

Arc/Info vs. ArcView vs. Informix:

As with most projects, some tools are better suited for the task than others. Working with Oaesis is no exception.

Example 1 required the use of Grid data. This can only be done in Arc/Info.

In Example 2, we performed a query in Informix. This query was done strictly to determine what values were in the database. Using these values, we could code the AML appropriately to search for those values when making the plot. Note that in Example 4, we also performed a query of the Informix tables, but, we did it in Arc/Info with the 'dbmsexecute' command. The difference in Example 4 is that we wanted to make an Info file for later use from the results of the query. This cannot be done in Informix alone. Examples 5,6 and 7 used ArcView to make new tables as the result of queries against the Oaesis database.

What about the differences between Arc/Info and ArcView? Other than the lack of Grid data processing features in ArcView, there are several other key differences. Notice how much reference data we could put on the Arc/Info maps. This is primarily due to the ability of ArcPlot to use data in different projections. ArcPlot is a bit more flexible with queries. Recall in Example 2 how selects were made against the Oaesis coverage for both year and completeness of coverage. To make the same map in ArcView, several new geographic datasets would have to be made and saved to disk. ArcView must have each dataset selected to represent all of the cases at the same time. ArcPlot, by contrast, makes a graphics file a bit at a time, so clearing one selection does not remove the features from the graphics file. So, other than making basic layouts of your ArcView session, ArcPlot generally produces a more detailed and controllable map.

ArcView is an excellent tool for on screen queries with the mouse. Another nice feature is that you can see the data tables that you are working with in spreadsheet form. This is a much easier to understand way to manipulate the tables for most users.

Pick whichever program helps you meet the requirements set down by the person making the request. The easiest option is not always the best.