Attribute Transfer Mapping

Have you ever had data in one attribute table that you wanted to bring into another but couldn’t figure out how? In this demo, we’re going to assume that we want to transfer information about certain platforms into their related pipelines. At first glance, it is difficult to know the best way of performing this transfer since there is no information present in both tables to make a join, and the features do not allow for a spatial join.

Our first step is to turn on the Editor toolbar and add two tools to the interface. Choose Customize from the Tools menu and check on Editor on the Toolbars tab. On the Commands tab, search for “transfer” to locate the tools.
Note: If you’re still using version 9.1 or earlier, you’d have to locate the Attribute Transfer category manually.

Drag these two tools onto the end of the Editor toolbar as shown.

We can now close the Customize window and begin editing. Once in an edit session click on the Attribute Transfer Mapping tool to set up which data should be included. In our case, we want to move info from the COMPLEX_ID field of Platforms to the PLATFORM field of Pipelines (which was added to the table for this transfer). We can simply click on each field in the lists and click Add.

We could add additional fields if necessary, but for now we’ll accept this setup and click OK. To perform the transfers, we can now click on the Attribute Transfer tool and begin associating features. Always click first on the platform followed by the pipeline target. Repeat as often as necessary. Setting up the snapping environment may help to click on the correct feature each time.
To verify that the process is working, we will make a handful of transfers and then open the attribute table of the target layer. Sorting the field where the values are being input is the easiest way to locate new attributes.

If several targets are possible, ArcGIS will help us by displaying a dialogue box that will allow us to choose the correct feature to associate the platform with.

Once all necessary transfers have been made, don’t forget that it’s still imperative to save your edits.