



# How to Customize the ArcToolbox™ Window for Project Work

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# How to Customize the ArcToolbox Window for Project Work

## An ESRI Short Tutorial

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# How to Customize the ArcToolbox Window for Project Work

ArcGIS Modules Used: ArcGIS® 9.1—ArcToolbox™ (from ArcCatalog™ or ArcMap™)

Setup Time: +/- 20 minutes

## Brief Workflow Description

This workflow starts with creating a project toolbox that will then be populated with the geoprocessing tools used in the project. Since all other toolboxes and tools are not needed, they will be removed. Once the project toolbox is complete, it is ready to be saved, which allows it to be shared with colleagues and reloaded whenever the project is worked on. In a final step, the ArcToolbox window is restored to its initial state with the full set of toolboxes.

The intent here is to show how to easily customize the ArcToolbox window for your project. You will start with the basics and become familiar with the steps involved to further customize a toolbox based on your project requirements such as setting a current and a scratch workspace, an output spatial reference, grid levels, and processing tolerances. The overall goal of creating a project toolbox through customization is that you will be able to focus on your work—instead of the GIS software—and let GIS do its job.

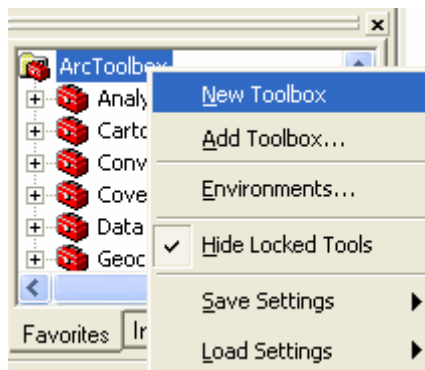
## Preparation

- Open ArcCatalog or ArcMap.
- Open the ArcToolbox window by clicking the ArcToolbox icon  on the ArcCatalog or ArcMap toolbar.

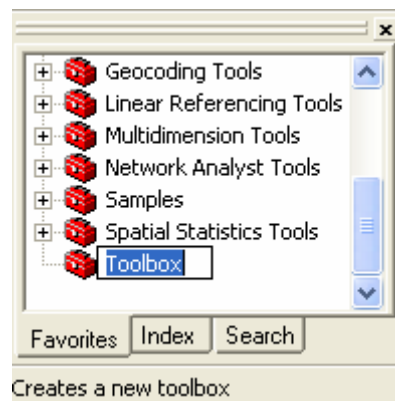
## Workflow Steps

### *Creating a Toolbox for Your Project*

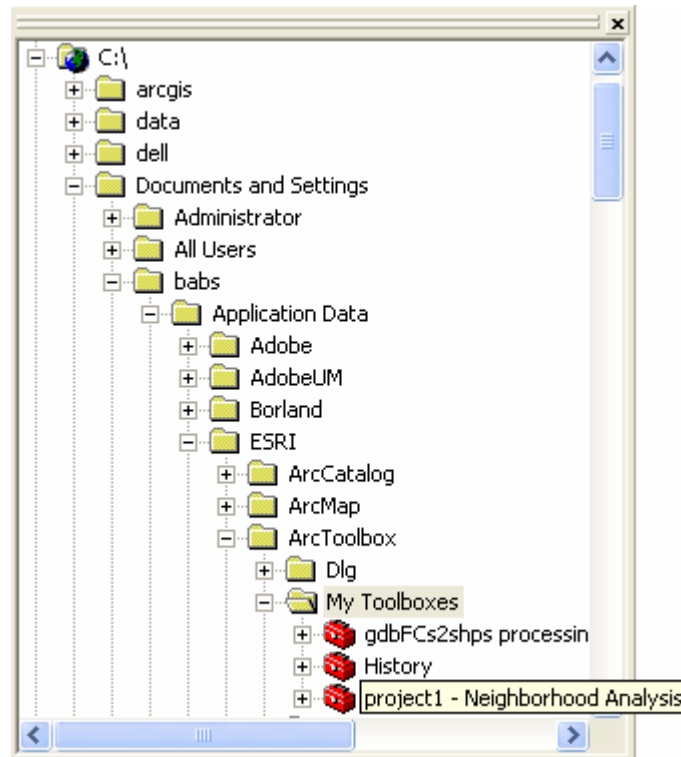
1. Move the mouse pointer to the ArcToolbox window and right-click in the white space or alternatively select ArcToolbox, right-click it, and select New Toolbox from the context menu.



Note that the ArcToolbox window is refreshed and a toolbox has been added to the bottom, indicating that it is ready to be named.

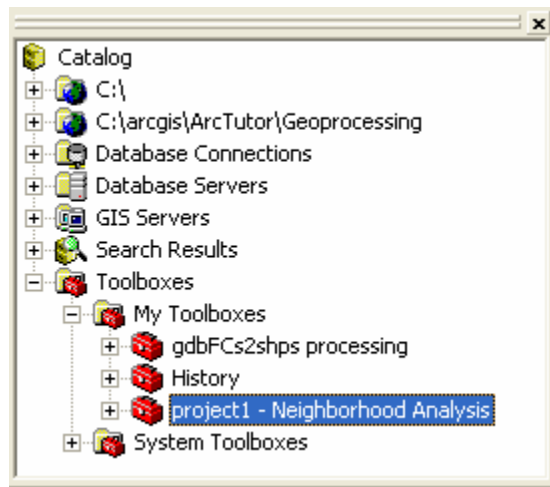


2. Rename the toolbox by typing a name that is descriptive enough for another person to understand. For this exercise, name it project1 - Neighborhood Analysis.

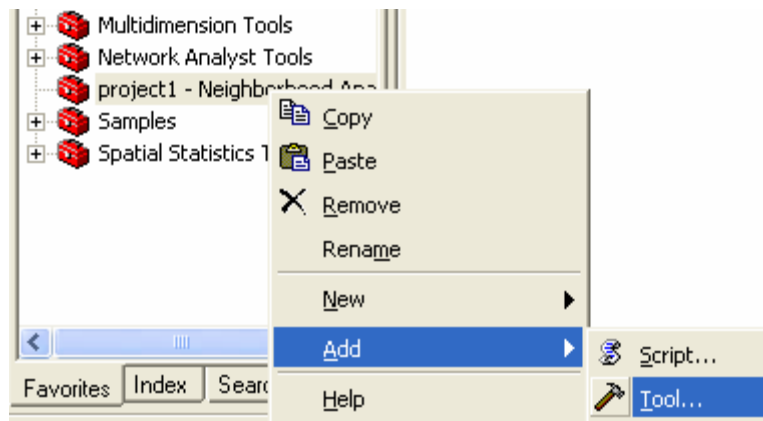


**Note:** Any toolbox you create is saved in the My Toolboxes folder in your profile on your computer.

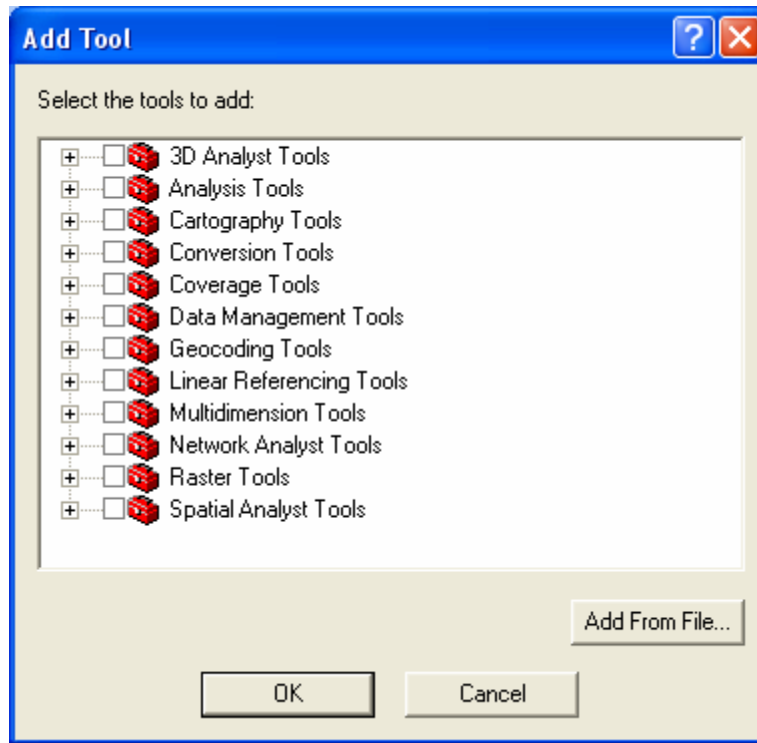
You can see all toolboxes you created in the My Toolboxes toolbox in the catalog tree and add, edit, or remove any toolboxes, toolsets, and tools it contains.



3. Move your mouse pointer to the new toolbox and right-click it.
4. From the context menu that opens, point to Add, then click Tool.



The Add Tool dialog box opens, showing a tree with all system toolboxes. On the dialog box, the Add From File button in the lower right allows you to add a custom tool such as a .exe.

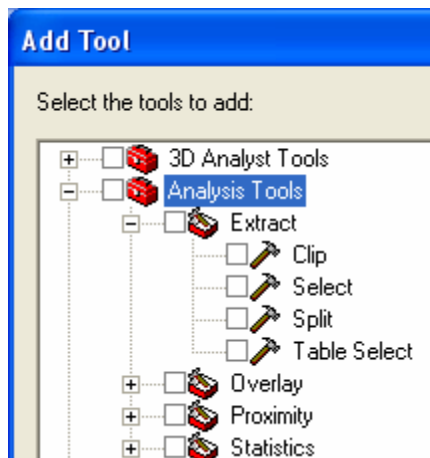


Next, select all the tools to use in your specific project. If you do not yet know all the ones you will be using, you can return to this step later to add more tools to your project toolbox.

5. For this exercise, select Analysis Tools. Click the plus sign to the left of the label to expand its tree branch and see all Analysis toolsets, namely, Extract, Overlay, Proximity, and Statistics.



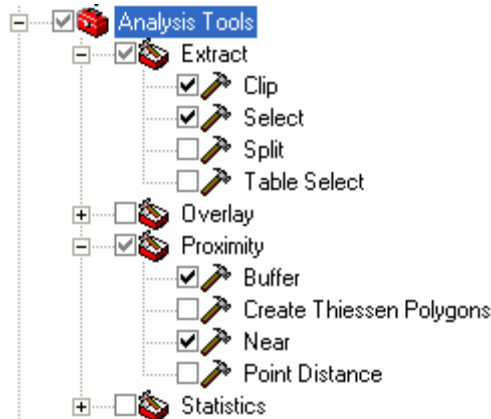
6. Click the plus sign to the left of the Extract toolset to expand its tree branch.



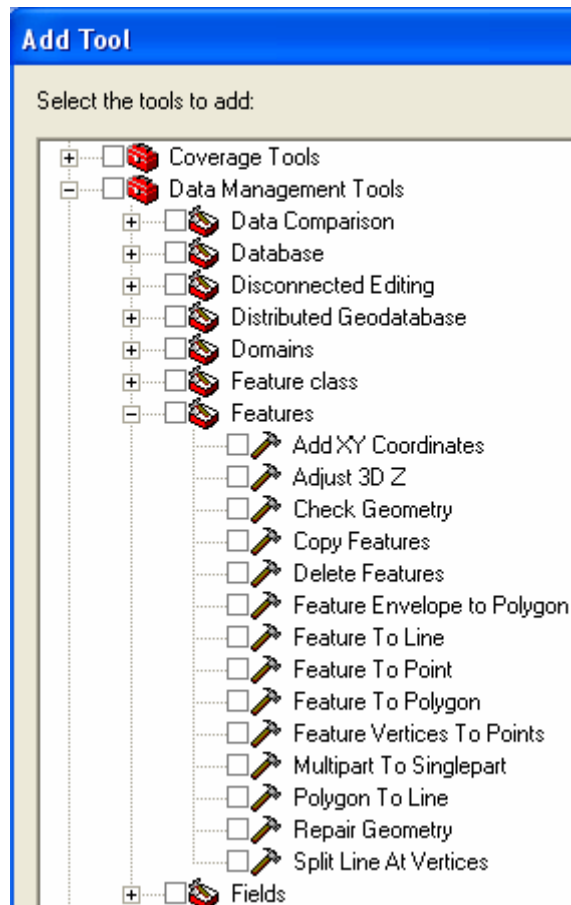
7. Check the Clip and Select tools check boxes.

Note that the Extract toolbox and Analysis Tools check boxes are now also checked.

8. Click the plus sign to the left of the Proximity toolset, and check the Buffer and Near tools check boxes. Note, as above, that the Proximity toolset check box is now also checked. Your interface will look as shown below.



9. Likewise, you will select a few Data Management Tools. Click the plus sign to expand the Data Management Tools tree.



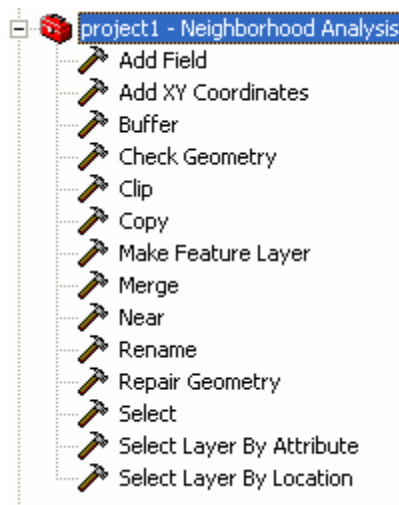


10. Click the Features toolset to expand its tree, and check the Add XY Coordinates, Check Geometry, and Repair Geometry tools check boxes.
11. For easier navigation to other toolsets in Data Management Tools, close the Features toolset by clicking the minus sign to the left of its label.

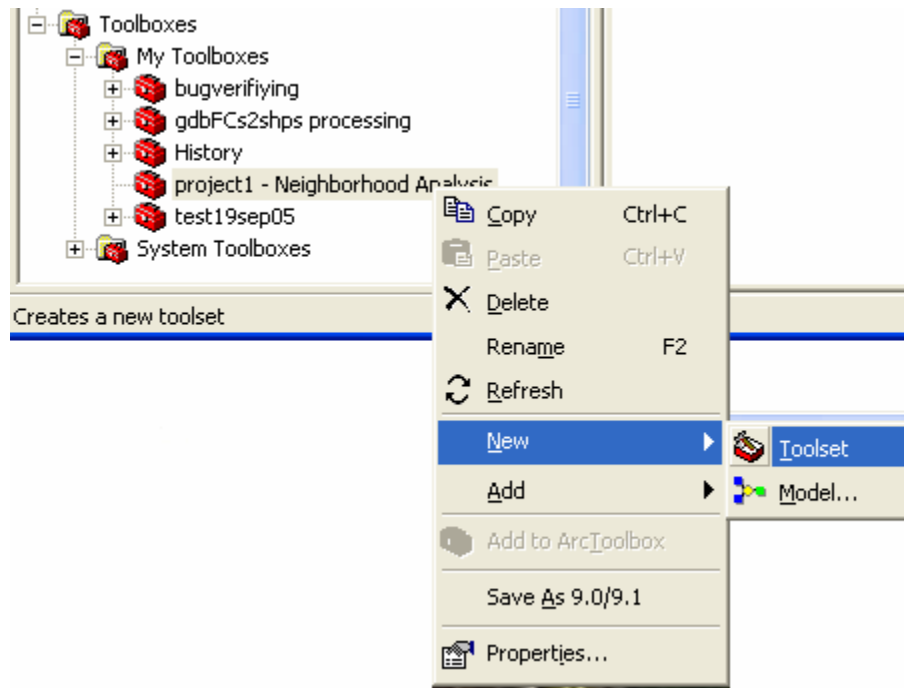


12. In the Fields toolset, check the Add Field tool check box, then close the Fields toolset by clicking its minus sign.
13. Following this pattern, add the following tools from the General toolset: Copy, Merge, and Rename. From the Layers and Table Views toolset, add the Make Feature Layer, Select Layer by Attribute, and Select Layer by Location tools.
14. Click OK to save your selection and close the Add Tools dialog box.

This depicts the project toolbox you have created, containing all the tools you added.

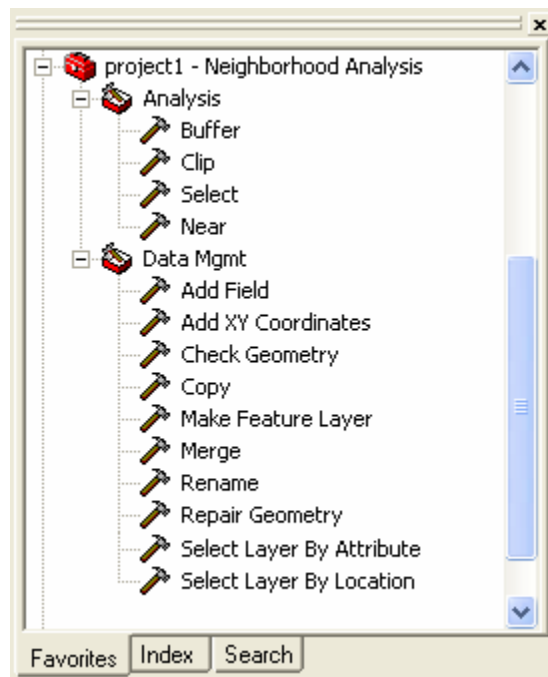


Alternatively, you can further categorize your project toolbox content by creating toolsets prior to adding tools (step 4). To accomplish this, right-click your project toolbox, point to New, then click Toolset. Name the toolset Analysis.



Right-click the toolbox again, point to New, then click Toolset from the submenu. Name this toolset Data Mgmt. This allows you to maintain the distinction of the tools' origin.

Now, right-click the Analysis toolset and point to Add, then click Tool. From the Add Tools dialog box, repeat steps 5 through 8 above to select the Clip, Select, Buffer, and Near tools. Then, right-click the Data Mgmt toolset and add the tools as outlined in steps 10 through 13 above. Click OK. Your project toolbox with toolsets will appear as follows.



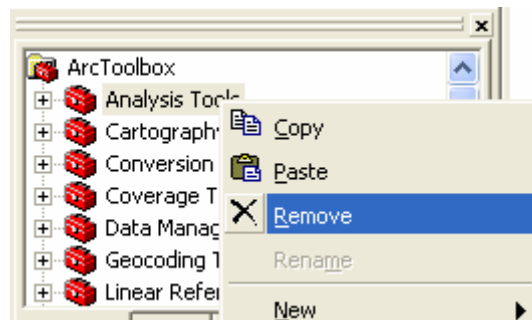
### ***Removing Toolboxes Not Used During Your Project Work***

In the next step, you will customize the ArcToolbox window further for easy project work by removing the system toolboxes you do not need from the ArcToolbox window.

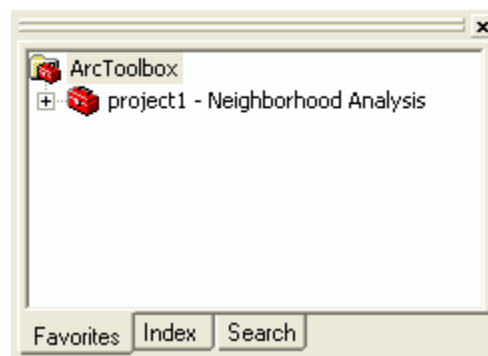
**Note:** Removing a system toolbox does not delete it; it only removes it from view in the ArcToolbox window.

Later, you will learn how to restore the ArcToolbox window to its initial install state. Remember, you always have access to all system toolboxes from the Catalog tree.

1. In the ArcToolbox window, right-click Analysis Tools and click Remove from the context menu.



2. Repeat this step with all toolboxes you want to remove until only your project toolbox is left. Your ArcToolbox window will appear as follows.

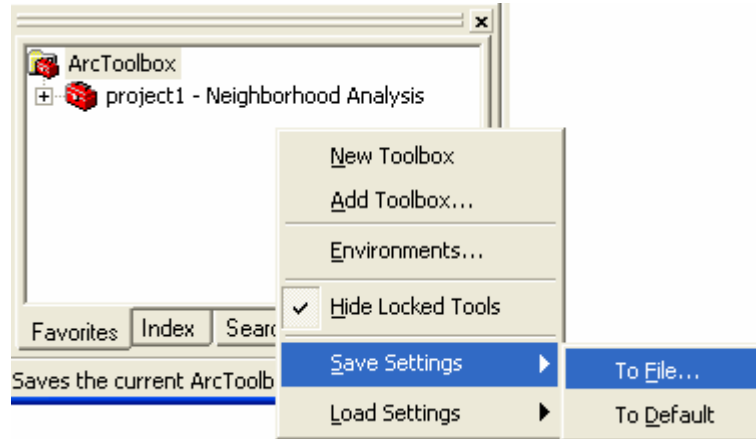


Note that you can keep any of the toolboxes you need alongside your project toolbox.

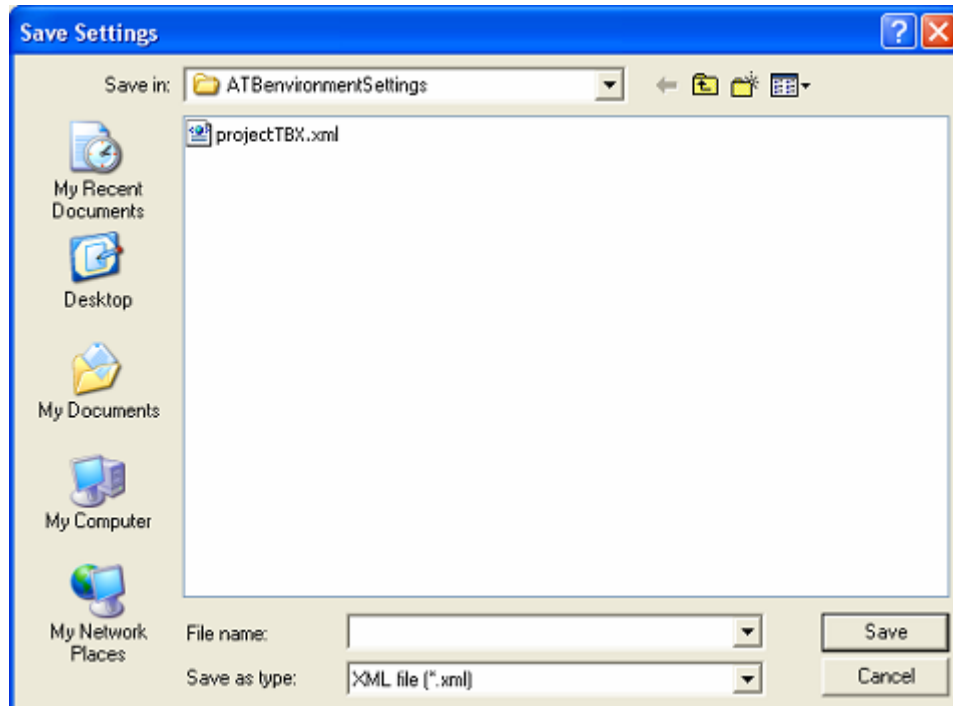
### *Saving Your ArcToolbox Window Customization*

Next, save this ArcToolbox window setting to a file, so you can load it back into another ArcGIS application, share it with others, or restore your project at a later time.

1. Right-click in the white space of the ArcToolbox window and point to Save Settings, then click To File from the context submenu.



The Save Settings dialog box opens.

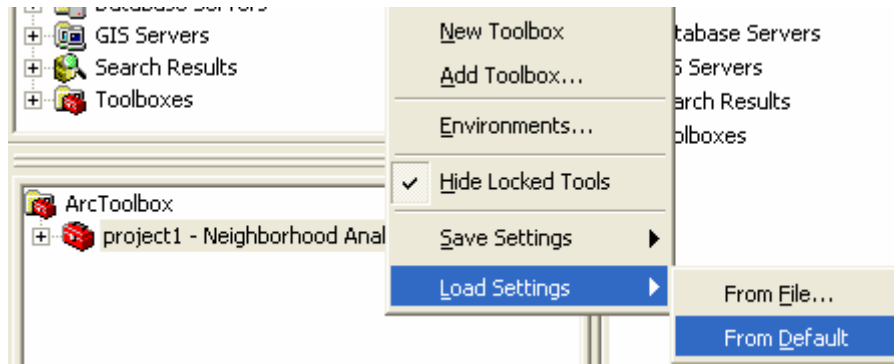


2. Navigate to the folder in which everything related to that specific project is stored. Type "project1tbx" in the File name text box, and click Save to save the .xml file and close the dialog box.

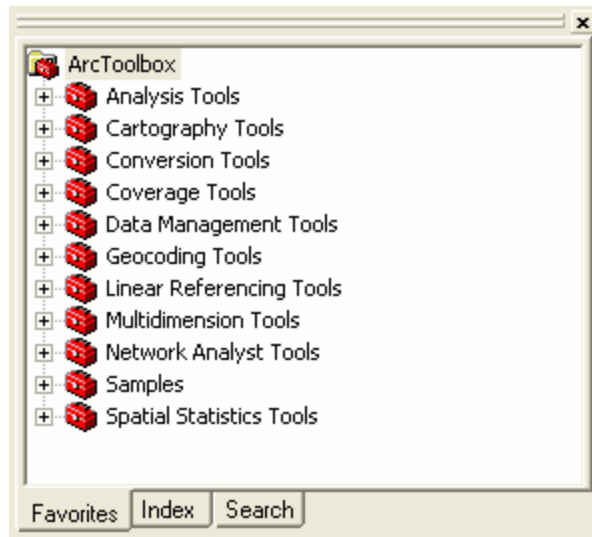
### Testing Your Saved ArcToolbox Window Customization

To test the ArcToolbox window customization you created for your project work, restore the ArcToolbox window to the settings it had when you opened this ArcCatalog session.

1. Right-click in the white area of the ArcToolbox window, point to Load Settings, then click From Default from the context submenu.



Note that the ArcToolbox window now displays the toolboxes you started with for this ArcCatalog session. As mentioned earlier, you always have access to the full set of system toolboxes from the Catalog tree window, and it is from there that you restore the ArcToolbox window to its initial install set of toolboxes shown below.



2. To return to your project toolbox, right-click again in the white area of the ArcToolbox window, point to Load Settings, then click From File from the context submenu.

The Load Settings dialog box opens.

3. Navigate to the folder in which you saved the project settings, and select the .xml file.
4. Click Open to load the file with your project toolbox settings; this also closes the Load Settings dialog box.

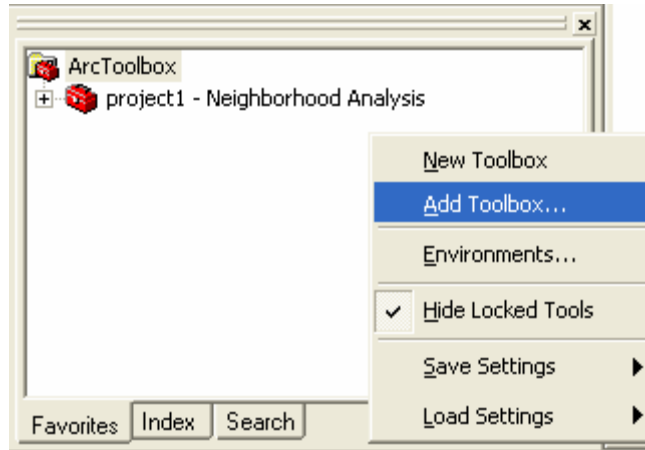
You have successfully customized the ArcToolbox window for your project work.

For additional projects, you will need to repeat all of the above steps under Creating a Toolbox for Your Project, Removing Toolboxes Not Used During Your Project Work, and Saving Your ArcToolbox Window Customization.

### *Restoring the ArcToolbox Window to Its Initial Install State*

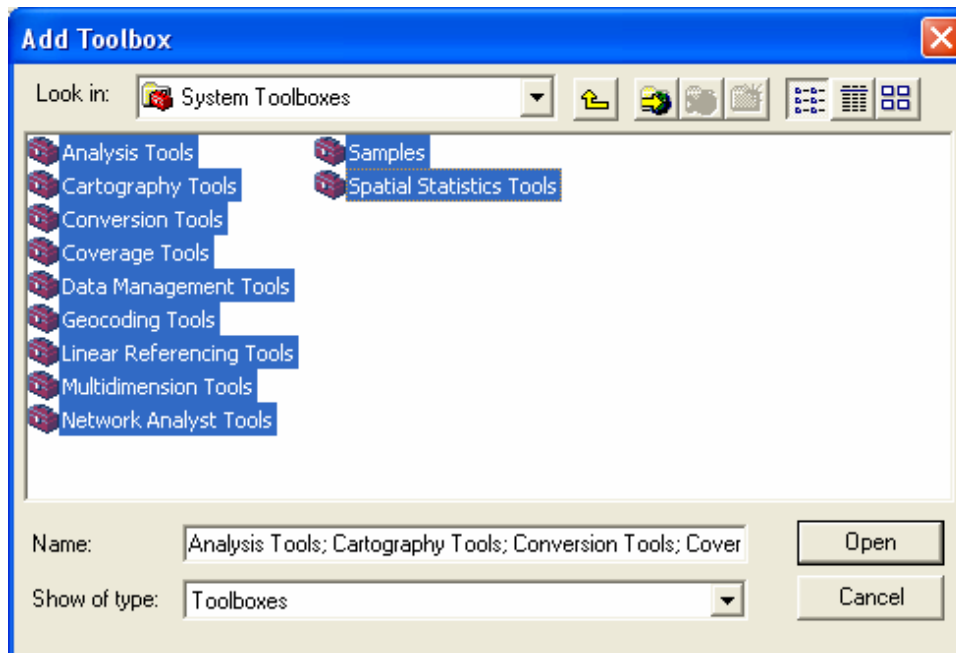
To restore the ArcToolbox window to its initial install state, complete the next three steps.

1. Right-click in the white area of the ArcToolbox window. From the context menu that opens, click Add Toolbox.

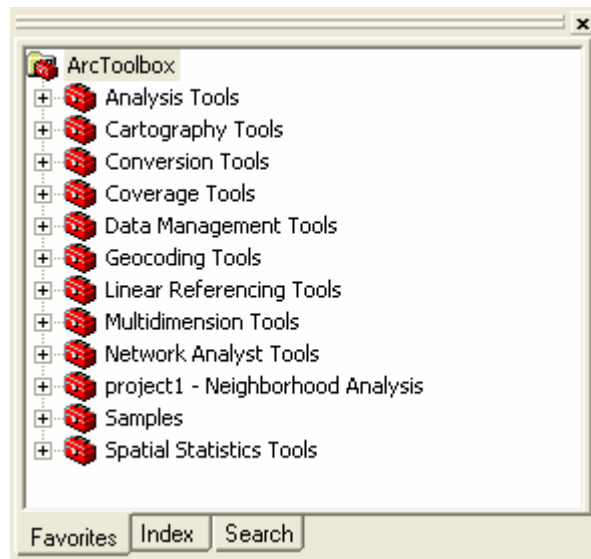


The Add Toolbox dialog box opens.

2. In the Catalog tree, navigate to the Toolboxes folder, double-click to open it, then double-click the System Toolboxes folder to open it. Select Analysis Tools, hold down the Shift key, and click Spatial Statistics Tools; this selects all system toolboxes.



3. Click Open to save your selection, close the Add Toolbox dialog box, and return to the ArcToolbox window. The ArcToolbox window will now appear as follows.



Note that your project toolbox is listed with the system toolboxes.

### ***Sharing Your Saved ArcToolbox Window Customization***

To share your saved ArcToolbox window settings with your project team, e-mail them the .xml file you saved, share the folder in which you saved it, or set up a shared project folder that holds all project .xml files. To safeguard your resources, make sure to provide only read-only access to the .xml files.

To further customize the environment settings and include them in your saved settings (.xml file), refer to the How To Set Workspace Environments for Project Work document.

This concludes the tutorial.