

MSDIS Update – March 2024

Updated Data

- MO MoDOT Roads Routes
- MO MoDOT Roads Arcs
- MO MoDOT Emergency Reference Markers
- MO MoDOT Rest Areas
- MO MoDOT Commuter Lots

MSDIS General News

While the MoDOT datasets listed above are not new to the clearinghouse by any stretch of the imagination, their recent inclusion is an important step. This will be the first complete batch of MoDOT datasets that have been deployed to the MSDIS AGOL account entirely as updates to existing services rather than as brand-new hosted feature datasets. You might remember a post from several months ago where I described the update option as a possible means to better track usage of a dataset over time since it would not reset whenever a new version of the data were uploaded and the old version was deleted. We've been testing this mechanic with the MoDOT updates over the last few cycles of updates and this is the first instance where all five datasets were added to our AGOL account as updates rather than as brand new hosted features.

In addition to updates to MoDOT data, MSDIS also received a hard drive full of LiDAR data from USDA-NRCS, courtesy of Katie Philbrick. On review, some of the projects on the drive are completely new to MSDIS and will be added to the LiDAR directory of the MSDIS Imagery server. Several of the projects are already present on MSDIS servers, though, but they appear to use a different organization method. In the coming weeks we will take time to compare what is on the drive with what we already have so we can better understand what assets exist, how they have been delivered, and what we need to do to make them available.

This is going to take a lot of time.

LiDAR data are, and have pretty much always been, the source of the most significant organizational difficulty that MSDIS regularly faces. That's not a complaint. We love getting new LiDAR data and we love making those data available to you. But, between older projects that are out of date but have precious little documentation, newer projects that require massive amounts of storage, different naming conventions for any given project, and the inherent LAS/DEM duality of the data, there is no easy way to work with these files.

So, what's the plan?

As we race towards the end of the Spring 2024 semester (not sure how that happened so quickly), we will have more time to work on MSDIS things. As our MSDIS time ramps back up, LiDAR is the first major concern on our list. Our first step will be to examine the data that were just delivered and decide on the best course of action to 1) decide what to keep and where, 2) get services set up and streaming, and 3) get the data over to WashU to establish downloads. You can safely expect that stage will take several weeks (because the "we" in this case is still just one person, two dogs, and two cats).

Once we get the new stuff sorted out, we will turn our attention to the older projects. Don't worry, we are not going to (intentionally) purge any of the old data, but we do need to figure out the best option for presenting those data in light of the fact that many of them have been replaced by newer, better acquisitions. We have no intention or desire to delete old data, but we do need to be very mindful of what data are presented to the outside world for as services vs downloads. People want access to these data, and we certainly don't blame them, but we cannot be expected to maintain services for every LiDAR project ever handed to MSDIS, especially when many of those projects are older than the students we are just about done teaching (that may not be entirely true, but it definitely doesn't feel too far off). We need to figure out how old is too old for a LiDAR project to deserve a service. Right now, after the LiDAR service rebuild of last year, we only maintain nine services, with the intent being that they represent the fewest number of services required to get as close to a complete state as possible. Of those nine services, one is an older Boone county service that has (as far as we can tell) been replaced by a newer collection. That's an easy scenario. The older Boone county service gets removed and the newer one lives on. But what about

MSDIS Downtime

No downtime was reported in March 2024.

Image Server Statistics

Since the replacement of the MSDIS Image Server, we have struggled to find a software to provide a comprehensive breakdown of server and service usage. We had hoped that the statistics pulled directly from ArcGIS Server Manager would be a suitable substitute, but the very bare-bones records were significantly less than what we wanted.

Moving forward, we will no longer publish these numbers in our monthly reports. We will remain on the lookout for a reliable option for parsing the server usage in the hope that we can publish these numbers again. The raw server logs are still being saved if anyone requires them. Should anyone need a rough estimate of usage for certain specific services, we are more than happy to run those numbers via Server Manager.