Virtual Work

Upgrade Tips & Tricks

When done properly, upgrading can be a pleasant and low-cost venture…

The biggest obstacle to upgrading is the FUD factor: **Fear, Uncertainty, and Death!** At IES our engineers have gone to great lengths to help alleviate the most common pitfalls to upgrading. For example, VisualAnalsis 6.0 will not break or interfere with VisualAnalsis 5.x or 4.x installs, so that you can continue to work while 'evaluating' version 6.0. Here are some other items you might consider before upgrading:

Is it "Safe"?

VisualAnalysis 6.0 has been in beta-testing since April 2007 by dozens of your peers. As far as we know, **no beta-testers were harmed** during the development of VisualAnalsis 6.0.

Portability of Files

Will you lose the ability to work with project files, if you open them in the new version? File formats change with each major release so it is a good idea to keep a backup copy of projects that you wish work with in a previous version. We try to ensure that files can be 'ported' backward, but only as an emergency--some information could be lost. The bottom line, old project will open in newer versions and there is limited ability to save new projects in the older-version format.

Custom Files (e.g. Shapes, Report Styles)

VisualAnalysis 6.0 uses new (or relocated) data files, but in most cases if you have custom files you can simply copy them to the new location to get them to work. We do not recommend this for report styles, it is better (perhaps) to create new styles in the new version as there are so many need features and changes that your old styles could miss.

New-Version Bugs

Software has bugs. Its a fact of life. New software has more bugs than old. That too is a fact. IES software goes through an extensive test process and through a 'beta test' where customers run the software, for months sometimes. By the time it gets released, it really isn't new anymore. (For example VA 6.0 had 2 alpha-test releases, 4 beta-test releases, and is now shipping at 'build 14', so we have already fixed most of the bugs that would prevent you from working productively.) We will publish maintenance fixes that are easy to download and install as required.

Learning Curve?

When we design new versions of the software, adding new features, consolidating old ones, and correcting limitations or confusing processes there is bound to be a little bit of culture shock for existing customers. But our primary goal with any change is to ensure that the software is easier to learn, easier to use, faster for typical daily chores, and consistent with the rest of the Windows world.

If you approach your new software for what it is: something new, then you will quickly adapt. If you try to force it into the "old mold" that you have been using for years, then you might get a little frustrated. Be sure to take a few minutes to read the 'upgrade notes' to understand what, how, and why the system was changed; especially if you are a person who does not like change!

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Maintenance Installs

How Can I install IES tools?

You wouldn't believe how many long-time IES customers contact us with questions about how to install their software! The answer, is actually quite simple:
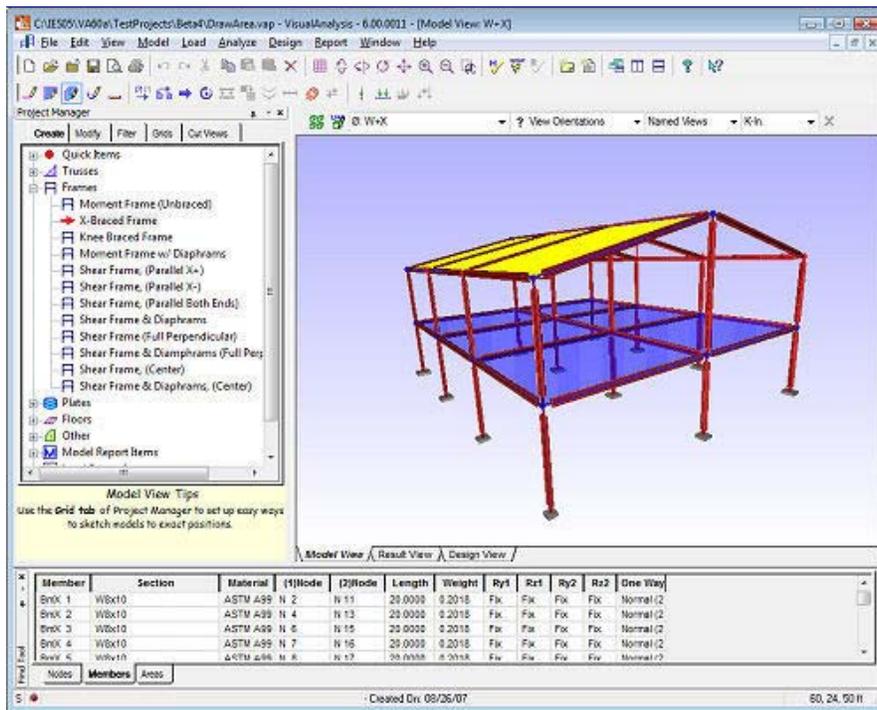
www.iesweb.com/install.htm

Don't bother with your old CD, which is obsolete unless it was mailed from our office this week!

At the above link you can install **updates** to existing products, or install **new products** (for a **free-trial**). You will also find the '**change logs**' that explain what fixes were made to the latest update. See the change log for VA 6 for example:

VA 6.00.0014 (9/22/2007)

IES Customers do not need to

VisualAnalysis 6.0 represents a great example of a system that has changed for the better: it is easier to access **Model**, **Result**, and **Design** views with visible 'tabs' rather than a hidden drop-down list. Changing the active load case is now done at the top of the window rather than the bottom, because it is easier to see and your mouse is already more likely to be near the top of the screen anyway. Menu commands have been reduced from about 85 to about 60 commands while simultaneously adding a number of significant new features. So while there are visual changes, the new system is still quite similar to the old: just a lot easier to use!

VA 6 Upgrade FAQ's

Is VisualAnalsis 6.0 really available? How much will it cost?

Q. What are the system requirements for VisualAnalysis 6?

A. First you need Windows **XP** or **Vista**, older systems are not supported. Second you need a good **graphics card** (hardware) and **driver** (software). Third, you need to have '**admin**' privileges on your login account to get it installed (once installed, you may run with restricted privileges).

Q. Will VA 6 'break' or 'replace' VisualAnalysis 5.5?

A. No! VisualAnalsis 6.0 plays nicely with all your IES products. It doesn't bite or spit. You will not have any problems continuing to use previous versions of VisualAnalysis.

Q. The newest version acts like a **free-trial**, why?

A. VisualAnalysis 6.0 is an optional upgrade that you must pay for, if you want it. And you will want it...so go ahead, install it and put it through some test cases, there is no cost, no obligation and really no risk at all.

Q. How much does the upgrade **cost**?

A. That depends on what VisualAnalysis product level and add-ons you have now, and which level you want to upgrade to. Find your current products in VisualAnalysis under **Help | About VisualAnalysis**, then use this chart:

'register' or fill out a demo-request form to access software!

Revit Structure 2008
Building Information Modeling

It was over 18 months ago that IES started working with Autodesk to provide a Revit Structure link and we actually produced such a product to connect VisualAnalysis 5.5 with Revit Structure 3.

Unfortunately, we joined the Autodesk Developer Network at exactly the wrong time, because without warning IES, Autodesk promply released Revit Structure 4, that used a completely new "API" (application programmer interface) and required that all access to Revit Structure be made through a new (and incompatible with VA5.5) Microsoft software technology. Not only that, but Autodesk made this a free upgrade for Revit customers essentially making Revit Structure 3 obsolete overnight. Our tool was "dead".

We were not very happy about this, but there was really nothing we could do about it at the time other than go back to the drawing board and start planning for VisualAnalysis 6.0.

And so now that we have VisualAnalysis 6.0 developed and shipping, we are turning our attention once again to Revit Structure (now version 2008!) and attempting to put together a data exchange link. If you have need of this link, or if you have specific suggestions as to what this tool should (or should not) do, we would love to hear from you.

New License System
Simple, yet secure.

With the release of VisualAnalysis 6.0 IES is rolling out a new licensing system for our products. We have used the same software-license key since VisualAnalysis 2.5 was introduced, which has worked fairly well but offered rather weak protection of IES intellectual property, was sometimes confusing,

Upgrade Cost Per License (Prices good only through October 2007)

Current Products (versions 3.x, 4.x, 5.x)	Desired Version 6.0 Upgrade Level		
	VA	VA+Design	VA Adv+Design
VA Basic	$415	$995[*]	$1,375[**]
VA Std	$415	$995[*]	$1,375[**]
VA Adv	-NA-	$995[*]	$1,375[**]
VA Basic Package	-NA-	$995[*]	$1,375[**]
VA Std Package	-NA-	$765	$1,375[**]
VA Adv Package	-NA-	-NA-	$975

The secure online-order form works to obtain a price quote or to order your upgrade. If you have multiple licenses, wish to change levels or add users, you may wish to contact the sales department (Garrett) for a custom quote: info@iesweb.com. Upgrade prices will be increasing by about 5% after October 2007, so take advantage of the introductory rates today.

Q. Why should I upgrade?

A. That depends on what you do and how you use VisualAnalysis! We have made literally hundreds of improvements, fixes and changes to streamline your daily needs for a structural analysis and design product! Sometimes just ONE of those changes will save you hours of work and change the upgrade 'cost' into a 'profitable investment'!

Case in Point: How many times have you struggled with an unstable 3D model because you had too many end releases. We made one minor change in the "simple-simple" member connection definition that could save you hours of hunting for a mechanism in a complex model! That little tidbit did not even make the 'New Feature' list.

Q. Which level should I purchase?

A. IES has tried to simplify the product line by removing 'VisualTools' and 'VisualDesign' as products and by removing the unpopular 'basic level' of VisualAnalysis. The result is this: VisualAnalysis, VisualAnalysis with Design, and VisualAnalysis Advanced with Design. See the above chart for the suggested level for your current products. Compare the levels.

Q. When I try to license VisualAnalysis 6.0 it doesn't work?

A. If you get a message that says "Please install your IES products first", or "Failed to write license", then most likely you installed VisualAnalysis under a 'restricted' login. You should install VisualAnalysis 6.0 with 'admin' privileges to ensure all system components are installed or updated.

Q. Where are my customized shapes (from VA5.x)?

A. VisualAnalysis 6.0 has relocated user-customizable data files to a Microsoft-required location. We no longer use the old "IESCommonFiles" folder because it is not user-specific, and it is in a location that is not normally backed up. You can easily copy your custom data files to the new folder to make them accessible to VisualAnalysis 6.0. For details please search the FAQ Answers for "*custom shapes missing*".

VA 6 Short Course

Do you want it? Need it?

People ask us for training classes or short courses about once every three months. We would love to put on a training session, especially for VisualAnalysis 6.0, but we need to know **what** you want to learn, **where** you want to learn it, **how much** you think it should cost.

We will most likely offer a short course in Bozeman sometime in the next 6 months. Then we could also take the show on the road and visit your office or your city.

If you are interested in IES training, be sure to let us know your needs.

and had other internal limitations that made it difficult.

Why the Change?

Over the past year we have developed a new licensing system that offers IES significantly better security. The primary design goals for our new system have been "Keep it simple" and "It just works". Our licensing system retains most of the benefits of the old system including a single license key to unlock all of your IES products. The new system now offers a friendlier and more straightforward free-trial software experience.

Customers will notice that the 'process' for entering a license key involves one additional step, but all other aspects of the process are simplified so that you simply copy & paste your license key and are done. Details of the licensing procedures are provided only to customers after a purchase or are available through IES technical support, they are not published in the Help files, on our web site or FAQ Answers for security reasons.

Network-Concurrent Licensing

Still in development is a network license-server for customers using network-concurrent licensing or "site" licensing of IES tools. We will be testing this system over the next month or two with VisualAnalysis 6.0. Customers interested in this new system are encouraged to contact IES technical support with suggestions, requirements, or warnings based on your experience with other license-metering software. **Please ask your Systems Administrator to tell us what makes a "great" network-installed software package & license system.** IES will also be looking for 'beta testers' for this new licensing system to help us ensure that the installation and maintenance of the system is easy and flawless for your IT people!

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