



[esri.com](#) > [online support center](#) > [advanced search](#) > [view item](#)

## HowTo: Salvage a damaged ArcView project file

Article Number	10364
Software	<b>ArcView GIS</b> 3.0, 3.0a, 3.0b, 3.1, 3.2, 3.2a, 3.3
Platforms	N/A
Last Modified	12/17/2002

### Summary

A project file may get corrupted by system crashes, or by operations that yield one of these errors: Segmentation Violation, Floating Point Exception, Invalid Operation, or Invalid Page Fault. The causes for such situations are varied and are beyond the scope of this document.

### Procedure

Given that the extent of the damage to the project file is unknown, as it varies from case to case, there are various options you may pursue to attempt recovering a damaged project file.

- o Before attempting the recovery process:

**⚠ Make a copy of the damaged .apr file under a different name. This backup copy may be needed to revert to if some of the recovery options do not work.**

Keep in mind that an .apr file is a type of ODB file (object data base), and so you can open it and make changes to it using a text editor such as Notepad, WordPad in Windows, and textedit or vi in UNIX.

- o Basic recovery:

Import damaged project into a new project [-show me-](#)

A. Select Import from the Project menu, if it opens you are done.

B. Save this project to a different file name.

- o Data oriented project repair:

If the basic recovery process does not work, it may be that your project file has corrupt data or wrong data definitions. You need to identify and replace any corrupt data or wrong data definitions. [-show me-](#)

A. Open the .apr file in a text editor.

B. Use the editor's Find and Replace option to change the drive letter of all the data sources in the project.

For example, if all your data is on drive c:\ and a network drive f:\, replace c:\ and f:\ with a non-defined letter (z:\).

C. Open the apr file in ArcView.

If it can't find a dataset, it will prompt you to find it. Click Cancel All at that point.

If the project opens, some of your data sets or the references to the data sets are corrupt. You will need to use a process of elimination to determine which data set is corrupt.

A. Open a the .apr file in a text editor and search for the string 'Path:'.

Each object referenced by this string is a FileName object, which provides the source name for the data file. As you search for all occurrences of 'Path:', you will notice text lines that look like this:

```
(FN.958
      Path:  "c:/ /sample.shp"
```

B. Use a textfile, or a piece of paper, to create a list of all data sources, skip duplicate definitions.

C. Do a project repair on each data source to determine which data ArcView is unable to find (refer to page 46 of your "Using ArcView GIS" book).

For example, assume that your project file contains the following data paths:

```
c:/gisdata/pop_90.dbf
c:/gisdata/county.shp
c:/gisdata/images/backgrnd.tif
```

Find and replace the pop\_90.dbf string with something like 'testing'. When ArcView reads the FileName object referring to 'testing', it will pause and ask you to find 'c:/gisdata/testing'.

D. Click Cancel if ArcView asks you to find the data source.

If the .apr file opens successfully, there is something wrong with that data set or a reference to that data set. Save the project without the corrupt data set.

If the project still does not open, you will need to test each data set until you find the set or sets that are keeping your project from opening.

- o Document oriented project repair:

If after removing all the data sets from the project it still does not open, you probably have corrupt document object. To determine if you have a bad reference in your document list you will again use the process of elimination. [-show me-](#)

A. Restore the .apr file from the backup copy you made earlier.

B. Open it in a text editor. The top of your .apr file should look like this:

```

/3.0
(ODB.1
    FirstRootClassName:      "Project "
    Roots:      2
    Version:      30
)

(Project.2
    Name:      "proj1.apr"
    CreationDate:      "Thursday, June 12, 1997 07:10:01"
    GUIName:      "Project"
    Win:      3
    CSMgr:      4
    VisGUIWidth:      70
    Doc:      5
    Doc:      177
    Doc:      143
    Doc:      187
    Doc:      39
    ActiveDoc:      187
    Buttons:      378
    Buttons:      379
    Buttons:      380
    Dependencies:      381
    Scripts:      382
    WorkDir:      1178
    WinX:      11
    WinY:      4
    WinW:      852
    WinH:      594
    SerialNumber:      "#####"
    SelColor:      1179
    GUINames:      1180
    GUINames:      1181
    GUINames:      1182
    GUINames:      1183
    GUINames:      1184
    GUINames:      1185
    GUINames:      1186

```

The object of interest is 'Project.2,' which contains this list of document objects:

```
Doc:      5
```

Doc: 177  
Doc: 143  
Doc: 187  
Doc: 39  
ActiveDoc: 187

B. Delete all but one of the document references. It is recommended that you keep the very first document in the list. If you have an Active Document, you need to delete that one as well.

C. Save the project.

D. Open it in ArcView.

If the project opens, you will most likely be able to salvage most of the project.

If it does not open, you need to use a process of elimination on groups of documents to indentify the documents that are causing the project to crash. You will need to take notes so you do not lose track of the documents you will be eliminating. When you remove a group of documents and the project opens, you will know that one or more of these documents that you eliminated are corrupt. If the project does not open, then you can assume one of the documents you left in the .apr file is causing it to crash. Use your editor's Undo function to restore the document references that were previously deleted, or restore the entire .apr file from the backup you made earlier. Select a group of documents to eliminate and continue testing documents until you are certain that none of them are corrupting your project.

Once you find the corrupt documents, you will need to remove them, save the project, reopen it, and recreate those documents.

o Miscellaneous recommendations:

You can keep the .apr file open in the text editor while you run the above tests. If you are on a Windows platform, and you are not familiar with your text editor, you may want to memorize these key sequences:

Ctrl+Z will Undo your last edit  
Ctrl+F is the shortcut to Find (except in Notepad)  
Ctrl+H is the shortcut to Find and Replace (except in Notepad)  
Esc will dismiss a window

After recovering your project, whether completely or partially, it is highly recommended you make and maintain a backup copy of it during the normal course of your work. You may need to revert to it in the eventuality the main file becomes corrupt again.

## Related Information

o [Segmentation Violation](#)

Segmentation Violations occur under various circumstances and can be caused by various factors. This document addresses the most common cases.

---

 [E-mail this article to a friend](#)

 [Print this article](#)

 [New search](#)

---

**Was this article helpful?**  Yes  No

Please provide any comments you have regarding this article.

**Comments**

**E-mail**

(optional)

**SUBMIT**

[Software](#) | [Data](#) | [Books](#) | [Consulting](#) | [Shop Online](#) | [News](#) | [Events](#) | [Careers](#) | [About ESRI](#) | [Support](#)  
[GIS Education & Training](#) | [Industry Applications](#) | [Partner Solutions](#) | [Library](#)

[Copyright](#) © ESRI. Send your comments to: [Site Manager](#).  
ESRI Web Site [Privacy Policy](#).