

GIS software summary

This information is based on an evaluation carried out on behalf of the RGS-IBG (please see disclaimer).

	Category*	Cost	E-learning credits	Educational Level Guide	Pros	Cons	Summary
Software							
AEGIS 3	I+	£100 + VAT single. £200 20 users - £500 full site and staff + VAT. Free basic viewer available on website also. Free technical and curriculum helpline.	Y	KS2 and Year 7+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed specifically for classroom use as an interactive worksheet Written to comply with the requirements of both the ICT and the Geography national curriculum Includes ready to use worksheets and resources Web site contains archive worksheets, links to events, courses and a teachers' discussion forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The layout is dissimilar to typical GIS software Need to be familiar with a range of GIS concepts and terminology Creating new case studies could be time consuming for new teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For viewing OS data and adding fieldwork data to it, and analysing patterns and distributions Use the worksheet to make maps, write answers and print off Introduces geographical skills and digital data in a more familiar A4 worksheet
ArcExplorer 9	B+, I-	Free	N/A	Primary and secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Good help and documentation Supports live data web services – no importing or converting required Can drag and drop data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little functionality Can't create new files No curriculum focus Can't view data attributes ESRI format bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An easy to use data viewer with querying functionality To view, map, query and print existing data A good introduction to GIS software environment
ArcView School Bundle	A	£435 + VAT. £200 + VAT for extensions.	Y	Secondary - Year 11/ A level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes abundant data (including LA OS data) Supports live data web services – no importing or converting required Includes a user manual and lot of Help and documentation Includes NTF converter Familiarises students with a real-life industry GIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High functionality Reads limited data formats Analysis extensions are extra The 3 interface elements of ArcGIS may be confusing to begin with No simple guide to get started or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For geographic display, data capture and analysis An advanced but easy to use GIS with abundant functionality that includes LA data and extra world datasets and documentation May be too advanced

						instructions and examples to suit teachers (at the moment)	to use as an introduction to GIS
Cadcorp	A	Contact vendor.	N	Secondary - Year 11/ A level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports a wide range of data formats • Integration of raster and vector data in a single environment • A fairly intuitive and clearly organised interface • Familiarises students with a real-life industry GIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High functionality • Limited sample data • Some counter-intuitive terminology • Difficult to read "Getting Started" guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful for manipulation of large quantities of data, especially if gathered from diverse sources where complex analysis is required • A powerful, integrated suite of geo-processing tools. • May be too advanced to use as an introduction to GIS
Digital Worlds	I+	£495 Primary, £695 Secondary. A one-off-cost with no compulsory annual renewal. There is a technical support and software update continuation fee but this is not compulsory. The cost of this is £99 for Primary and Secondary.	Y	KS1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful technical support • The project manager and viewers are well executed and easy to add, remove and organise data • Good quality data included • Includes school-centred data, lesson ideas and map templates • Uses Excel to view and edit attributes • Clear installation instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School centred data may not cover wide enough area • Quite expensive – limited functionality for the price • Help files are not extensive or presented in clear language most teachers would readily understand without support • May need specific time and purpose to master 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-end interactive GIS that is close to an advanced GIS without the extra functionality • Offers the possibility of many interesting enquiry projects
Geomatica Freeview	B+, I-	Free or £1,625 + VAT for full educational suite	N	Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads many data formats directly • Shows map attributes • User manual easily followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little functionality • Can't edit, save or export • Raster, image-processing bias • Is rather unintuitive with a learning curve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To view existing data without translation and to view and query attributes

Geomedia Pro	A	Free education license for personal use (teachers and pupils) for single machine. Education grant provides multiple licenses of GeoMedia Pro and a copy of GeoMedia WebMap for free, including updates and discounted training.	N	Year 11/ A level. HNC+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free licence • Familiarises students with a real-life industry GIS • Is capable of any sort of analysis a school might require • Useful Help • Future free training seminars for schools in use of the software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High functionality • Requires GIS experience to get the most out of it • Would require training and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-end vector GIS • May be too advanced to use as an introduction to GIS
Geomedia Viewer	I	Free and unlicensed. Schools can install and make copies for free.	N	Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Views ArcView and MapInfo data with many editing options and functionality • Can view map attributes and many map windows • Good map layout elements and printing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of data organisation and preparation required • Takes time to research on how to use and the Help files are complicated • Need to understand coordinate systems and complex terminology. Quite a steep learning curve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To view existing data, change symbology, and display and query attributes and print maps
IDRISI Kilimanjaro	A	Demo CDs are \$5 plus shipping. \$150 per licence installed on server. Stand-alone Academic License is \$600. Upgrades are \$75.	N	Secondary - Year 11/ A level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarises students with a real-life industry GIS • Excellent vector, raster, 3D and image processing functionality • Data and very robust tutorial exercises are included in the Help System in PDF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High functionality • Raster bias • Large data files to download • Tutorials may be required before some teachers could use the software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent research package but unlikely many schools will need the extensive functionality • May be too advanced to use as an introduction to GIS • Probably be more user friendly after initial training

InfoMapper	B+, I-	£200 (Primary School site license) & £600 (Secondary School site license) Discounts through joint procurement across an LEA or Grid.	Y	QCA learning objectives from KS1 upwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A web-tool that doesn't require installation. • Teachers can set up accounts and monitor use • Curriculum focussed • Great selection of UK and world data available • Good visualisation options • Share resources and link to other schools. Provides basic GIS functionality without a complicated interface • Easy to access maps • Clear instructions • Easy to get started using the Quick Start Guide • On-line user manual is very comprehensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pre-installation set up required • Only two map layers can be viewed at any one time • Personalised Layers and Resources take time to put together • Can't edit other people's layers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interactive internet tool for viewing maps and aerial photos at the UK and world scale, and to link to students' information by locality • Resources can be stored, shared and communities created between schools • To create and display web pages containing resources (text, spreadsheets, pictures, video, etc) using a map as the background. • Ideal to support fieldwork visits
Local Studies	B+, I-	£55 - £165 primary, £70 - £200 secondary	Y	KS2 and KS3. KS4 - GCSE with Map Importer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inexpensive easy to use product • Similar to MS Paint with simple functionality and drag-and-drop symbols • Includes 6 basic projects and worksheets and has classroom ideas in manual • Photo and video hotspots are good • Direct link to the OS Free maps website • Very easy to install and the support is very helpful if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No analysis • Can't view attributes • Data restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal for creating maps and building information on study areas • A good introduction to computer mapping for enhancing project work • Good for familiarising younger students with map work • Can be extended with Map Importer to create base maps
Manifold	A	\$245 per school district for unlimited usage. Likely to waive the £245 fee for regions larger than a single school district.	N	Secondary - Year 11/ A level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most sophisticated raster presentation and graphics arts capabilities ever available in a GIS combined with the most analytical power and database capabilities ever delivered in any GIS at any price • Low price for the extensive functionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High functionality • Many set up parameters and settings • Need 1-2 days of reading documentation to get started • Need to be familiar with GIS concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very powerful teaching tool and a method of investigation • May be too advanced to use as an introduction to GIS

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads 80 formats – data from every GIS and web source • Video training manual for only \$30 • Web forums available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits from a powerful machine • IT Technicians may require training before taking on an installation 	
MapExplorer	B+, I-	Free	N/A	Primary and secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Simple and useful functionality • A step towards ESRI ArcView • Translates Landline NTF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No analysis functionality • Limited printing options • Can't view attributes • No data included • No simple help to get started with the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To view existing OS and other data, query it and create maps • A good introduction to GIS software environment and digital data and maps
Map Importer	B	£30 1-5 users, £48 for 1-10, £66 for 1-20, £90 for Unlimited Licence.	Y	KS2 - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid and simple navigation only requires a few minutes practice • Map tiles are automatically organised and made seamless for use • Simple instruction screens in familiar style • To translate NTF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited use – only to create and view base maps • Maps have to be obtained separately through the LEA or directly from OS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents an extra to Local Studies to create and view background maps of suitable scale and with appropriate layers of information • Could be used as whole class investigations of local area characteristics, routes, sampling techniques, etc
Maptitude	A	\$495. Technical support provided free to schools.	N	Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplied with a great deal of free data that can be easily displayed • Extensive Census data included • Easy to display multiple format files • Good map production facilities • Familiarises students with a real-life industry GIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High functionality • A lot of assumed knowledge and terminology • If didn't use frequently could struggle to retain familiarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For geographic display, data capture and analysis • May be too advanced to use as an introduction to GIS

Mapping Skills	B	£55 for 1-5 users, £90 for 1-10, £120 for 1-20 and £165 for an Unlimited Site Licence	Y	Aimed at KS2 to KS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A classroom specific product • Classroom lessons included (28 units in 5 sets through a work plan) • Checks on achievement and progress record • Assign work plans of increasing difficulty to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires some file management • Not clear if can only use sample data or set up own projects with Local Studies • Cannot be used for any other mapping or GIS purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purely for teaching students map interpretation skills
MapsDirect	B+, I-	£75 + VAT primary, £175 + VAT secondary. If you order the second year in advance, you get a 20% discount on the above fees.	Y	KS3-4+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An easy to use web-based tool with no installation required • Linked to curriculum with built in resources, practicals and worksheets • National mapping included and only pay for service, not data • Can buy tiles for use in a GIS • Teachers can share projects and materials. Free 30 day trial • Online access to OS Mastermap • No data converting or loading required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited functionality • Internet connection dependent • Restricted to included data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find places and view and print maps • To access digital map data and start using GIS quickly for projects, exercises and field trips • An introduction to digital mapping and basic GIS tools
Map Skills Plus	I	£33.85 + VAT Available free on initial approval. £20 + VAT for Exploring Today's Britain. £60 + VAT for SCAMP-4	Y	KS3 and KS4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A classroom specific product • Includes ready to use worksheets for key human geography curriculum topics • Sample data included and lots of extra data available – SCAMP for Census and IMD, Exploring Today's Britain) • Can be used as a GIS with own data • Links to several areas of the National Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation is a copy file procedure. The files could be easily deleted or moved • Help isn't particularly coherent (but guidance is included) • Unhelpful icons and terminology • Requires running 2 applications at the same time and resizing windows (topic sheets can be printed though) • Conventional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of topics providing quick introductions or revisions for key map skills and themes • An introduction to map and geography skills to be used straight away in the classroom.

						interface	
Memory Map	B+	From £79.95 for national parks From £49.95 for national trails £39.95 per region for aerial photos	Y	KS2 and Year 7+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An easy to use product with lots of data included • Great visualisation, especially 3D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed specifically for outdoor route planning and for use with GPS • Limited functionality • Can't interact or add data • Maps take up a lot of hard drive space • Help may be too detailed for pupil use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For viewing and printing OS raster maps and route planning • To introduce students to digital data and 3D mapping • Printed maps can be annotated
Multimap	B	Free	N/A	Primary and secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Easy to use • Accessible website • Aerial photography makes it more interesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interaction and functionality • Can't add data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very basic introduction to digital mapping and map scale • Students could search for specific places and print and annotate maps
Our School Aerial	B+	£64.95 + VAT per 1km2, £84.95 + VAT per 4km2 Or £76.32 plus £19.95 + VAT centred on school. £19.95 + VAT for Landline	Y	KS2+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An easy to use product • Easy to navigate • Centres on aerial photography of your school • Includes OS Land-line for small charge • Good visualisation with a low learning curve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't add other data • Unclear where layers are saved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces GIS concepts and digital mapping • To view school aerial photos and add students' own annotation and project information
Streetmap	B-	Free	N/A	Primary and secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Easy to use • Accessible website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interaction and functionality • Can't add data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very basic introduction to digital mapping and map scale

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Tracklogs 50	B	50k per Region = £39.95 50k per National Park = from £19.95 50k per country = from £49.95	N	Primary and secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great visualisation and 3D mapping Includes seamless OS mapping Quick to learn and fun to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed specifically for outdoor route planning and for use with GPS Limited functionality Can't interact or add data Maps take up a lot of hard drive space No aerial photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For viewing and printing OS raster maps and route planning To introduce students to digital data and 3D mapping Printed maps can be annotated

*Category: B = Basic Viewer, I = Intermediate with some interaction, A = Advanced