Tools, Tips and Workflows

GeoCue Adds Project Archiving in V2017 Release

GeoCue, v2017

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One of the common requests we receive from our GeoCue users is to add the ability to archive or off-line projects when they are completed. Once a project has been completed and fully delivered to the customer, it needs to be transferred effectively out of production operations to an enterprise data archive. Archiving a completed project frees critical IT resources such as primary disk storage and simplifies operational back-up processes while providing an auditable compliance trail for any corporate or customer-required data retention policies. It also reduces the burden on on-going production staff of having to maintain and track historical projects, often for years after they are completed, in your live production database. Archiving can also reduce your overall business risk by adding another layer of data loss prevention by archiving to an off-site facility or to the cloud.

It is important to note that "archiving" is not the same as "backup" and archiving not intended to be used to replace a robust production data back-up and versioning policy. GeoCue already has automatic file backup and file versioning tools built-in to the GeoCue architecture. These existing backup tools are intended to provide short-term data recovery or rollback capabilities for live production projects. They are essentially error recovery tools for restoring data files while a project is still in production. Archiving or off-lining is intended to be used only at the end of a projects production life cycle as part of your data retention policy. As such, the new archiving tool in GeoCue extends the existing back-up and versioning tools already available, it does not replace them. Using both as part of your enterprise data management strategy will be of significant benefit.

Once you have upgraded to GeoCue V2017, the project archiving tool can be found under the Project Utilities menu on a new "Archive" tab. To archive a project, you should first flag the project as Inactive in Project Utilities; GeoCue will not allow you to archive Active projects.

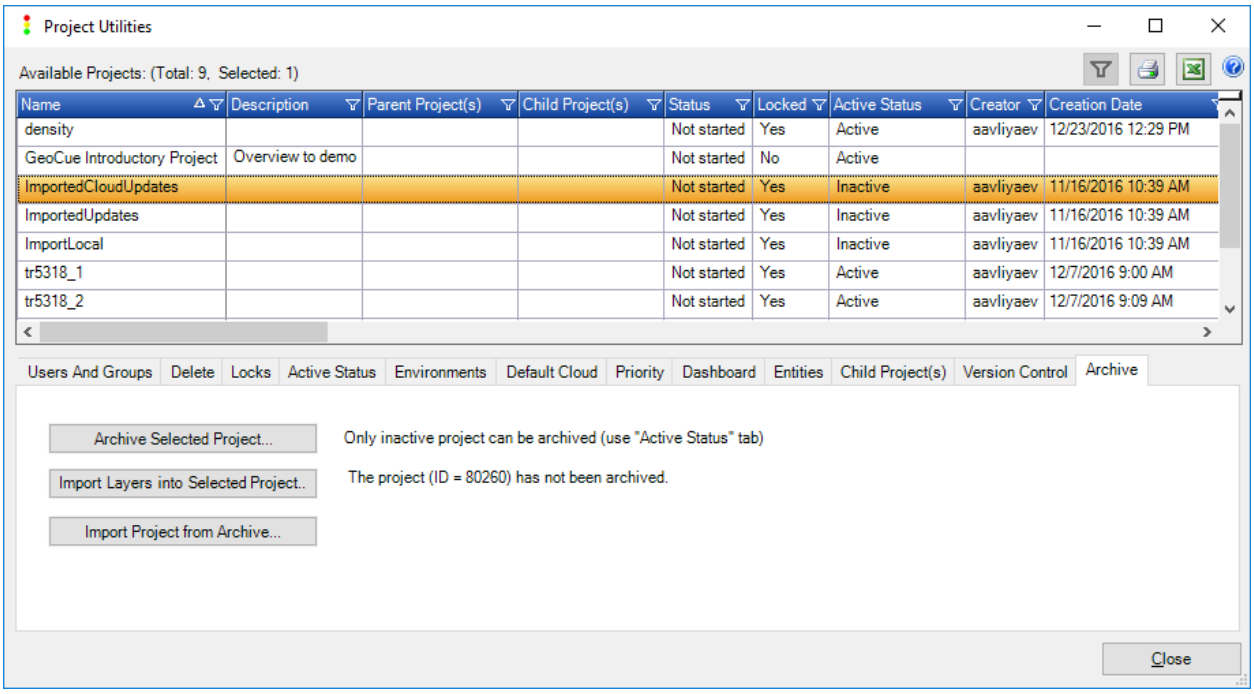

Figure 1 – Select Inactive project in the Project Utilities Dialog to Archive

Select the project you want to archive, verify it is flagged Inactive and click Archive Selected Project. This will bring-up the main archive settings dialog.

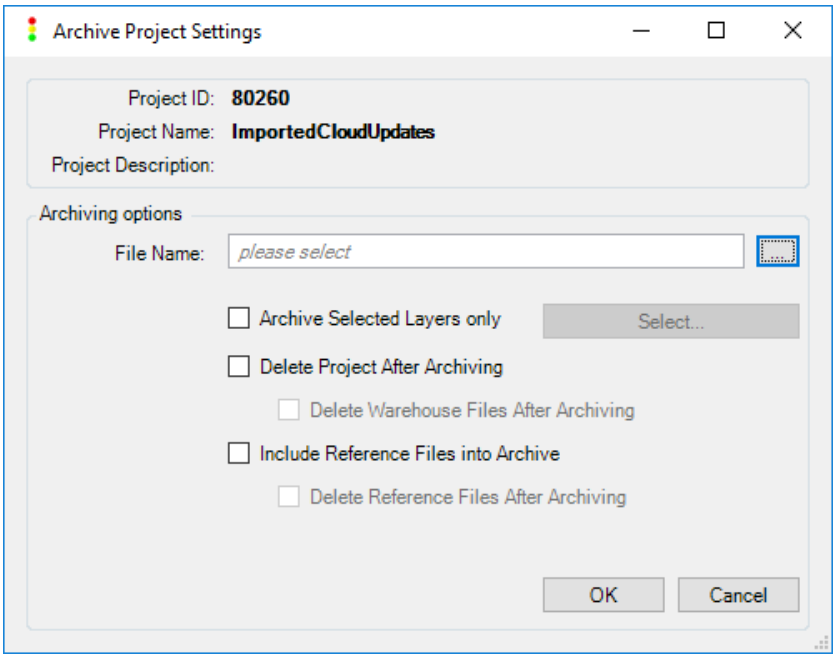

Figure 2 – Archive Project Settings Dialog

In the initial 2017 release, you will be able to archive to a local network location. Typically, this will be to a designated location for transfer to your main enterprise data archive, either a local repository such as

a tape backup or to off-site storage. Browse to and select the folder location and name for the archive file. A single GeoCue archive file will be created at this location. Note that you have options to delete the project completely from GeoCue after archiving, to only archive certain layers in a project and to include reference data in the archive if necessary. A significant benefit, should you chose to delete the project after archiving, is that the associated database records for that project will also be archived and then deleted from your production database, reducing the size of the database. Previously it was not possible to reduce the database size, even by deleting a project, so this capability adds significant convenience when you need to reduce the size of your database.

The archiving process itself will run in the background on the machine from which it is initiated – through GeoCue's Command Dispatch System (CDS) of course – once you click OK. If you need to recover a project in the future, you can re-import an archived project back to your live production database using the Import Project and Import Layers buttons. Again, please remember archiving is not intended to be used for backup or version control on a live project; only use it when you want to retire a project at completion. Keep in mind that if you are archiving data layers, the archive will have a corresponding file size since it will contain all your geospatial data.

In the initial release, GeoCue Archiving supports local archives only. However, we are adding cloud-based archiving to Amazon Web Services (AWS) later in 2017. This will add more robust cloud-based off-site capabilities to your data archiving procedures. Since data archiving is essentially used for long-term retention of data that is no longer actively used, it makes sense that a cloud-based repository will be the most cost-effective way to go in the future. Cloud-based archiving will be available as a subscription service directly through GeoCue, so you won't have to worry about configuring your own AWS archive or using a third-party provider.

We feel adding the benefits of project archiving, especially the reduced costs of primary storage and ability to reduce overall database size, will be of significant value to our GeoCue users. If you are dealing with regulatory data retention or compliance issues or you work with customers who have contractual requirements for long-term project data retention, you will find it invaluable. GeoCue Archiving is included in all levels of GeoCue Server except GeoCue Workstation, so we encourage you to evaluate it after you upgrade and let us know how it works for you and how it can be improved in the future.