

TPC Desktop 2010

I have been using Traverse PC (TPC) since its inception in 1987, and for 30 years I have been a county surveyor and in private practice. I stopped using CAD programs because it seems like most CAD programs I'd used are designed by mathematicians and engineers for engineers and design professionals. TPC is designed by and for surveyors, and their methodology makes sense because it is from the surveyor's point of view. I rely entirely upon TPC to do my survey work and to prepare all my deliverables, such as drawings and reports.

COGO, closure, adjustments drawings, and file sharing are all there. Curves, right-of-way, least squares adjustments, GPS interface, including lat/lon, elevations, etc. are great. Everything I need in the drawing side of the program works well also. I do some GIS work, so exporting to .dxf, .shp, or .txt files is another plus. I also work with aerial photos, and bringing in images is very manageable.

TPC's latest release, TPC Desktop 2010, extends their core technologies that they call the Smart Survey System. I write about some of them in this review.

Views

TPC has used *Views* since it started in 1987. Views expose different parts of your survey, such as points, surfaces, and drawings. Once you learn the two or three views you use the most, you know the program—it's pretty simple.

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Using views is the most efficient way to work with surveys. It is fundamentally different from CAD, where you manage everything through a drawing. Views makes TPC fun and easy to use while being powerful and intuitive. The software provides the tools that help you make the decisions you have to make on every survey.

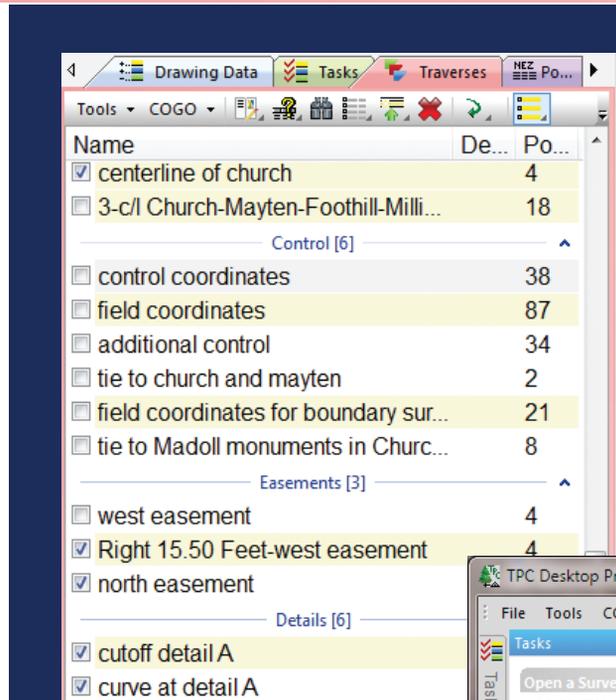


Figure 1

Figure 2 ▶

TPC Desktop 2010 places all the menus and toolbars for a view right in the view itself. If you are working with multiple monitors and place a view in the second monitor, you don't have to switch back to the first monitor to find a tool. Views can even have their own status bars. Now you can stay focused on the view you are working with even though you may have many views open.

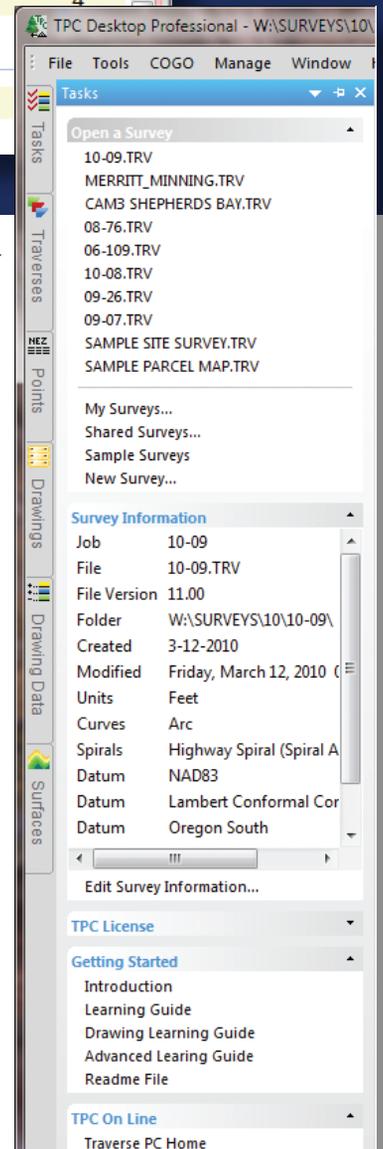
Managers

TPC Desktop 2010 also introduces *Managers*. These are views you use to manage parts of your survey that come in multiples. The drawings manager is a good example. It lists all the drawings in the survey (you can have as many as you want). Open the drawings manager

Figure 1 Managers include embedded menus and toolbars.

Figure 2 Tasks Manager provides immediate access to what you need.

Figure 3 Drawing Data Manager lists every object in a tree structure.



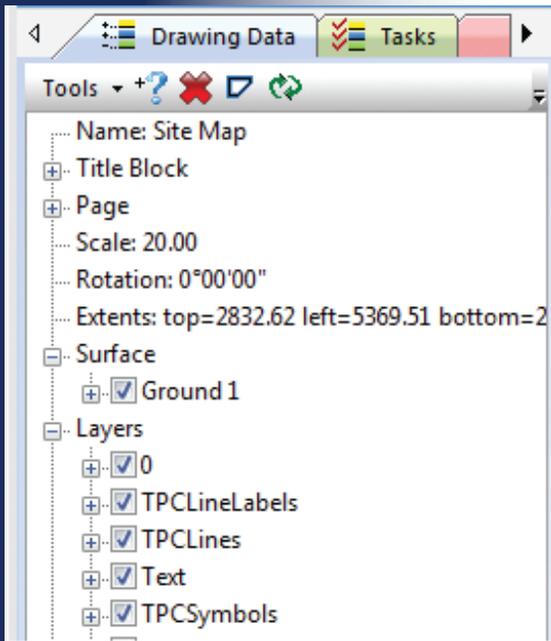


Figure 3

to select a drawing to work on, duplicate an existing drawing, or add a new one.

Managers use a Windows feature called *Groups*. The traverse manager shown in **Figure 1** displays the traverse groups for control, easements, and details. The functionality of groups makes it very easy to organize complex surveys. Because I work on a township level, my groups consist of a GPS group, and then 36 groups, named S.1, S.2, S.3 ... S.36 for all of the sections in the township. You can modify or make any number of groups of your choosing, then hide or show just the groups that you need to work on.

The new *tasks manager* (**Figure 2**) is like Grand Central Station. It lists the most recent surveys, displays information about the current survey, and provides links to help topics, learning guides, and online videos. It provides immediate access to things you need.

Examples of this are the My Surveys folder that takes you to your primary survey location, and the Shared Surveys folder that takes you to a secondary location such as file server or VPN. Now you can work in the office, in the field, or at home and easily access the surveys you want.

The TPC Desktop manages the views. It has done this since the DOS days and has been adapted seamlessly to Windows. Everything you do in TPC is done inside the TPC Desktop. TPC Desktop 2010 extends the TPC Desktop with conventions such as docking, autohide, tabs, and embedded menus to help you work more efficiently with views. If you are working on a notebook with limited screen space, auto hiding views will maximize your work space. On a desktop computer with multiple monitors, docking and tabbing views will give you maximum access to your survey data. You'll actually enjoy arranging the TPC Desktop the way you want. Of course, you can also save your desktop layouts and switch between your favorites.

By the way, you won't find ribbon bars in TPC Desktop 2010 because they take up way too much space and can be difficult to figure out. What you will find are context menus that exactly match the embedded pull-down menus, making it easy to learn and use the program your way.

More Key Components

A key component of TPC's Smart SurveySystem, called *Quick View*, does away with the CAD paradigm entirely. Because drawings are a subset of the data (rather than the data becoming a side-effect of the drawing), drawings update automatically (almost magically) when you update your data. With Quick View, you decide which traverses and surfaces to include in a drawing, and there they are. Then use Quick View settings to get the text size, line types, symbols, and other properties you want. Apply the settings globally for the whole drawing, to just part of the drawing, or right down to an individual drawing object. You'll figure out pretty quickly that this isn't CAD.

The new *Drawing Data Manager* (**Figure 3**) lists every object in the drawing in a familiar tree structure. Drawing

data is organized into branches for layers, traverses, blocks, raster images, surfaces, and fonts. Expand a branch to see all the layers, then expand the layer to see the objects on it.

Tag or untag any object to add or remove it from a drawing, or you can hide/unhide objects. Right click any item in the list and choose Properties to open that item for editing. Want to see which symbols and fonts you used in a drawing? Just expand those branches and take a look.

If you are interested in TPC Desktop 2010, watch the online videos on Traverse PC's website. And if you get a copy, I can almost guarantee you will be working efficiently right out of the box—as long as you take off your CAD hat first.

If you have used Traverse PC before, you will be happy to know that TPC Desktop 2010 uses the same views as previous versions so you don't have to re-learn the software. Even the hot keys (such as F6 for Closure View) are the same.

When you call Traverse PC, you talk with a live person. And because they are surveyors themselves and very knowledgeable about the program, you get all the help you need. The folks at Traverse PC are committed to making their users successful with the program, and the learning guides, help files, online videos and online training give you all the tools you need to learn the software.

TPC Desktop 2010 comes in three editions, Personal, Premium, and Professional. You purchase the edition that has the features you need, and if you need more features, you just pay the price difference to upgrade to the next edition. I give TPC Desktop 2010 a hearty thumbs up! ▼

BRUCE ANDERSON, LS has been the Kootenai County Surveyor in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho since 1990.

