Presentation Title: Creating Merged Shapefiles from Tiled Data Using Avenue and Dialog Boxes
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Software: Visual Basic 6.0, MapObjects 2.0, Irfanview 3.07

Problem: How do I allow application users to define or import their own data selection sets, particularly when dealing with tiled data sets? This is especially useful when using data sets that are comprised of hundreds of tiles.

Example: A users wants to merge a specific set of data using a merge themes application. Instead of manually selecting all the tiles to be merged, a text file can be created that contains a list of all the needed tiles. (e.g. K23, K24, G12, G13)

Solutions: Allow users to import or define their own data lists by reading in a text file of the list. The text file must adhere to some standard formatting. Each line contains the path or filename to a dataset. Each line is read in one at a time by specifying the number of characters to read from the text file and the value added to a list. The code reads through the entire file and then exits.

Code sample

```
‘set a variable to a dialog control radio button
byFile = theDialog.FindByName("rbByFile")
if (byFile.IsSelected = true) then
‘Show the open file dialog
atextFile = FileDialog.Show("*.txt", "*.txt", "Select Text File")

‘make a text file from the selected file
tf = TextFile.Make( atextfile, #FILE_PERM_READ )
‘read the entire file into a string
 source = tf.Read( tf.GetSize )
‘close the text file
 tf.Close

‘create a new string that will define the listbox list
newString = {}
        ‘do while the length of the source string is longer than three characters
        while (source.count >3)

        newstring.Add(""+source.Left(4)+"")
        source = source.Right(source.count-4)
        end
‘put the newstring to a listbox
theTileList.DefineFromList(newstring)
end
```