

Killer Tips & Tricks for AutoCAD

July 2005

Mouse Droppings

When using the dynamic pan (middle mouse button) if you hold down the CTRL key, this will lock the pan in either the horizontal or vertical position similar to ortho.

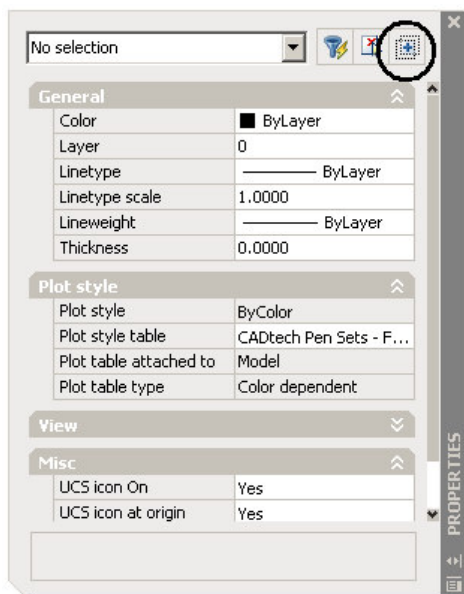
When Things Go Wrong - Variables and Other Fun Settings

PICKADD

I cannot multiple select objects by mouse selection, unless I have the shift key depressed. I am only able to select one object at a time. When I choose an object and select another, it will not retain more than one item at a time. Any ideas?

Don't you just hate when this happens! It is a little setting that is usually selected by accident found in the Properties Dialog Box. See the graphic below. When the circled button shows a + sign, you can select multiple objects. If see a 1, you can ONLY select ONE object at a time. Click on it... it is a toggle. To open the Properties Dialog box, type PROPERTIES or use CTRL+1.

All the fun of those little settings.....
You can also type PICKADD at the command prompt to toggle it on and off. It is called.



UPCOMING EVENTS

We are currently planning our Northeast and Midwest Seminars. These cities and dates will be posted on August 20, 2005 at www.autocadtraining.com

California Seminars

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PICKFIRST

Normally in AutoCAD if I select an entity (a line, polygon, etc.) it changes that layer in the drop down layer list to whatever it is. However, in a few drawings I have been working in lately, it does not do this. It remains showing the current layer.

There is a little variable called PICKFIRST that needs to be set to 1. This tells AutoCAD to show the layers etc. when the object is selected with grips. If turned on (1) it also lets you pick the object and then the command. For example, select a line and then choose ERASE. If PICKFIRST is turned off, the object will NOT erase. If ON the object will erase.

It is an old setting that was used to disable the grips for people who got frustrated with them.

PICKFIRST is a global setting.

UCSFOLLOW

For some reason in certain drawings, when I click inside one viewport it does a zoom extents. Why is this happening... Gremlins?

The setting is called UCS FOLLOW. If it is turned on in that viewport, that viewport will zoom extents every time you click in and out of that viewport. This can drive you crazy!

UCSFOLLOW is a setting that is saved per viewport.

When Things Go Wrong

What are Proxy objects, why do I get a warning dialog and how can I fix the problem?
Why are objects like doors missing from my drawing?

Some of the higher end architectural (Architectural Desktop) and engineering (AutoCAD Map) packages that run with AutoCAD produce drawings that contain data the regular AutoCAD does not understand....

Not to worry! Most of these problems can be fixed by using a free plug-in from Autodesk (the company that makes AutoCAD). Autodesk calls them Object Enablers.

To pick the right object enabler, you need to know your version of AutoCAD and the version where the DWG came from.

Once this is established, go to the following link and download the required object enabler. Usually this will solve the problem.

<http://usa.autodesk.com/adsk/servlet/index?siteID=123112&id=2753223&linkID=2475161>

BUT for some of the older versions, object enablers are not available.... But not to worry. If the engineers are using a high-end Autodesk product like Autodesk MAP or LAND, they can EXPORT there DWG to a simple AutoCAD 2000 drawing. They go to FILE>EXPORT>As a AutoCAD 2000 or FILE>UTILITIES>EXPORT>As a AutoCAD 2000

This should solve the problem.

AutoLISP Tips

If you want an AutoLISP routine to run automatically, it is quite simple. Just remove the defun statement from the AutoLISP routine and the first and last parens.

I have attached the two examples so you can try them. The 'steelautorun.lsp' can be added to the suitcase and will run every time OR it can be renamed or added to your ACADDOC.LSP and AutoCAD will run it every time. See the CADtech Seminars Maximizing AutoCAD or Customization and 3D manual for more information on the suitcase and ACADDOC. See the example below.

This Lisp file will load and wait for the lisp name to be typed before it is executed.

```
(DEFUN C:STEEL()  
(COMMAND "-LAYER" "MAKE" "STEEL" "COLOR"  
"RED" "" "" )  
)
```

This lisp file will just run.

```
(COMMAND "-LAYER" "MAKE" "STEEL" "COLOR"  
"RED" "" "" )
```

XREF Fun

What is the difference between an Overlaid xref and an attached Xref?

There is a big difference between xref > Attach and Xref > Overlay.

Here is an example of three drawings.

A B C drawings

if A is attached to B and B is attached to C, then C will contain A & B as xrefs.

if A is overlaid to B and B is overlaid to C, then C will contain ONLY B as an xref and A gets left behind.

Overlays go ONE generation ONLY.

Attachments - in essence - chain the Xref A to the main drawing B. So wherever B goes, so does A.

Converting from 2004/2005/2006 down to R14 and anywhere in between

To convert your 2005 files to 14 you need to download a FREE application from the Autodesk website called MIGRATION TOOLS. Within the tools is a small program called BATCH CONVERTER that runs outside of AutoCAD that will batch convert a whole list of your drawings from 2005 to 14. You need to have AutoCAD on your computer for it to work.

Here is the link to the free software. Just download it and install it. www.autodesk.com/migrationtools
The programs will be listed under Program Files>Autodesk>Migration Tools.
Batch Converter.

NOTE: Make A COPY of the original files!!! This program will convert the files directly to 14. So make a copy before you convert.

TIP: Make a folder called R14 Files and copy a set of the originals to this folder THEN run the convert software.

TIP: Read the documentation that comes with the migration tools.

Next Month: More tips and tricks, News and Fun Stuff.