Tip Sheet

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ArchiCAD 12
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Using ArchiCAD 12 with Google Earth

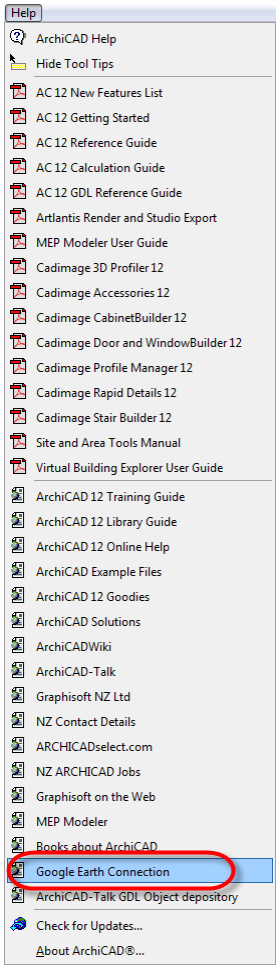
Google Earth is a virtual globe program. Google Earth has the capability to show 3D buildings and structures (such as bridges), which consist of users' submissions using ArchiCAD, Sketch Up, and other 3D modelling programs. In prior versions of Google Earth (before Version 4), 3D buildings were limited to a few cities, and had poorer rendering with no textures. Graphisoft announced bidirectional connectivity between ArchiCAD 12 and both Google Earth and the Google 3D Warehouse. Users can now download 3D models from building product manufacturers to use in their projects, plus they can publish their designs for the world to experience via Google Earth.

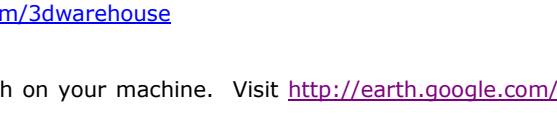
ArchiCAD's Google Earth Connections tool enables seamless communication between ArchiCAD and both Google Earth and the Google 3D Warehouse, offering bidirectional data communication with the programs in an integrated solution.

Google 3D Warehouse is a web site that lets users search, store and share 3D models. The models in the 3D Warehouse include everything for the 3D world: buildings, houses, bridges, statues, sculptures, furniture, cars, people, pets and much more. http://sketchup.google.com/3dwarehouse

Firstly, install Google Earth on your machine. Visit http://earth.google.com/download-earth.html to download, then install the file as instructed.

Within ArchiCAD go to the **Help** menu and click on **Google Earth Connection**. You will be connected to Graphisoft's website, and taken to their Google Earth page:
http://www.graphisoft.com/products/archicad-solutions/google_earth_connection.html
Scroll to the end of the page and download the Google Earth Connections package for ArchiCAD 12. Once the file is downloaded, Run the .exe file to Install.

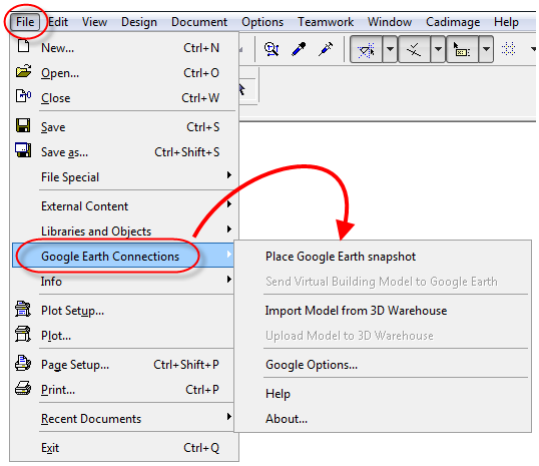




NOTE: *Google Earth Connections package is only available for Windows operating systems, not MAC OS X. However you can still get ArchiCAD models into Google Earth, see below.*

This webpage also has instructional videos to download.

Once the connection has been installed, a new pullout tab will appear in the ArchiCAD **File** menu called **Google Earth Connections**. This is your access point for importing and exporting Google Earth data.



This bidirectional Google Earth Connection enables ArchiCAD 12 users to:

Import terrain and coordinate information from Google Earth – In the early stage of design, even a rough terrain model can significantly help the visualization of the model in context. With the help of Google Earth Connections, users can take a snapshot of terrain and imagery data from Google Earth.

Import 3D buildings and building manufacturer parts from the Google 3D Warehouse – The Google 3D Warehouse site contains thousands of real-world buildings and manufacturer-specific building products for use in your designs. If the architect needs a special car or household appliance for a design project, they can simply search for it in the Warehouse and download it to ArchiCAD with just a few clicks.

Publish ArchiCAD designs to the Google 3D Warehouse – Since the 3D Warehouse is the source for 3D building models for Google Earth, if the architect wants to share his/her real-world 3D building model with others, publishing the model will allow for it to be viewed by hundreds of millions of Google Earth users around the world.

Evaluate ArchiCAD designs in Google Earth – With the help of the Google Earth Connections tool, users can export textured 3D models to Google Earth to create compelling client presentations.

Please download and view the Instructions videos from:
http://www.graphisoft.com/products/archicad-solutions/google_earth_connection.html

Mac OS X ArchiCAD models into Google Earth

Mac OS X users do not currently have a plug-in to export directly to Google Earth, however it is possible!

To export an ArchiCAD model to Google Earth with Mac OS X 10.4 or 10.5:

1. Open the **3D window in ArchiCAD** and set the **scale to 1:1**
2. Go to **File > Save As** and choose **.3ds** as the file format, and save the file
3. **Open Google SketchUp** (download a free copy from here: http://sketchup.google.com/download.html)
4. Go to SketchUp **File > Import 3DS** (*.3ds) and import the .3ds file
5. Go to SketchUp **File > Export > Google Earth** and export the file
6. **Open Google Earth**
7. Go to **Add > Model**, browse for the **Google Earth 4 file** or **the .kml file** (Google Earth 3) and import the model into Google Earth

Sometimes, models exported in 3DS format can have more 3d faces than Google Earth likes. MeshLab (http://meshlab.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/MeshLab_Documentation) is a fantastic utility to reduce number of 3d faces. It's free and available for Linux, Windows and Intel Mac. Please note that MeshLab is Opensource software and not supported by CADConsult or Graphisoft New Zealand, but you may find it a very useful tool when used in conjunction with Google Earth.