User-Driven Content Testing with RoadSoft Labs

You may have noticed that the latest version of RoadSoft incorporates a new menu titled: Labs. This menu was added by RoadSoft programmers to provide users with limited releases of new features that are in development. "We wanted to give our users a way to test and give us feedback on new features," explains RoadSoft Programmer Analyst Jason Poll.

Since RoadSoft is user-driven, people frequently request changes to make the work they do in RoadSoft easier. The Labs menu provides a way to test these new changes and make sure that they are useful to users before they are finalized and implemented.
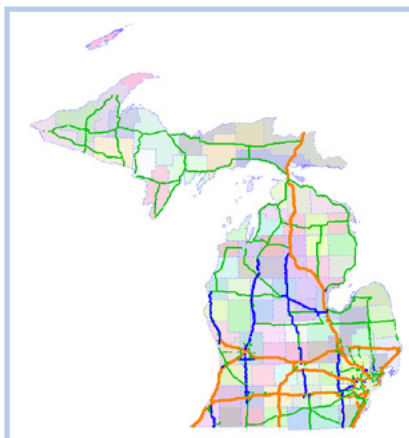
The NFC Conditional Visibility Legend

The first Labs menu item available to users is the NFC Conditional Visibility Legend. This feature allows users to enable a map legend that toggles the visibility of roads based on a combination of function class and zoom level. To put it another way, the legend can

A Map of Michigan with NFC Conditional Visibility enabled

make certain roads invisible if your map is zoomed out far enough. This reduces map clutter at wider zoom levels, which makes jurisdiction-wide views more practical in metropolitan areas.

The NFC Conditional Visibility Legend can also drastically reduce the time it takes for RoadSoft to draw a jurisdiction's map, especially in regions with a high road density. "We estimate that the map can draw up to 50% faster with conditional visibility enabled," says Poll.

Users can enable the NFC Conditional Visibility Legend by selecting it in the *Labs* menu (available in RoadSoft version 7.2.0.7 or later). Once the *NFC Conditional Visibility Legend*

Controls window opens, select the *Options* tab. Then, check the box that reads "*Use Scaled NFC Legend.*" When the legend is enabled, roads are hidden on the map as the zoom level is adjusted.

The zoom levels that roads are hidden at can be changed using the *Ranges* tab. There are two ways to do this:

1. Use the *Current Map Scale* slider to set a zoom level and then click on the *Current* button below a class of road. This sets the road class to disappear from the map when the current zoom level is exceeded.

2. Manually set a *Function Class* slider to the zoom level that you want the function class to disappear from the map at by moving it up or down.

An in-depth video tutorial of this process is also available at roadsoft.org/tutorials

Feedback is Key

Conditional visibility is currently only being tested using the Labs menu. If enough positive feedback is received the feature may be fully implemented in a future release of RoadSoft. All users are encouraged to give their opinion on the NFC Conditional Visibility Legend by sending a message through RoadSoft.org, sending an email to roadsoft@mtu.edu, or by calling (906) 487-2102.

Not sure what a Labs feature does? Read any information included within the feature and check RoadSoft.org/tutorials for video tutorials on the feature. Feedback on this documentation is also encouraged.