

## 6.4.1 Building a GIS Fanbase

### Presenter

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As much as we spatial geeks love the analysis aspect of GIS, the bottom line is we still need to be able to communicate what we have in a way that others can understand. Most often this will be in the form of maps. But is your map worth a thousand words or does it take a thousand words to explain it? Knowing your target audience and what message you want to get across are key factors to planning your map layout. Equally important is knowing your software well enough to bypass shelling out a ton of money on software add-ons to achieve your goal.

At the High Point Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), we serve both the city and the MPO, which means producing a wide range of maps. Map scales range from local to regional (sometimes even national). Map themes range from internal worksheets to regional planning documents. Map sizes range from letter to poster. Our target audience range from common citizens to state legislators. To make matters a little more hairy, the workload needs to be distributed to non-GIS users. So our user group has expanded in one year from 1 power user to 10 users of varying degrees.

This presentation will review the small, consultant-free steps we took to build our GIS database, user group, and fan-base. Topics to be discussed will include our data sources, sample maps we publish, and how we provide access to mapping for casual users. The software we use is ESRI's ArcGIS 9.2.