency applied

4 Importing a CAD File

To import a CAD file with the roads in the study area, do the following:

1. Click **Open**  to bring up the *Open* dialog.
2. Select “DWG/DXF Files (*.dwg, *.dxf)” from the *Files of type* drop-down.
3. Select “roads.dwg” and click **Open** to import the file and close the *Open* dialog.
4. If the window now appears blank, right-click on “roads.dwg” in the Project Explorer and select **Zoom To Extents**.

After importing the CAD file, the Graphics Window should appear as in Figure 4.




Figure 4 Imported CAD data

Notice that the background image has disappeared. By moving the mouse around in the Graphics Window, the displayed coordinates vary from (-71.15, 42.46) to (-71.09, 42.52), and the latitude/longitude values have changed.


Because there was no PRJ file associated with this CAD file, the data is drawn at the coordinates specified in the file. A projection for the CAD data must be specified so that it will be drawn in the correct location. This particular file has coordinates in latitude/longitude.

To set the projection:

5. Right-click on “ roads.dwg” in the Project Explorer and select *Projection | Projection...* to bring up the *Projection* dialog.
6. In the *Horizontal* section, select *Global projection* and click **Set Projection...** to bring up the *Horizontal Projection* dialog.

When opening the *Horizontal Projection* dialog, notice that a list of recently used projections is shown. This can be useful when assigning the same projections to multiple objects. Likewise, frequently used projections can be saved by right-clicking on the projection and selecting **Add to Favorites** which will then show the projection under the favorite projections folder.

Instead of searching the tree for the correct projection, enter the EPSG code to assign a geographic projection to the CAD data.

7. Click **EPSG code...** button to open the *Projection from EPSG code* dialog.
8. Enter “4269” as the *New EPSG code*.
9. Click **OK** to exit the *Projection from EPSG code* dialog.
10. Click **OK** to exit the *Horizontal Projection* dialog.
11. Click **OK** to exit the *Projection* dialog.
12. Click **OK** at the warning about changing projections.
13. Right-click on “ roads.dwg” in the Project Explorer and select **Zoom to Extents**.

The image should now be visible behind the CAD data (Figure 5). Even though the CAD data is in a different projection from the display projection, it is positioned in the correct location. The CAD data is “projected on the fly”, which involves transforming the coordinates of the CAD data from latitude and longitude to State Plane meters.



Items with a projection different from the display projection are “projected on the fly” so that they are positioned correctly.




Figure 5 CAD data correctly positioned after specifying the projection

If the CAD file had initially had an associated PRJ file, then the data would have already been correctly positioned in the current display projection.

5 Importing a Shapefile

A shapefile of the Aberjona River will now be imported. This shapefile uses a different projection than the display projection.


To import the shapefile:

1. Click **Open**  to bring up the *Open* dialog.
2. Select "Shapefiles (*.shp)" from the *Files of type* drop-down.
3. Select "AberjonaRiver_Clip.shp" and click **Open** to import the file and close the *Open* dialog.

The Graphics Window should appear as in Figure 6.



Figure 6 Aberjona River shapefile

4. Right-click on “ AberjonaRiver_Clip.shp” in the Project Explorer and select **Projection | Projection...** to bring up the *Projection* dialog.

Note the horizontal projection is “NAD_1983_2011_UTM_Zone_18N”, which was imported from the PRJ file associated with the shapefile. This allowed GMS to place the shapefile in the correct location.


5. Click **Cancel** to exit the *Projection* dialog.




If a file is imported into GMS, and the file has an associated PRJ, then the projection is imported with the file.

6 Importing Elevation Data

Next, import surface elevations into the project from a text file by doing the following:

1. Click **Open**  to bring up the *Open* dialog.
2. Select “Text Files (*.txt, *.csv)” from the *Files of type* drop-down.
3. Select “elev.txt” and click **Open** to close the *Open* dialog and open the *Step 1 of 2* page of the *Text Import Wizard* dialog.
4. Below the *File import options* section, turn on *Heading row*.
5. Click **Next** to go to the *Step 2 of 2* page of the *Text Import Wizard* dialog.
6. Select “2D scatter points” for the *GMS data type*.

7. Click **Finish** to close the *Text Import Wizard* dialog.
8. Click **OK** at the prompt that says that a projection must be specified for the imported data to bring up the *Projection – Project\Scatter Data\elev* dialog.
1. In the *Horizontal* section, select *Global projection* and click **Set Projection...** to bring up the *Horizontal Projection* dialog.
2. Click the **.prj file...** button to bring up the *Projection from .prj File* dialog.
3. Select “elev.prj” and click **Open** to exit the *Open* dialog.
4. Click **OK** to close the *Horizontal Projection* dialog.
5. Click **OK** to close the *Projection* dialog.
6. Click the **Display Options**  macro to bring up the *Display Options* dialog.
7. Select “2D Scatter Data” from the list on the left.
8. On the *2D Scatter Point Set* tab, click on the color selector button to the right of “elev” in the list below the *Contours* checkbox to bring up the *Symbol Attributes* dialog.
9. Enter “2” in the *Size* field and click **OK** to close the *Symbol Attributes* dialog.
10. Click **OK** to close the *Display Options* dialog.



The Graphics Window should appear as in Figure 7.





Figure 7 Imported elevation data

6.1 Editing the Scatter Points

The elevations that are in the project can be edited as follows:

1. Select “ elev” in the Project Explorer to make it active.
2. Using the **Select Scatter Point**  tool, select one of the scatter points in the Graphics Window by clicking on it.
3. Press the *Delete* key to delete the selected point.

A prompt appears that explains that the projection of the “elev” scatter set does not match the display projection. In order to edit the points, the scatter set’s projection must be the same as the display projection.




4. Select **Yes** at the prompt to change the display projection to match that of the “ elev” scatter set projection.
5. **Frame**  the project.
6. Press the *Delete* key again to delete the selected point.




An item in a project can be edited only if its projection matches the display projection.

7 Creating a Coverage

A coverage can be created by doing the following:

1. Right-click in a blank space in the Project Explorer and select *New* | **Coverage...** to add a “ new coverage” under the “ Map Data” folder.
2. Right-click on “ new coverage” and select **Coverage Setup...** to bring up the *Coverage Setup* dialog.

Notice that this is where Sources/Sinks/BCs, Areal Properties, and Observation Point attributes can be turned on and off. For this project, all options should be grayed out.

3. Click **Cancel** to close the *Coverage Setup* dialog and retain the default settings. The use of this dialog is not needed for this tutorial.
4. Right-click on “ new coverage” and select *Projection* | **Projection...** to bring up the *Projection* dialog.
5. Notice that the projection for this coverage is the same as the display projection. Click **OK** to exit the *Projection* dialog.



When a new item is created in a GMS project, the projection of the new item will be set to match the Display Projection.

8 Creating a 3D Grid



MODFLOW simulations are common components of GMS projects. Some versions of MODFLOW use a structured grid for computations. 2D and 3D grids and grid frames in GMS are not “projected on the fly” because they must retain their rectilinear shape and cannot be warped.

Therefore, when a grid is created in a GMS project, the grid will be set to use the display projection; as long as the grid is part of the project, the display projection cannot be different than the grid's projection.

To create the 3D grid, do the following:

1. Right-click in a blank space in the Project Explorer and select *New | 3D Grid...* to bring up the *Create Finite Difference Grid* dialog.
2. Click **OK** to accept the defaults and exit the *Create Finite Difference Grid* dialog.

A grid will appear over the other items in the Graphics Window.

3. Right-click on “ grid” in the Project Explorer and select *Projection | Projection...* to bring up the *Projection* dialog.
4. Notice that the projection for this grid is the same as the Display Projection. Click **OK** to exit the *Projection* dialog.
5. Right-click on “ AberjonaRiver_Clip.shp” in the Project Explorer and select *Projection | Set As Display Projection*.
6. An *Error* dialog appears explaining that the display projection must match the grid projection. Click **OK** to close the dialog.



If a grid is included in a project, the display projection must match the grid's projection.

9 Conclusion

This concludes the “GMS Projections / Coordinates Systems” tutorial. The following items were discussed in the tutorial:

- GMS supports many different projections.
- GMS has a user-defined display projection.
- An item's projection can be specified in GMS and a PRJ file will be created or overwritten.
- All georeferenced data in a GMS project is drawn in the display projection; this requires “Projecting on the fly”.
- Newly created items in a GMS project are assigned the display projection by default.
- To edit an item in a GMS project, the item's projection must match the display projection.
- If a grid is included in a GMS project then the display projection must match the grid's projection.