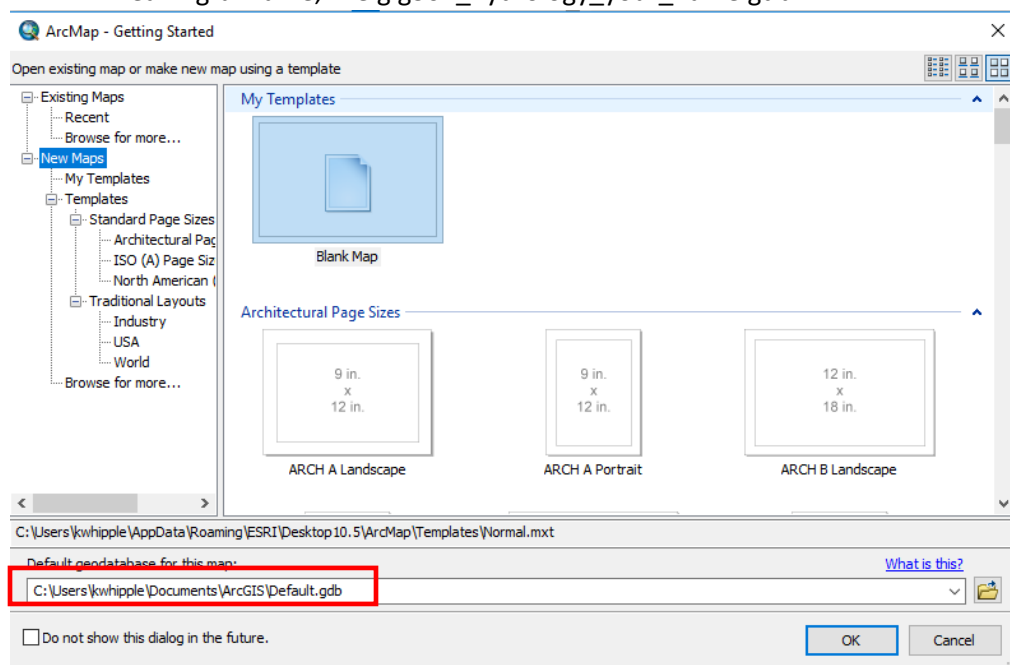


Saving ArcGIS Data and Project Files

ArcMap project files *.mxd hold only the list of loaded data and the display order and properties. These are important to save, but on their own have no value – the associated data must be saved and moved along with the project file.

The Challenges:

1. Classroom computers are wiped of user data each night, so you must save a copy of data somewhere for continued work.
2. ArcGIS creates many data layers, and many data layers are represented by 6-7 component files. All must be moved together.
3. The best policy is to create a geodatabase (*.gdb) for each project you work on. For instance: glg362_hydrology_your_name.gdb. A Geodatabase is a Folder that will hold all data layers saved in a single place, so all you need to do is save and copy that one Folder, so long as you take care to save ALL LAYERS to the same geodatabase.
4. Note: you will only be able to “see” the different layers in a geodatabase from within ArcGIS applications (ArcMap, ArcCatalog, ArcScene, etc).
5. To help ensure you save all layers to the same geodatabase, the best practice is to create a Default Geodatabase unique to each project. There are two ways to do this.
 - a. If starting from scratch by opening a new (blank) ArcMap project, you will be prompted to create a **Default Geodatabase**. DO NOT USE THE DEFAULT VERSION of the **Default Geodatabase** – this will be common to all users on a given computer, and will be erased each night. Instead create one by pointing to your thumb drive (D:) or the Desktop, or a Folder you make on the Desktop (or elsewhere) and give the **Default Geodatabase** a meaningful name, like glg362_hydrology_your_name.gdb.



- b. If starting from an existing *.mxd (like the chi_area.mxd), first save a copy of the *.mxd to your own Folder or Thumb drive with a unique name that is meaningful to you. Then in the new, personal copy of the *.mxd, go to File/Map Document/Properties and towards the bottom left you will see a Browse Folder icon next to a listing of the Current **Default Geodatabase**. Click this icon and navigate to your thumb drive (D:) or the Desktop, or a Folder you make on the Desktop (or elsewhere) and give the **Default Geodatabase** a meaningful name, like glg362_hydrology_your_name.gdb.

The screenshot shows the 'Map Document Properties' dialog box with the 'General' tab selected. The 'Default Geodatabase' field is highlighted with a red rectangle. The path 'C:\Users\kwhipple\Documents\ArcGIS\Default.gdb' is entered, and a folder icon is visible to the right. Below this field is a checkbox for 'Store relative pathnames to data sources' which is currently unchecked. At the bottom of the dialog are 'OK', 'Cancel', and 'Apply' buttons.

6. Every time you save a new file, ArcGIS will suggest a name for the file and target it to be written to your personal D. Using the suggested names is OK, but I find it helpful to always give new layers a name of my choosing that is meaningful to me.
7. Note ArcGIS GRIDs have a maximum layer name of 13 characters. Never include spaces or capitals, and NEVER start the name with a number.