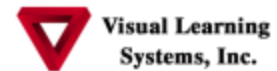


**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MISSOULA, Montana – Visual Learning Systems, Inc. (VLS) of Missoula, MT was awarded the 2002 ESRI Business Partner *Most Innovative Solution* Award for the Feature Analyst™ automated feature extraction software extension for ESRI's ArcGIS™ 8 geographic information systems (GIS) platform. ESRI is the world leader in GIS software having sold over 1 million licenses. ESRI has just under 1,400 business partners worldwide developing solutions and software extensions to their product line. VLS introduced the Feature Analyst technology as a commercial off-the-shelf software in 2001. "ESRI's recognition of the Feature Analyst extension is a tremendous honor and accomplishment for our organization." said VLS CEO David Opitz, "Our sole focus is to provide a solution that lowers costs for our customers. Prestigious awards and recognition, such as this, help validate our technology. We anticipate our software will bridge the gap between image processing and GIS for decades to come."

Feature Analyst provides the GIS community with a paradigm shift for extracting information from digital imagery. A GIS project is only as useful as the data upon which it works. Geographic features, such as streets, buildings, and vegetation are used in a GIS to produce maps and perform spatial analyses for planning, transportation analyses, defense, telecommunications, and many other applications. Presently, creating and keeping current geographic features is the central bottleneck for the GIS industry. Until now, GIS technicians had to either accept bad results from hard-to-use image processing software or hand-digitize the features by hand. This is an expensive, painful, and time-consuming process. As a result, billions in research dollars have been spent, with little success, on trying to automate the problem of feature extraction from digital imagery.

The Feature Analyst uses machine learning technology to help crack this tough research nut. Extensive studies have shown that the product significantly cuts the labor costs for customers. The technology is so noteworthy that NASA and U.S. Department of Defense have awarded VLS over \$850,000 in research grants over the past two years to support their program goals. Traditional image processing systems, in addition to their functional limitations, are complex systems usable only by trained professionals. The Feature Analyst, on the other hand, is so simple and intuitive that non-technical users become advanced users after a day or so of training. "Feature Analyst is very well integrated with ArcView, and the interface is so well designed and intuitive that novices can begin to successfully classify images with relatively little training," said Roly Redmond, Director of the Wildlife Spatial Analysis Lab at the University of Montana.

The award was the highlight of the unveiling of Feature Analyst 2.1 at ESRI's 2002 Worldwide Business Partner's Conference. The reception to the new release was overwhelming as many users, initially skeptical due to past industry failures, immediately saw the benefits of extracting user-defined features. Jack Dangermond, founder and owner of ESRI, recognized the Feature Analyst during his plenary speech emphasizing the software's ability to simply "lift" features from imagery. ESRI representatives invited VLS to share their exhibitor booth at the GIS for Transportation Symposium in Atlanta March 25-27, 2002. In addition, ESRI is investigating incorporating Feature Analyst into the Production Line Tool Set (PLTS) software used for creating map layers for the U.S. Department of Defense. An evaluation copy of the Feature Analyst is available at [www.featureanalyst.com](http://www.featureanalyst.com).