



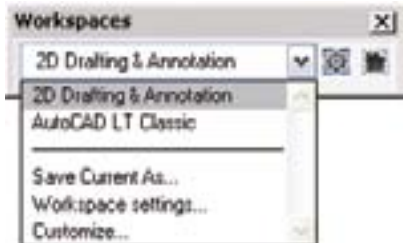
# AutoCAD LT®

Lynn Allen's Tips and Tricks For  
Using AutoCAD LT 2008 Software

# User Interface

## New 2D Workspace

If you are using only 2D AutoCAD® LT commands, why not use the new 2D Drafting & Annotation workspace? This capability displays powerful 2D tools on the Dashboard.



## 2D Dashboard Control Panels

New 2D control panels provide easy access to layers and include controls for annotation scaling, text, dimensions, multiple leaders, tables, 2D navigation commands, object properties and block attributes.



## Tool Palettes

When you drag geometry to an inactive tool palette, it is automatically activated for easy placement – just give it an extra second to switch.

- A new Specify Image option on the shortcut menu makes it easy to assign an image to any tool.
- The location of tools on a tool palette is now saved in the tool catalogue (and the profile), making it easier to share your tool palettes with others and maintain the same look and feel.
- Use TPNAVIGATE to set a tool palette current at the command line.

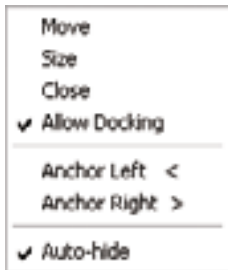
## Clean Screen

Use the Clean Screen button located in the lower-right corner of the screen to turn off everything except for the status and menu bars and the command window. This feature comes in handy when showing files to a client and you need to quickly clean up your interface.



## Controlling Toolbar and Tool Palette Placement

Anchor your palettes to the left or right side of the drawing area for quick access. Palettes roll open or closed as the cursor moves over them, keeping them out of the way. You can easily stack several on each side of the screen for maximum productivity. Simply right-click the name bar and choose Anchor Left or Anchor Right from the shortcut menu.



## Layout Tab Improvements

- Rename a layout by double-clicking the Layout tab.
- Re-order layouts with a simple drag-and-drop.
- Use the Ctrl and Shift keys to select multiple layouts for dragging and dropping.
- Hold down Ctrl while dragging to create a copy.

# Annotation Scaling

If you've found getting the proper scale factors per viewport to be frustrating and confusing, then you'll love the new annotative scaling! No longer do you need to create multiple sets of text and dimensions on multiple layers. Now you create one set of annotative objects (such as text, dimensions, multiple leaders, blocks, attributes and hatches), indicate the desired actual plotted size and it magically displays at the correct size.

## Controlling Annotation Scale

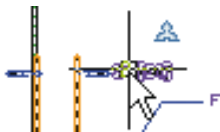
A new annotative property can be assigned to objects such as text, dimensions, blocks and hatches. Just create the object at the actual size you want it to plot and indicate the intended scale factor(s). Any object with an annotative property can have one or more scales assigned to it (such as  $\frac{1}{4}''=1'$  or  $1:50$ ). This capability makes it easy to display the same object in different viewports with varying scale factors. For example, the same text object could appear in one viewport that is scaled  $\frac{1}{8}''=1'$  and another viewport at  $1''=1'$ .



You can change an existing object to annotative using the Properties command.

**TIP** Re-defining a style or definition to be annotative does not affect existing objects. Use the new ANNOUPDATE command to update selected objects to match their style or definition (model space only).

How can you tell if an object is annotative just by looking at it? Drag your cursor over the object to see the new annotative indicator.



**TIP** Set the annotative scale factor in model space to reflect the most prevalent scale factor in the drawing.

For those objects that need to display at multiple scale factors, use the Properties palette to add scale factors. You can also use the OBJECTSCALE command.

**TIP** It's faster to use the OBJECTSCALE command when dealing with different object types.

## New Annotative Controls on the Status Bar

- Use the two new controls on the status bar to set the VP Scale and Annotation Scale (accessible only if the viewport is unlocked).
- A new Lock/Unlock Viewport button appears when a viewport is selected.
- Only the annotative objects that have the same scale factor as the viewport appear in a viewport. Toggle the new Annotation Visibility button to display annotative objects for all scales (even if they are not supported by the viewport's current annotation scale).



**TIP** Use SCALELISTEDIT to customise the list of scales.

**BONUS** If an annotative object disappears (and you don't want it to), click the Automatically Add Scales to Annotative Objects button before changing the Annotation Scale.

## Backward Compatibility

A new option on the Open and Save tab of the Options command helps ensure that those who are not using AutoCAD® LT 2008 can see your annotative objects. Each scale of the objects is saved as an independent object on its own layer. The layers are automatically frozen in the appropriate viewport.



**TIP** If you have a large quantity of annotative objects, you can speed things up by turning off the Maintain Visual Fidelity option. Be sure to turn it back on before you save the file to a previous version!

**BONUS** Linetypes are automatically scaled by the viewport's annotation scale. Disable this behaviour with the MSLTSCALE setvar if needed.

# Dimensioning Techniques

## New Multiple Leaders

The new MLEADER command permits more control over leaders than ever before.

Not only can you control the order of leader creation (head first, tail first or content first), but you can also add multiple leader lines where needed.

## New Multiple Leader Style Manager

The new MLEADERSTYLE command controls format and display options, just like dimension styles. New options include the following:

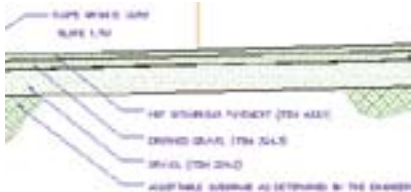
- Type of leader line (straight, spline or none)
- Type of arrowhead
- Leader connection info
- Text information
- Assign a block (great for creating balloons!)



**TIP** Use the shortcut menu to add leader lines. Use grips for speedy editing.

## Aligning Leader Lines

Leaders not lining up properly? The new Multiple Leader Align tool snaps leaders into place for you. You can even control the spacing between them!



Use the MLEADERCOLLECT command to combine multiple block-type leaders into a single multiple leader.



### Smart Dimension Break Command

The new DIMBREAK command breaks the dimension or extension lines where they intersect objects or other dimensions. The breaks automatically update if you move the intersecting objects – even if they no longer intersect! You can also use the Restore option to remove all breaks.



### More Cool Dimension Features:

- Create inspection dimensions with the new Inspection Dimension tool (DIMINSPECT).
- Add a jog to linear dimensions with the DIMJOGLINE command.
- Evenly space dimensions with the DIMSPACE command.
- Dimension an arc beyond its endpoints with the updated diameter and radial dimension commands.



- Place the dimension text outside the angle being measured with the updated Angular Dimension command.
- The new Tolerance alignment option in the Dimension Style dialogue box allows you to align decimal separators or operational symbols.

# Step Savers

## Text Step Savers

Use these handy tricks to buy yourself some time when working with text in AutoCAD LT 2008.

## MTEXT Column Wrap

Ever wish text would automatically wrap across multiple columns in wide areas of your drawing? Your wish has been granted with the new dynamic columns option in the MTEXT command. Use grips along with the text formatting ruler to get the exact results you are after.



## More Control over Paragraphs

The updated MTEXT command permits more control over paragraph alignment, indentations and spacing.



### More Efficient Spell Checker

No need to select objects first. The updated spell checker searches the entire drawing by default. You can also specify the current space or specific objects if you prefer. When an error is found, AutoCAD LT now highlights and zooms to the word in the drawing.

The new Check Spelling Settings dialogue box allows you to customise the spell checker. You can choose to include dimension text, attributes and xrefs and set a variety of exclusions, such as capitalised words or words with numbers.



### Create Attributes with Multiple Lines of Text

The new Multiple Lines option allows you to create attributes that support multiple lines, underlining, overlining, fields and so forth.

## Table Step Savers

Improved capabilities in AutoCAD LT 2008 take away the pain when you're working with tables.

## Bidirectional Excel Tables

Wouldn't it be nice if you could bring a Microsoft® Excel® file into AutoCAD LT and truly link the file? If you could change the Excel file and have it update in AutoCAD LT and vice versa? Good times are here at last, because now you can do exactly that!

Just use the updated Paste Special command, choose AutoCAD Entities and select Paste Link to insert the Excel spreadsheet into AutoCAD LT. This process creates a data link. Should any changes occur in the XLS file, a bubble notification lets you know that the data link has changed and provides an easy option to update the table.

## Create a Table from a Data Link

A new option in the TABLE command also allows you to create a table from an Excel file. Just select all or part of the sheet.



## Retain Changes in Tables

Any changes you make to an AutoCAD LT table are retained, even if you update the table to reflect any changes in the Excel file!

**TIP** Use the DATALINK command to manage all of your various data links.

## Wrap Long Tables Across Multiple Rows

To wrap tables across rows, simply select the table and adjust it with grips or use the new Table Break tool in the Properties palette.

### **Create Incremental Data Fast**

New auto-fill allows you to quickly increment data in cells by dragging, just as in Excel. You can also combine blocks and text in the same cell!

### **View New Grip Tips on Dynamic Blocks**

As you hover the cursor over a dynamic block grip, the associated parameter description displays as a tooltip.

### **Recover Drawings Along with Xrefs**

A new drawing utility allows you to run the recover process on a drawing and all the associated xrefs. Find this capability under Files>Drawing Utilities or use the RECOVERALL command.

### **Change Copy Multiple Default**

To default to a single copy, set the system variable COPYMODE to 1.

# Layers

The Layer command is the third most frequently used command in AutoCAD LT. These additions make this popular command even better!

## Customise the Layer Manager

Now you control the display order of the layer property columns by dragging the column headings—put your favorites on the left for easy access. Too many columns? Turn off the ones you aren't using by choosing Customise from the shortcut menu.



## Freezing a Layer in All Viewports

The shortcut menu allows you to create a new layer that is frozen in all viewports, a function that is also available as a new button. Here you also find additional controls to freeze or thaw the selected layer(s) in all viewports.



## Renaming Layers

There are now three ways to rename a layer. Double-click the layer name, select a layer and press F2 or choose Rename from the shortcut menu.

## Layer Properties per Viewport

How often have you wished you could assign layer properties per viewport? Wish granted! No more tedium duplicating geometry on separate layers and flipping the layers on and off per viewport. Now you can double-click in a viewport and assign a specific colour, linetype, lineweight and plotstyle per layer that affect only the current viewport. (Hoorah!)

VP Color	VP Linetype	VP Lineweight	VP Plot Style
img	CONTINUOUS	Default	Solid
3	CONTINUOUS	0.15 mm	Solid
green	CENTER2	0.35 mm	Solid
3	CONTINUOUS	0.15 mm	Solid
green	CONTINUOUS	0.08 mm	Solid
img	DASH-BC	0.08 mm	Solid
3	CONTINUOUS	0.25 mm	Solid

Remove these viewport overrides from the right-click menu. Use `VPLAYEROVERRIDES-MODE` (phew!) to temporarily ignore the overrides for viewing or plotting. These overrides affect only those objects that are bylayer. Use the new `SETBYLAYER` command to quickly change objects to bylayer, including those within blocks and nested blocks!

## Direct Access

### to the Layer States Manager

A new `LAYERSTATE` command (LAS alias) provides access to the Layer State Manager from the command prompt (also on the layer panel of the Dashboard). Use the new Import option to bring in layer states directly from DWG™, DWT or DWS files. Now you can also edit or view layer states from xrefs!

## New Layer Evaluation Tool

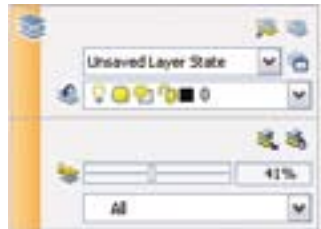
A new Settings button in the Layer command allows you to turn on a new layer evaluation tool.

- The first time you save or plot, the current list of layers is stored for evaluation purposes.
- When new layers are added, an “Unreconciled New Layers” notification appears. Click the link to view the non-matching layers.
- A new layer filter for unreconciled layers is automatically created.
- Layer Settings allows you to customise this process.
- Two new system variables, LAYEREVAL and LAYERNOTIFY, are now available.



## New Layer Panel on the Dashboard

The new Layer panel provides quick access to all these cool new tools, including the very popular Layer Isolate (LAYISO) and Layer Unisolate (LAYUNISO) commands! New fading options allow you to lock and fade background layers, rather than hiding them completely.

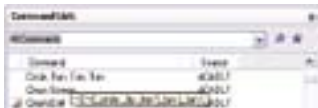


# Customise

## New CUI Features

Now you can customise the Dashboard and palettes with all your favorite commands in the CUI command. Simply drag a command from the command list directly to the palette. Customise the Dashboard by dragging commands to the new Dashboard panel that displays in the upper right of the CUI. You can even create a new row of tools on the Dashboard by dragging a toolbar from the Toolbar node to the Dashboard node.

A new search tool makes it easy to find commands. The macro associated with each command appears as a tooltip as you hover the cursor over the command.

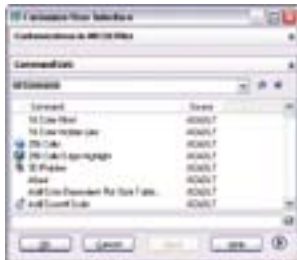


## New Dynamic Preview Panel

It's easy to drag Dashboard and toolbar tools to the Preview Panel in the CUI.

## New Quick CUI

The QUICKCUI command displays a simplified Customise User Interface dialogue box for speedy customisation. Just drag commands to toolbars or palettes.



## Double-Clicking

When you double-click an object, a command is launched. Now you can assign which command is executed for each type of object! For example, when you double-click an attribute definition, the DDEDIT command is executed, allowing you to edit only the attribute value.



## External References

Now you can use the XREF command to see all externally referenced files in one handy central location. Here you find any attached drawing files, DWF files, images and DGN files.

## Plotting to PDF

Use the Add Plotter wizard to print your drawings to PDF format. Under Manufacturers, select Autodesk ePlot (PDF) and under Models select PDF.



## Access to DWG Files

AutoCAD LT 2008 lets you open DWG files all the way back to AutoCAD version 2.0 and AutoCAD LT version 1.0 (ancient!).

- Backward and forward conversion of DWG files from AutoCAD LT 97 to AutoCAD LT 2008 using the conversion features of DWG TrueView™ 2008 software.
- Now anyone can view, publish and plot DWG files with DWG TrueView.

Download DWG TrueView for free (and we all love free!) at [www.autodesk.com/dwg](http://www.autodesk.com/dwg).

**TIP** Use DWG TrueView to quickly apply a page setup to multiple layouts!



Lynn Allen, *Cadalyst* columnist and worldwide Autodesk Technical Evangelist, speaks to more than 30,000 users each year. For the past fourteen years she has written a monthly column in *Cadalyst* magazine called "Circles and Lines." Lynn started using AutoCAD® software with Release 1.4, over 20 years ago and has taught at the corporate and collegiate level for 13 years. A sought-after public speaker with a unique comedic style, Lynn is consistently one of the highest rated speakers at Autodesk University. Her latest book is entitled *AutoCAD Professional Tips and Techniques*.

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