Software for Orienteering Mapping – AOC's Experience with OCAD 2018

Selwyn Palmer, Sep 2018

Preface by Michael Wood, ONZ Mapping Committee

The following views were supplied by Selwyn Palmer, Mapping Officer for AOC and the recent Oceania/Masters events. It presents considerations for mapping software needs for a large club with several active mappers. You will see that AOC uses OCAD for course setting as well as mapping, whereas other clubs may only use Condes or Purple Pen. So you'll need to interpret these views in the light of your own club.

Selwyn has kindly agreed to provide this background to NZ clubs and mappers. The rest of the words are Selwyn's. I have however added a few clarifications in [square brackets] and removed a couple of personal references, shown as <snip>.

Re OCAD2018:

AOC made a committee decision to go for [OCAD] 2018 completely, expecting to kill off OCAD9 which is clunky and lacks a bundle of features.

Course setting for the Nationals this year was one of the triggers. People still using OCAD9 just got left behind because OCAD12 course setting doesn't save back to OCAD9. There are new CS [Course Setting] symbol sets and probably more general symbol set updates to come when ISSOM20?? gets approved. Ali got to the point where one of setters still using OCAD9 just got left out! Catering for people using 12-year-old software is ridiculous.

The deal with Ken [Dowling, Australasian OCAD agent] is an existing license can get traded in for 2 Team Licences. Makes sense because the existing licenses were permitted two downloads. We had to get those club members who had their own licenses to assign them to the club name. We only had one license that the club had bought, another was a left over from WMOC OCAD11. Jeff and Ali had 2 separate OCAD licenses and opted to retain one privately and update it to OCAD2018. I had a Pro version in OCAD11 which Ken was surprised was still functioning after I updated to 12 normal. Mervyn had 12 Pro. The club has paid for Mervyn to update to the "Pro" version of 2018 which was about $750 just in case it was needed. I don't think it is, but we will see.

["Pro" is the Professional version of OCAD, aimed at users beyond orienteering such as national mapping authorities.]

So, the club finished up with 10 Mapping licenses without buying any new licenses. These have been "assigned" on a "permanent" basis to (1) Me, (2) Joanna, (3) Alistair, (4) Jeff, (5) Guy, (6) Vy Smirnov – who still hasn't activated it yet. The remaining four are intended for 2 club laptops and 2 to be moved around if required. At present one is with a newby mapper Neill McGowan and the other on a 3rd club laptop.

Somehow the club had 6 CS licenses, some from a club purchase and some from WMOC legacy. These were traded in for 12 CS2018 licenses. We are happy to buy more licenses outright if it transpires they are required. We agreed that the Starter version isn't worth bothering with. It soon ran out of permitted changes. Any of these licenses can be reassigned to anyone else but no more than once a day per license.

Our payment to Ken Dowling was $NZ3,710 which may have got in a bit cheaper before a pending currency exchange fluctuation. Considering that map software is a crucial part of the sport it is not a major expense. AOC pays about $1800 to Woodhill Forest owners for every event there.

Re your [pending Mapping bulletin] paragraph 4 regarding reallocating licenses: There was a bit of discussion with OCAD in Switzerland because Ken and I didn't quite understand how the club licenses were managed. I had imagined me having to control it all. But not so. Whoever has the license sitting on their computer simply assigns it another person using the license transfer utility in the help menu, supplying the existing user name and email address and the replacement user name and email address. Although we haven't done it yet, it seems that the software on the existing computer gets deactivated-downgraded to just OCAD-Viewer.

Attached to "my" team licence is an added function. In the help menu is a license manager option which goes to OCAD Switzerland and takes a couple of minutes to populate a window with a list of all the club licenses, as in attached screen capture. When I click on the "I" I can see a bit more detail including the computer name it's sitting on, their email address and a list of previous activations. I don't actually have anything to do with the transfers. I just get to view where they are and become the contact licence holder for issues that might arise. If a license gets into the wrong hands or the user dies or whatever, we have to email OCAD Switzerland who then permit a fresh activation.

With OCAD2018, when an update is available, the process seems to be exactly as before, a notification window appears and the usual complete download procedure is followed. The additional features of OCAD2018 above OCAD12 do not seem that significant for my level of mapping. I thought OCAD12 was a bigger step up from OCAD11 especially w.r.t. generating contours from my Council supplied as files that OCAD11 couldn't handle. I had struggled with Shape files in the past, but 2 days ago the Wizard in OCAD2018 made it easy. [Michael – new features often take a while to be discovered. I reported a bug in OCAD 12 and it is only fixed in OCAD 2018.]

So far there have been no transfers of licenses, but with our SummerNav season starting at the end of October transferring licenses might happen. We have yet to see who wants to use CS OCAD versus Purple Pen. We had a bit of a CS training night using OCAD2018 on about 6 laptops. Our club has accepted that Purple Pen will suffice for CS for most of our local events except for a few complex city maps that have map within a map.

We have had problems with OOM maps being saved as OCAD maps. I agree, not as bad as it was. I guess Hubert Klauser at OCAD will be keeping a watchful eye on Open Source software and doing what he can to offer a better product.

So far, all our previous versions of OCAD have remained intact on our computers. So, I still have OCAD11 Pro and OCAD12 and OCAD9. I'm reluctant to enquire about this in case Hubert takes control and deactivates them. It may be that if we fail to renew a license in three years, all versions will get deactivated, except for OCAD Viewer.

I still have my original OCAD9 software stored away and it can be loaded as far as version 9.47 before demanding a verification. That was a first version that included NZTM coordinates and the final version before registration checking. <snip> … becoming enslaved to outdated software. Hence AOC determination to go for OCAD2018. The time and effort spent adjusting maps and CS files between softwares is something our Club was keen to get away from.

Another advantage of the Team license option is, for example, while I am away overseas from <snip> I can lend "my" license to someone else.