



Transition Playbook:

Considerations when moving from Geocortex Essentials to VertiGIS Studio

VertiGIS Studio™

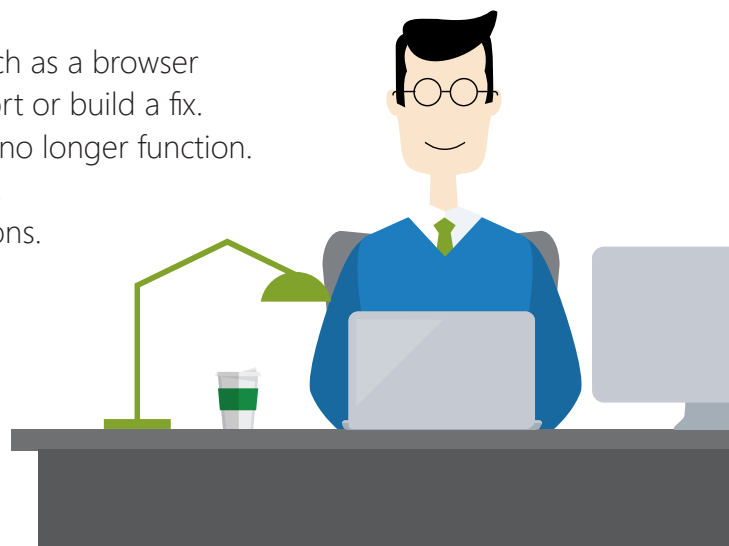
Why is it time to transition from Geocortex Essentials to VertiGIS Studio, and why is this important?

Esri's ArcGIS API for JavaScript 3.x will be retired on July 1st, 2024, allowing for a focus on their modern ArcGIS Maps SDK for JavaScript (formerly known as the ArcGIS API for JavaScript 4.x). If you're still using applications running on the 3.x API, it's time to plan the transition to VertiGIS Studio.

While your Geocortex Essentials apps will continue to work for now, it's important to act with urgency. The clock is ticking, and the 3.x API retirement is fast approaching. If you're still using applications running on the 3.x API, it's time to transition. Waiting too long could result in your applications no longer functioning if a breaking change is introduced to the ecosystem, such as a browser update that breaks the 3.x API. Don't wait until it's too late - make the transition to VertiGIS Studio now to future-proof your applications and avoid potential headaches down the road.

While your Geocortex Essentials viewers will continue to work, it's recommended to transition applications to VertiGIS Studio to take advantage of new capabilities in ArcGIS and keep up with changes in browser technology.

If a breaking change is introduced to the ecosystem, such as a browser update that breaks the 3.x API, Esri won't provide support or build a fix. This means that applications running on the 3.x API will no longer function. This affects applications built using Geocortex Essentials, ArcGIS Web AppBuilder, and any custom-built applications.



We understand that software transitions can be overwhelming, especially when it comes to your critical GIS applications. We've noted this has created a sense of urgency among our customers. We want to assure you that making the transition from Geocortex Essentials to VertiGIS Studio is the best way to position your organization for continued success with your ArcGIS deployment. Don't worry, we're here to help you every step of the way.

VertiGIS Studio is built using the ArcGIS Maps SDK for JavaScript, providing the best way to build apps for the modern Esri framework. Many of our customers have already made the transition, and we're excited to help you get there, too.

Trust our experience in changing technology

There are thousands of public-facing Geocortex apps, and probably multiples of that non-public or internally facing. Retiring any product with such prevalent use has huge impacts, and that's true for our popular offering.

At VertiGIS, we recognize the importance of technology transitions and are very experienced in managing them. We've done this before; you can trust our guidance through this process. In the past 15 years alone, we have assisted our customers in migrating from ArcIMS to ArcGIS Server with Web ADF, then to Flex and Silverlight Viewers, and then Web AppBuilder. You could say that we are experts in navigating the modernization of web GIS applications.



Why use VertiGIS Studio over other platforms?

Avoid custom code

- Whether you develop your apps in-house or hire a consultant, customizing them with programming locks them into a specific language and architecture. This approach is expensive up-front, expensive to maintain, and especially expensive to re-write or re-platform. Instead, consider configuring your apps with a flexible, technology-agnostic approach.

Create fully customized applications that are tailored to your business, without the need for custom code

- With VertiGIS Studio, you can create fully customized applications that are tailored to your business, without the need for custom code. VertiGIS Studio not only allows you to configure our Studio Web viewer with a highly configurable interface, but it also enables you to extend your applications with the powerful capabilities of Workflow, Reporting, and Printing. This means that you can tailor your applications to meet your organization's needs, making it easier than ever to manage multiple apps at once. With VertiGIS Studio, you can create fully customized applications that are tailored to your business, without the need for custom code.
- To find out more about these capabilities, check out the [VertiGIS Studio product](#) website.

Extend Esri viewers with VertiGIS Studio capabilities

- With VertiGIS Studio, you can easily create configurable widgets and templates that can be imported into your Experience Builder apps. This means that you can take advantage of the powerful capabilities of VertiGIS Studio, including Workflow, Reporting, and Printing, to create fully customized applications that meet your organization's needs.





Accessibility

- Many jurisdictions and organizations are legally requiring accessibility support for web offerings; as technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, historic exemptions for web mapping are being eliminated. Studio Web viewers are fully WCAG 2.0 compliant. Not only are accessible web offerings mandated in many regions, but it's also simply the right thing to do. No group should be excluded from leveraging the amazing power that mapping technology offers.

Have a strategy for managing multiple apps

- Esri customers who pursue a web strategy often develop multiple apps. While it may start with just one, it usually grows to several, if not dozens. Mismanagement of these apps can increase maintenance burdens and costs and hinder the ability to advance to more modern technologies. To avoid this, it is important to have a shared framework for managing several apps at once. This framework should include configuration, business logic, and deployment patterns.
- VertiGIS Studio's deployment stages can help you create a software development lifecycle that is tailored to your organization's needs.



Where to Begin

Adopt new technology right away and incrementally. There's a saying: "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time, of course." Organizations can make the mistake of believing they have to wait for emerging technologies to mature or approach feature parity before migrating their "workhorse" applications over. Our experience shows that it's much more productive to start using emerging technology as soon as it's released (or even in pre-release) for lighter weight apps or new requirements.

Let's plot out some first steps and questions to ask yourself as you begin to plan your transition.

Phase 1: Plan

Step 1: Inventory

- Take inventory of what needs to be transitioned. As you begin your transition to VertiGIS Studio, it's important to understand the size and complexity of your current Geocortex Essentials deployment. Consider the following to help you get a sense of scale for your project:
- Who are your users, and how many of them are there?
- How many apps do you currently maintain?
- How many workflows have you built, and what do they do for your business?
- Are these workflows built using Geocortex Workflow (e.g. .xaml format) or VertiGIS Studio?
- What is your current network environment and topology?
- Are you still using Geocortex report and/or print templates? If so, how many?
- Do you have any custom-coded components in your app(s)? If so, are they still necessary? Consider whether there is another way to offer the same functionality to your users with out-of-the-box capabilities or configuration.

By taking inventory of your current deployment, you can separate the transition into manageable chunks.

Step 2: Assessment

Dive into your business's strategy and evolving needs. A significant benefit of a transition like this is that it offers an opportunity to assess your GIS and other business systems. This allows you to consider not only their current state, but also how they should operate in the future.

When transitioning to VertiGIS Studio from Geocortex Essentials, consider this an opportunity to build applications with new and improved functionality. Rather than simply recreating your apps, approach each design decision with fresh eyes and think about how you can improve upon your previous versions.

Step 3: Learn

"If I had five minutes to chop down a tree, I'd spend the first three sharpening my axe." Before we act, there is value in knowing our tools and sharpening our approach. VertiGIS Studio offers a variety of enablement resources to help you maximize your tools, such as:

- [VertiGIS Studio Documentation](#)
- [VertiGIS Studio Developer Center](#)
- [VertiGIS Training](#)
- [VertiGIS Studio Demos](#)
- [VertiGIS Community](#)

Our training courses, offered by our partner organization TeachMeGIS, are the best way to improve your VertiGIS Studio skills and get a head start on your development. Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn from the experts and build better web GIS applications. Check out [TeachMeGIS' training courses](#) now! These have tons of value for both decision makers and technical implementers.

Step 4: Explore

Explore the VertiGIS Studio SaaS options. Consider the benefits for your organization:

- **Infrastructure:** No hardware costs, no installation needed, and public accessibility. VertiGIS Studio SaaS is a cloud-based platform, allowing you to focus on building and keeping your applications without worrying about the underlying infrastructure. Coupled with ArcGIS Online, you can reduce your infrastructure maintenance to zero.
- **Scalability:** VertiGIS Studio SaaS is designed for scalability. This allows you to easily accommodate growth in usage or demand for your applications without having to worry about provisioning additional servers or infrastructure.
- **Security:** Our DevOps team manages security for you, and we are SOC 2 & ISO 27001 compliant. This ensures that your applications are secure and compliant with industry standards.
- **Updates:** Automatic, effortless updates are built into VertiGIS Studio Designers. This means that you can enjoy the latest features and improvements without the hassle of manually updating your applications.
- **Time & Money:** All the above add up to saved time, which gives you more time to solve real GIS problems. Spend your valuable time & money on what's important to your business.

If any of these benefits are appealing to you, consider deploying with VertiGIS Studio SaaS. For more information, reach out to us at transition@vertigis.com.



Phase 2: Act

Step 1: Replace existing functionality

Replace Geocortex Essentials capabilities with corresponding VertiGIS Studio products. Geocortex Essentials sites typically include workflows built using the Geocortex Workflow Designer, as well as Report and Print templates built using Geocortex Reporting and Print designers. Remember having to remote desktop to your server to get to designer? That's no longer an issue: all VertiGIS Studio designers are web applications that you can access in your browser.

VertiGIS Studio Workflows, Reports, and Prints work in both Geocortex Essentials and VertiGIS Studio Web, supplying a seamless transition for your existing applications. A good first place to start is to make sure all your workflows are built using VertiGIS Studio Workflow, as opposed to the legacy workflow modelling tool in Geocortex Essentials. Workflows built in the new designer are future-proofed and ready to be deployed in viewers using the new APIs.

The same goes for your report and print templates – ensure these are built in VertiGIS Studio Reporting and VertiGIS Studio Printing to have them ready for use in the future.

In terms of permissions, VertiGIS Studio Access Control extends the existing ArcGIS sharing permissions model with fine-grained permissions that allow you to tailor your data and applications, so your users see only what you want them to see.

Step 2: Export your site to a web map

This is a key piece of transitioning your Geocortex Essentials applications. Your site in Geocortex Essentials was the definition of map services and layer configuration. With VertiGIS Studio, your web map becomes the source of map service and layer configuration. Once you've got your web map, you can begin creating your VertiGIS Studio application with all the capabilities we offer.

Using the Export Web Map module tool, you can save your existing Essentials site directly to a web map without spending significant time building a web map in ArcGIS Pro or the ArcGIS Enterprise Map Viewer.

This tool ensures that all your layer, field, and feature-description settings, including layer aliases and visibility settings, field aliases and hyperlinks, popup descriptions, and more, are saved.

This feature is game-changing and can significantly reduce the amount of time customers spend on creating web maps, especially those with dozens of layers and attributes. With this tool, you can save hours or even days of work.

We offer detailed step-by-step instructions for exporting a Geocortex Essentials viewer as a web map for use in VertiGIS Studio in our comprehensive knowledge base article, which you can access here: [Export a Geocortex Essentials viewer as a web map for use in VertiGIS Studio](#). This guide is essential for anyone interested in simplifying their web map creation process.

Step 3: Build and deploy

Build your applications to be what you need. This is the big step, but with VertiGIS Studio, it won't be daunting!

VertiGIS Studio provides integrated [deployment stages](#) that facilitate the maintenance of a software development life cycle for applications. This approach enables transparency, simplifies estimation and scheduling, allows for better management of risks and costs, and provides a methodical way of delivering software that satisfies customers and enhances satisfaction.

With VertiGIS Studio Web, you can take your web maps and display them exactly how you want with a fully configurable viewer framework that goes beyond what was possible in Geocortex Essentials. Adjust the UI layout and branding colours, and incorporate your VertiGIS Studio workflows, reports, and print templates to create a better version of your applications than ever before.

VertiGIS Studio Mobile simplifies mobile GIS app creation to meet your organization's needs. It deploys your app to Android, iOS, and Windows with a single app. Field data collection is easy with VertiGIS Studio Mobile, which supports offline data access, enabling field users to access and edit your GIS data even without an internet connection.



Phase 3: Review and continue to evolve

Step 1: Test & discuss

Remember the business processes we discussed in Phase 1. Your applications should meet these needs. Reach out to your internal customers to discuss: does what you have meet your needs? This can be quite a diverse conversation, but almost invariably will result in adjustments to your approach.

Step 2: Continual improvement

Improve your app(s) with other VertiGIS Studio capabilities. Your business needs should be met by your apps. Is your app where you need it to be? Consider making it even better by adding advanced activity monitoring and analytics with VertiGIS Studio Analytics or integrating full-text search capabilities with VertiGIS Studio Search.

Step 3: Reap the rewards

With your new VertiGIS Studio web GIS applications, you can take your organization to new heights. You'll be able to work faster, more efficiently, and more effectively than ever before. It's time to celebrate your hard work and the progress you've made. We can't wait to see what you will accomplish with VertiGIS Studio.

I'm ready to get started, but what are my options?

Don't worry, we aren't going to leave you hanging with such a major technology shift on the horizon. Our approach at VertiGIS has always been to help our customers stay aligned with Esri's evolving business and technology models, and we are committed to that to this day. Below we've supplied some proposed options for how to go ahead:

1. Self directed option

Going back to the earliest days of Geocortex Essentials, one of the main values of our products has always been the ease with which GIS Analysts can build their own web GIS applications.

If you have the skills and knowledge – or are willing to roll up your sleeves and develop them – then you should begin diving into the VertiGIS Studio suite of products and get started on building new versions of your web apps.

During your transition period, you'll build your replacement apps, and you can keep the old apps running while you build and test the new ones. This gives you breathing room to tweak the new apps, make them even better than the old ones.

2. Developer coaching

Want to rebuild your apps on your own, but need just a little bit of help to get yourself over a hump? We offer low-cost Developer Assistance/Developer Coaching options to give that little boost to customers who can build most of their apps themselves but have some questions or want some feedback along the way.

3. Hire our professional services team to do it for you

Lack the time or resources to rebuild your own apps? The VertiGIS Professional Services team are always available to help our customers build the apps they need. They can help you scope a project, decide a budget, and rebuild your apps for you on the 4.x SDK. Once development is complete, they'll aid with testing and QA before handing you the keys to your brand new, fully optimized web app.

4. Managed services *BEST VALUE*

We know that resourcing for GIS departments has been a major issue in recent years. Do you have apps that need transitioning, but are already struggling to keep your legacy apps? Consider the VertiGIS Managed Services program. Through this annual subscription program, the VertiGIS team will not only transition you and your web GIS apps over to VertiGIS Studio, but we'll also keep them for the duration of your subscription! This ensures your apps are always up-to-date and functioning the way you need and it frees up time for you and your staff to work on other priorities.

Ready to get started? Contact us at transition@vertigis.com for more info.
Visit www.vertigisstudio.com