

Too Many Layers

Sometimes you may want only certain layers to be listed in the Layer Properties Manager and the Object Properties toolbar. For example, you might not need to view the Xref layers or layers from other disciplines. Listing only specific layers makes it easier to navigate through the layer list.

Use Layer Filters

You use the *Named layer filters* area of the Layer Properties Manager window to select or create filters. Start Layer Properties Manager by clicking **Format → Layer** or by clicking the Layers toolbar button:

Figure 4 shows a layer filter that excludes Xref layers from the layer lists in Layer Manager and in the Object Properties toolbar. Notice the *Apply to Object Properties toolbar* checkbox.



Figure 4: In the Layer Manager window, here is a layer filter that shows only non-xref layers. Accomplished by selecting *Show all Xref dependent layers* and checking the *Invert filter* box.

The Object Properties toolbar now displays the filtered layer list as seen in figure 5.

AutoCAD includes 3 built-in filter settings: Show all layers; Show all used layers; Show all Xref dependent layers. You can also create your own layer filters by clicking the [...] button.

The Named Layer Filters window (figure 7) is where you add and delete custom filters.

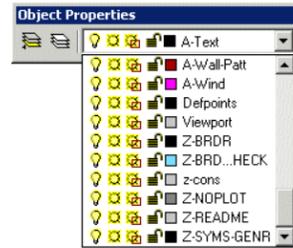


Figure 5: This drawing has about 40 Xref layers that are filtered out - they are hidden in the Layer Manager window, and in the layer list shown here on the Object Properties toolbar.

To create a new filter, enter a Filter name and criteria, then click the Add button. Appropriate for an Architectural drawing file, figure 7 shows [AVZ]* in the Layer name box - which will probably not make much sense unless you refer to the wild-card characters chart shown below.

Why filter to layers beginning with A, V or Z? Remember our layer standard - the one you follow so closely? Anyway, dust off and have a look at that layer chart from the Cadd User's Guide, and you'll see that A is for Arch, Z is for general, and V is because this drawing has a "Viewport" layer. The brackets [] around AVZ tell AutoCAD to match any one of the characters enclosed. Using this filter, AutoCAD will shorten the layer list to include only layers that begin with A, V or Z - other layer names still exist, but the list is shorter because some names are hidden.

Choose one of the built in layer filters, or for custom filters, refer to the wild-card character chart, and with a little creativity you can shorten that long layer list!



Figure 6: Click [...] to create a custom layer filter.

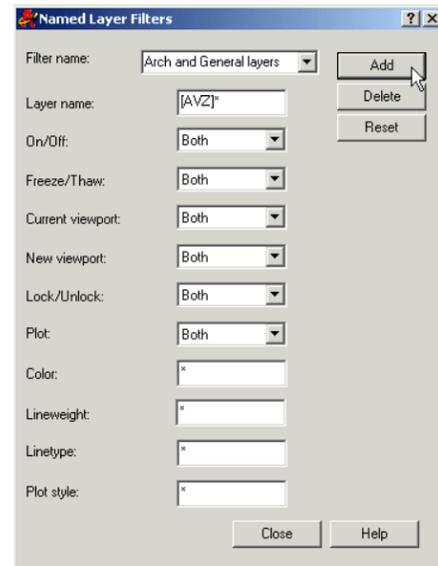


Figure 7: A custom filter that displays only layers beginning with the characters A, V or Z.

Valid Wild-card Characters For Use With AutoCAD	
Character	Definition
# (pound)	Matches any numeric digit
@ (at)	Matches any alphabetic character
. (period)	Matches any non-alphanumeric character
* (asterisk)	Matches any string and can be used anywhere on the search string
? (question mark)	Matches any single character. For example, ?BC matches ABC, 3BC and so on
~ (tilde)	Matches anything but the pattern. For example, ~*AB* matches all strings that don't contain AB
[]	Matches any one of the characters enclosed. For example, [AB]C matches AC and BC
[~]	Matches any character not enclosed. For example, [~AB]C matches XC but not AC
[-] (hyphen)	Specifies a range for a single character. For example, [A-G]C matches AC, BC and so on, but not HC
` (reverse quote)	Reads next character literally. For example, `*AB matches *AB

CADVENTURES

Information for Users of AutoCAD

Dec/Jan Two Thousand Two
Presented by Bruce Littlehorn
Denver Service Center
National Park Service



in this issue

- Help me AutoCAD! How to ask AutoCAD for help
- Too many layers? Shorten the object properties toolbar layer list
- Capture screen images for documentation or to include in documents
- Index of CADventures articles
- More storage space for P: coming soon
- Cadd Links: 1-click access to pen charts, ftp site and more

Autodesk, the Autodesk logo, AutoCAD, AutoCAD Express Tools and AutoLISP are registered trademarks, and AutoCAD Architectural Desktop, AutoCAD Land Development Desktop and AutoCAD Map are trademarks of Autodesk Inc. All other brand names belong to their respective holders.

Index of CADventures Articles

Past CADventures are available online. Click **Start → My Cadd Links → CADventures Newsletters**. You'll also find an up to date index of CADventures articles. No My Cadd Links? See Cadd Links article in this newsletter.

May 2000

- Page setup wizard
- Multiple command
- NPS AutoCAD Tools for standalone PC's
- AutoCAD 2000 training guide

June 2000

- Land Development Desktop project path
- Lotus Notes discussion database
- CSWAP - Change colors automatically

July 2000

- AutoCAD discussion database available from the Internet
- AutoCAD complains of a missing font
- Annoying AutoCAD dialogues - access the command line version

August 2000

- Missing AutoCAD toolbars
- Windows keyboard shortcuts
- Group command
- Make your drawing into a TIF
- Useful Web sites

September 2000

- OCE plotter accounting
- DSC P: drive folder names
- Polyline linetype generation settings

October 2000

- Single line and multiline text - convert one to the other
- Tiled Modelspace trick
- Unsorted layer list
- Paperspace viewport within a Paperspace viewport
- Xref not loading
- Express Tools Layer Delete
- Import/export block attribute information

March 2001

- Make your drawing into a TIF (it's back)
- AutoCAD autosave
- Do you right-click?

April 2001

- Lotus Notes mouse pointer trick
- Move dimension text wherever you want
- Viewres alternative
- Network status line
- Too dense to hatch
- Exporting AutoCAD objects
- Windows Explorer columns

June 2001

- AutoCAD 2000i recommended configuration
- Open and save drawings to FTP

July 2001

- AutoCAD favorites
- Double-click to edit
- Customize your toolbars

August 2001

- Layer states - save and restore
- Relative Xref paths
- HP5000 color printer

September 2001

- Join polylines
- eTransmit
- AutoCAD Today window

Oct-Nov 2001

- Ole. Just say no.
- Change attribute's width and color
- Archive database
- Xrefs, attach or overlay
- Mirroring text

Ask AutoCAD for Help

It's not that I don't want you to call me. In fact, pick up the phone or drop by anytime. However, AutoCAD does provide several ways to get online help, including the traditional help window, Learning Assistance, and the new Active Assistance tool. Help and Active assistance are good for help with specific commands, and Learning assistance has brief lessons on various tasks and concepts.

AutoCAD Help

Start AutoCAD help with the help toolbar button , by clicking **Help** → **AutoCAD Help** from the pull-down menu, or by typing **HELP[enter]** at the command line.

AutoCAD Help includes the User's Guide and Command Reference in electronic format. Use the Index and Search tabs to search the help database using keywords.

While a Command is Running

If you're in an AutoCAD command that you need information about, type **'?[enter]**. That's apostrophe and question mark. Alternately, you can click the Help toolbar button. This works with command-line commands like PEDIT, not dialog based commands like HATCH. AutoCAD's context sensitive help feature will take you directly to help about the current command. Figure 1 shows what you'll see if you start help while in the PEDIT command.

For dialog based commands like hatch, you can usually find a help button in the command's window.

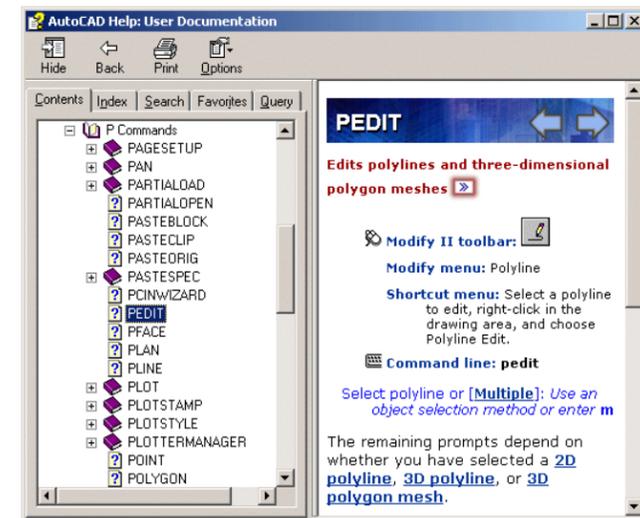


Figure 1: The AutoCAD 2000i help window. Start Help with the Help toolbar button, or the help pull-down menu. Use the Index and Search tabs to search the help database using keywords.

Learning Assistance

For brief lessons, try Learning Assistance. Unlike help and Active Assistance, you start Learning Assistance outside of

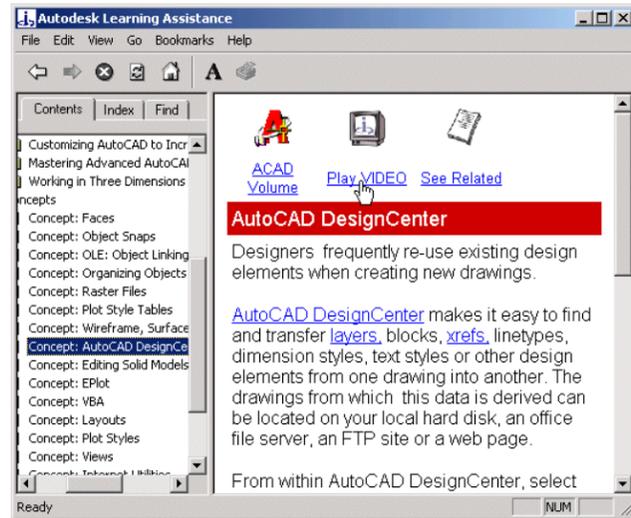


Figure 2: Learning Assistance provides lessons that take less than five minutes to view and includes a Try It mode to practice what you learn.

AutoCAD. To access it, browse with Windows Explorer to the folder **S:\ACAD2000i\ Learning Assistance**, double-click on **setup.exe**, then click the **Run** button. The video's are especially well done, and include narration, so you'll need speakers and a sound card. Hopefully in the future, Autodesk will expand the content to provide more topics.

Active Assistance

Remember the pesky Active Assistance window that started with AutoCAD 2000i? Active Assistance provides context sensitive help, and it follows along with the command you're in. You probably configured your system to disable it on startup (see CADventures June 2001), but you can start it with the click of a button.

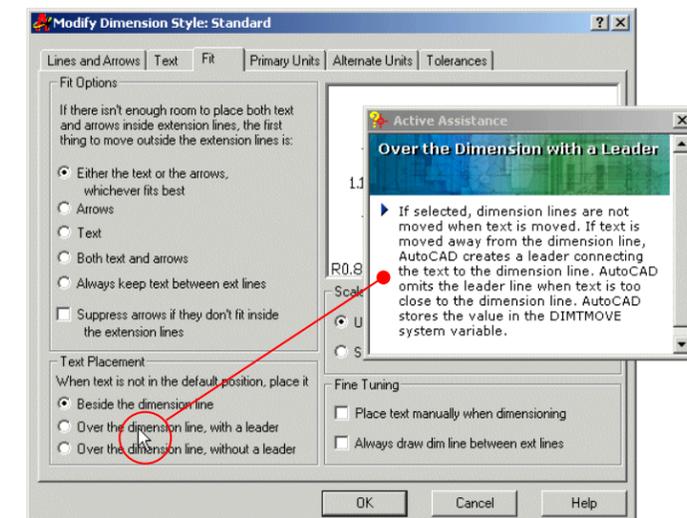


Figure 3: Active Assistance follows along interactively as you move your mouse over areas of a command dialog. Shown here is Active Assistance while in the Dimstyle setup window.

Ask AutoCAD for Help continued...

If you've disabled Active Assistance, start it with the toolbar button (see below). Notice how it provides help based on the command you're in. For dialog based commands, active assistance even changes content as you move the mouse over different areas of the command's window. Figure 3 shows the Active Assistance as seen during the Dimstyle command.

The Active Assistance toolbar button: 

Conclusion

If you need help, AutoCAD's rich set of assistance tools makes information easy to look up. Or, as always, you can call me at x2520.

More Storage Space for P Drive

DSC has new storage space to replace the current CAD file server. The "P:" server has been at capacity for a couple of years now, and we've upgraded from 55 gigabytes to several hundred gigabytes, using a Storage Area Network (SAN). For now, P: still resides on our old server. We plan to make the switch to the new SAN in the next few months. More information to come.

Spring Cleaning

Now would be a good time to remove unneeded files from P: and N:\Projects.

Archiving

If you know of completed projects that are ready for archiving, please let me know via email or x2520. I'll move the files to CDROM's which go to TIC, and add the archived files to our database list for future lookup.

Cadd Links

You may have noticed a menu group on your Windows Start menu: **Start** → **My Cadd Links**. The shortcuts, or links, give you 1-click access to the following: Director's Order 10 (NPS 10);DSC Cadd Standards Web Site; DSC Cadd User's Guide; CADventures Newsletters; NPS FTP Site ftp.nps.gov; AutoCAD Pen/Color Reference for NPS and BLM; Lotus Notes Discussion Groups AutoCAD, Architectural Desktop and 3D Studio VIZ; Project Archiving Database.

If you don't have Start → My Cadd Links, use Windows Explorer, go to S:\Install\ folder, double-click on MyCaddLinksSetup.exe and follow the directions. It's super easy to install.

Screen Capture

Need to capture the graphics of your current screen or program window? Why would you want to? Here are a few reasons:

- Capture error messages
- Include program windows in Word or Power Point documents
- Capture your AutoCAD screen and print it out. Useful when AutoCAD is reloaded and you want to reconfigure to look the same.
- Document a process

How?

Press the **Print Scrn** button or **Alt + Print Scrn**.

Print Scrn captures the entire screen, including the Windows task bar, clock etc. Alt + Print Scrn captures the topmost/active window.

Nothing Happened!

But something did happen when you pressed Print Scrn. The image was placed in the Windows Clipboard, where it remains until you clear the Clipboard or until you cut or copy other information (or do another screen capture). You can paste the information from the Clipboard into any document as often as you like. However, the information is only stored on the Clipboard temporarily.

Now let's do something with that image. Create a new Word document, then click Edit → Paste. You can resize the image by clicking on it, and dragging one of its corners.

You can paste the image into most applications, including a Lotus Notes email, or a Power Point presentation.

If you ever need to send an error message to your computer support person, capture the message window with Alt + Print Scrn, begin a new email message in Lotus Notes, then click Edit → Paste to add that image directly to the message.

To save a captured image as a file, start Microsoft Paint - click Start → Programs → Accessories → Paint. Paste the image into Paint, then click File → Save to create a bitmap (.bmp) file.