

AutoCAD Tool Palettes Management Lab (Planning and Preparation, Not Perspiration)

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Learning Objectives

- Learn how to create a completely fresh tool palette in a network location
- Learn how to create, edit, and save tools onto your networked palettes
- Learn how to boost productivity with scripts and macros hosted on your palettes
- Learn how to hack your tool palettes without opening AutoCAD

Description

CAD standards are a bone of contention for every CAD manager. For me, CAD standards are all about a single thing - productivity.

It's all about decision-making. I don't want you spending time deciding what font to use or what line weight to draw with. Those tasks don't increase the project's value. I want you to be able to focus on creating drawings that sell ideas to a client or help make manufacturing quicker and easier. You shouldn't need to worry about CAD standards.

In this Lab, I'll take you through the exact steps that I use to create a comprehensive set of tool palettes that deploy our company CAD standards. I'll show you how to deploy your tool palettes on the network, and how to update them from a central file. We will push as hard as we can into deploying scripts and macros from tool palettes, and cover some of the tips and hacks of tool palettes that you won't find in the help file.

Speaker

Paul Munford is an Application Engineer for Graitec UK. Until recently Paul was a specialist joinery draughtsman (a “setter out”) and CAD/CAM manager for a U.K. based custom furniture contractor.

Paul had 8 years of experience “on the tools” before joining the CAD department in 2005. As an Application Engineer, Paul handles licensing, deployment, and training for AutoCAD and Inventor software. Paul also uses AutoCAD and Inventor to create manufacturing “workshop” drawings for Graitec’s customers.

In his spare time, Paul writes the blog entitled [CAD Setter Out](#), and he also authored Mastering Autodesk Inventor 2016. This will be Paul’s 9th trip to Autodesk University, and his 6th as a speaker.

@Cadsetterout



| | |
|--|-----------|
| Watch the Screencast | 3 |
| Planning and preparation for this lab | 4 |
| Resetting AutoCAD to its defaults | 4 |
| Opening AutoCAD faster | 4 |
| Disable digital signatures | 4 |
| Set switch to /nologo | 4 |
| Windows Explorer settings | 5 |
| Creating a mapped drive (Not available at AU) | 6 |
| Lab Exercises | 7 |
| Folders | 7 |
| Data set | 7 |
| Creating folders | 7 |
| Copying the data set | 7 |
| Admin Profile & Support Paths | 8 |
| Create an Admin profile | 8 |
| Set support paths | 9 |
| Add a default template. | 10 |
| Set your trusted locations | 11 |
| Add a path to your new Tool Palette location | 12 |
| Create a tool palette | 13 |
| Close AutoCAD to write out changes | 14 |
| AutoCAD Tool Palettes - tool order | 15 |
| Palette & Tool Creation | 16 |
| Create palettes | 16 |
| Re-order Palettes | 17 |
| AutoCAD Tool Palettes - Palette order. | 17 |
| Create a tool to run a macro using the CUI | 18 |
| Editing tool properties | 19 |
| Action Recorder Tool | 20 |
| Create an Action Recorder tool – File location | 20 |
| Create an Action Recorder tool – Recording an action | 21 |
| Create an Action Recorder tool – Creating a tool to play an action | 22 |
| Deploying Tool Palettes | 23 |
| Creating a ‘Deploy’ set of palettes. | 23 |
| Locking your tool palettes | 24 |
| Creating a user profile | 25 |
| Editing your user profile | 26 |
| Deploying a profile from the network | 27 |
| Exporting your user profile. | 27 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Automating Deployment | 29 |
| Creating an Acad.Isp..... | 29 |
| Create an Init.Isp..... | 30 |
| Testing our deployment strategy. | 31 |
| Update & Re-Deploy | 32 |
| Updating our tool palettes | 32 |
| Thanks | 33 |
| Resources | 34 |

Watch the Screencast

Please note that each of these exercises has been recorded as an Autodesk Screencast.

You can find the Screencasts here:

<https://knowledge.autodesk.com/community/collection/118591?preview>

Planning and preparation for this lab

Resetting AutoCAD to its defaults

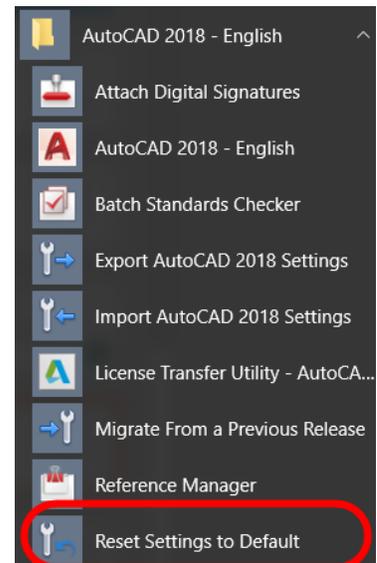
To make sure that AutoCAD is ready for the class, we have re-set AutoCAD to its default settings.

There is an application to do this. If you want to find it, look in your programs folder under AutoCAD [year].

Opening AutoCAD faster

AutoCAD only writes out changes to tool palettes when we close AutoCAD.

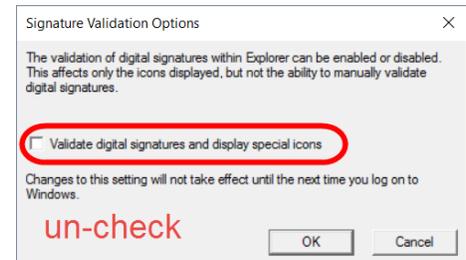
Because we will be opening and closing AutoCAD a lot during this lab, we have made a couple of tweaks to help AutoCAD open faster.



Disable digital signatures

To disable digital signatures:

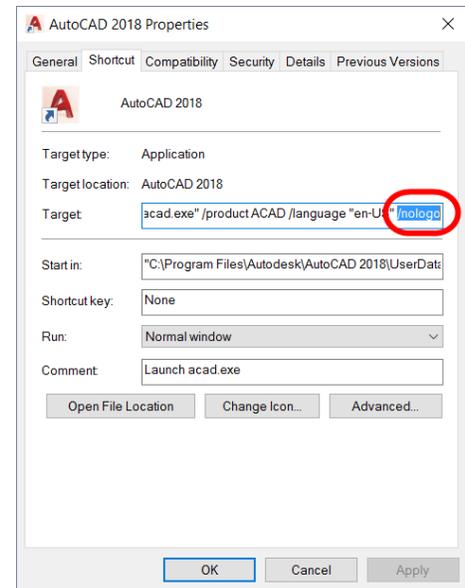
1. Right click on your desktop AutoCAD start up icon.
2. Pick 'Enable/Disable Digital Signature Icons'.
3. In the 'Signature Validation Options' dialogue, un-check 'Validate digital signatures and display special icons'.
4. Restart your computer.



Set switch to /nologo

To turn off the splash screen that appears on your screen before AutoCAD opens:

1. Right click on your desktop AutoCAD start up icon.
2. In the 'Target' input box, add '/nologo' to the end of the command string.
3. Click OK

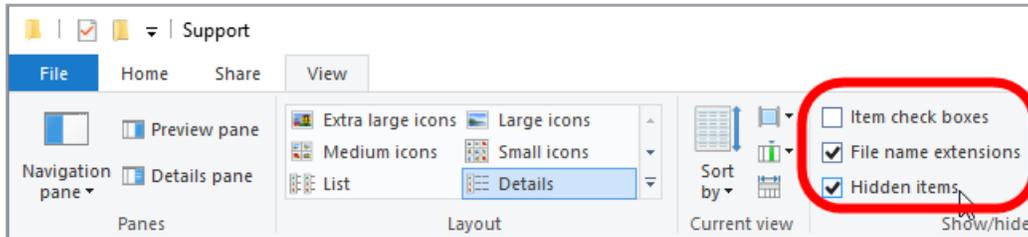


Windows Explorer settings

Make sure that you can see hidden files in Windows explorer, and that you have file extensions showing.

To show hidden files and file extensions in Windows 10.

1. Open Windows explorer.
2. Select the 'View' tab > 'Show/Hide' panel.
3. Tick the boxes for 'File name extensions', and 'Hidden items'.



Creating a mapped drive (Not available at AU)

Note: Unfortunately we are unable to create a mapped drive with the Lab machines at AU. I encourage you to discuss the instructions below with your IT support on your return to your office.

It makes it much simpler to create and deploy your AutoCAD tool palettes if you can use a mapped server drive letter.

A mapped drive letter gives you a much shorter path to browse, type and remember! In addition, you can create a mapped drive on your laptop to test new additions to your palettes before adding your updates to the corporate server.

You may need to work with your IT provider to create a mapped network drive. Here's how to fake a mapped drive on your windows 10 PC.

To create a local mapped drive:

1. Create a new folder on your hard drive for mapping.
2. Right click on your folder and choose 'Properties'.
3. In the '*Foldername* – properties' dialog, switch to the 'Sharing tab'.
4. Select the 'Share' Button.
5. In the 'File sharing' dialog, pick on the drop down at the end of the 'Choose people' input field. Pick 'Everyone'.
6. Click on the 'Share' Button.
7. Click on the 'Done' button.
8. Click on the 'Close' button.
9. Back in windows explorer, click on 'This PC', and click the 'Map Network Drive' button.
10. Choose the drive letter that you'd like to map to. Type in the address of your shared folder using the following format:

\\Your-computor-name][Your-shared-folder-name]

e.g.

\\GRA0401PMAutoCAD

11. Click 'Finish'.

Lab Exercises

Folders

Data set

The data set for the lab can be found on the computer you are sitting at:

C:/DATASETS/Paul Munford/AS124612-L

Note: You will be able to download this dataset from the Autodesk University website after the class has finished.

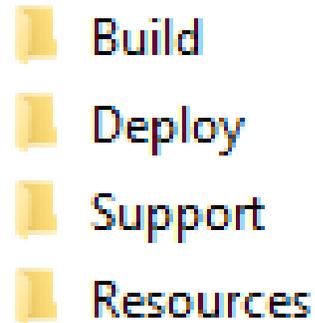
Creating folders

On the computer you are sitting at for this lab, create a new folder at the root of the 'C:' drive named '**Palettes**'.

This will be our working folder for the class.

Now create the following subfolders:

- Build
Where we create our palettes
- Deploy
Where we will deploy our palettes from
- Resources
Templates, libraries
- Support
Customisations



Copying the data set

Copy the contents of the following folders from the AU data set to your new folders:

- Resources
- Support

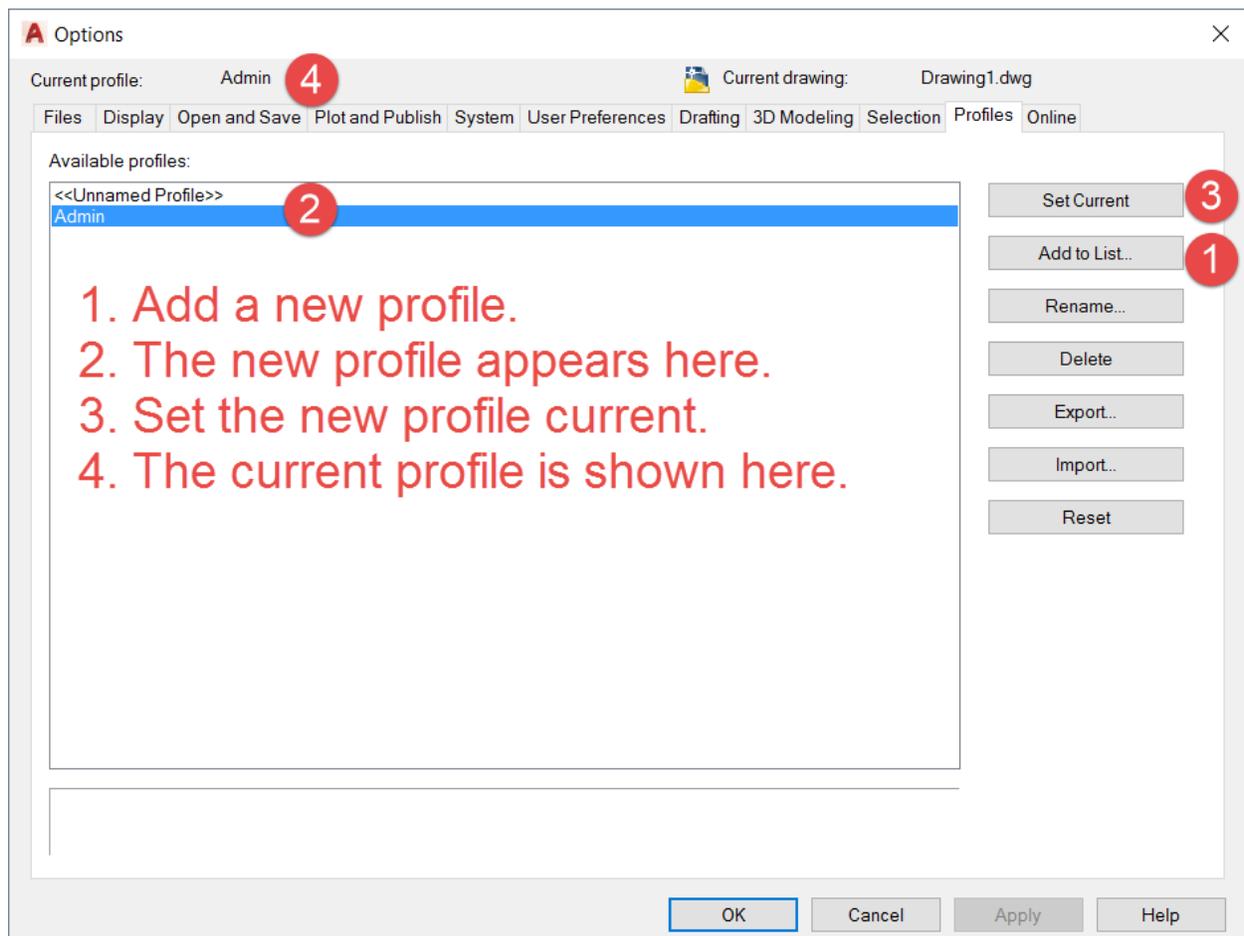
Admin Profile & Support Paths

Watch the Screencast: <http://autode.sk/2AdxAJr>

Create an Admin profile

To ask AutoCAD to use the folders we just created, and to save these settings, create a new profile for the CAD Manager/CAD Admin (You!).

1. Open AutoCAD by double clicking on the desktop icon.
2. Click 'Start Drawing' to open a new, blank DWG file from a template.
3. Type 'Options' at the AutoCAD command line.
4. In the 'Options' dialog, switch to the 'Profiles' tab.
5. Select 'Add to List'.
6. Give your new profile the name 'Admin'.
7. Click 'Apply and close'. Note that your new profile has been added to the 'Available profiles' list, but it isn't active.
8. In the 'Available profiles' list, select 'Admin' with a left click. Click on the 'Set Current' button. Note that the 'Current Profile' is now 'Admin'.



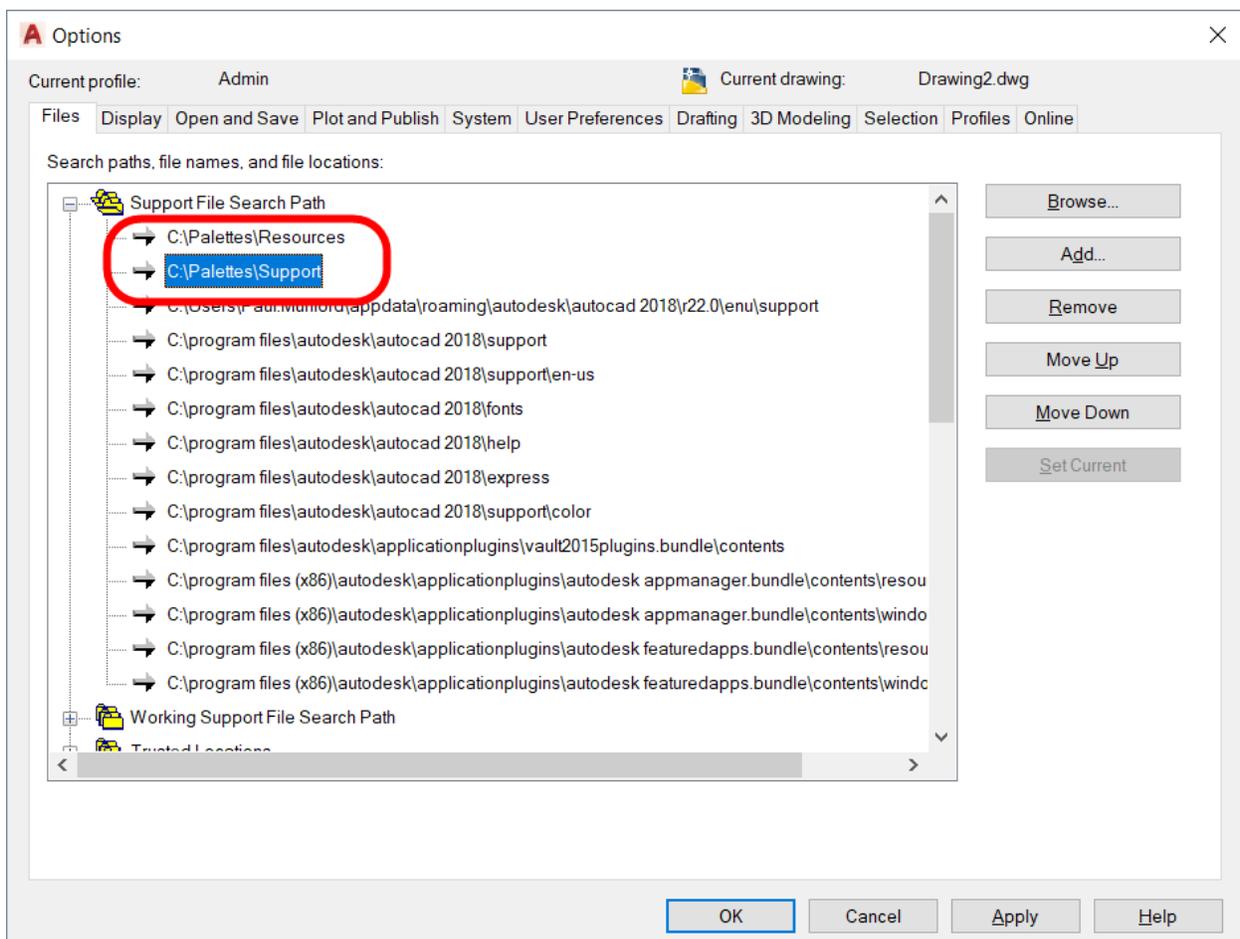
Set support paths

Add the following support paths to the 'Admin' profile.

1. With the AutoCAD 'Options' dialog open, switch to the 'Files' tab.
2. Expand the 'Support file search path' node.
3. Select the 'Support file search path' node.
4. Click 'Add...'
5. Click and browse to your 'C:\Palettes\Resources' folder.
6. Repeat step 4. And add a path to your 'C:\Palettes\Support' folder.

Now AutoCAD will search your 'Resources' and 'Support' folders when you ask it to look for templates, customisations, libraries etc.

Tip: Move your 'Resources' and 'Support' folders to the TOP of the list and AutoCAD will search these folders first.

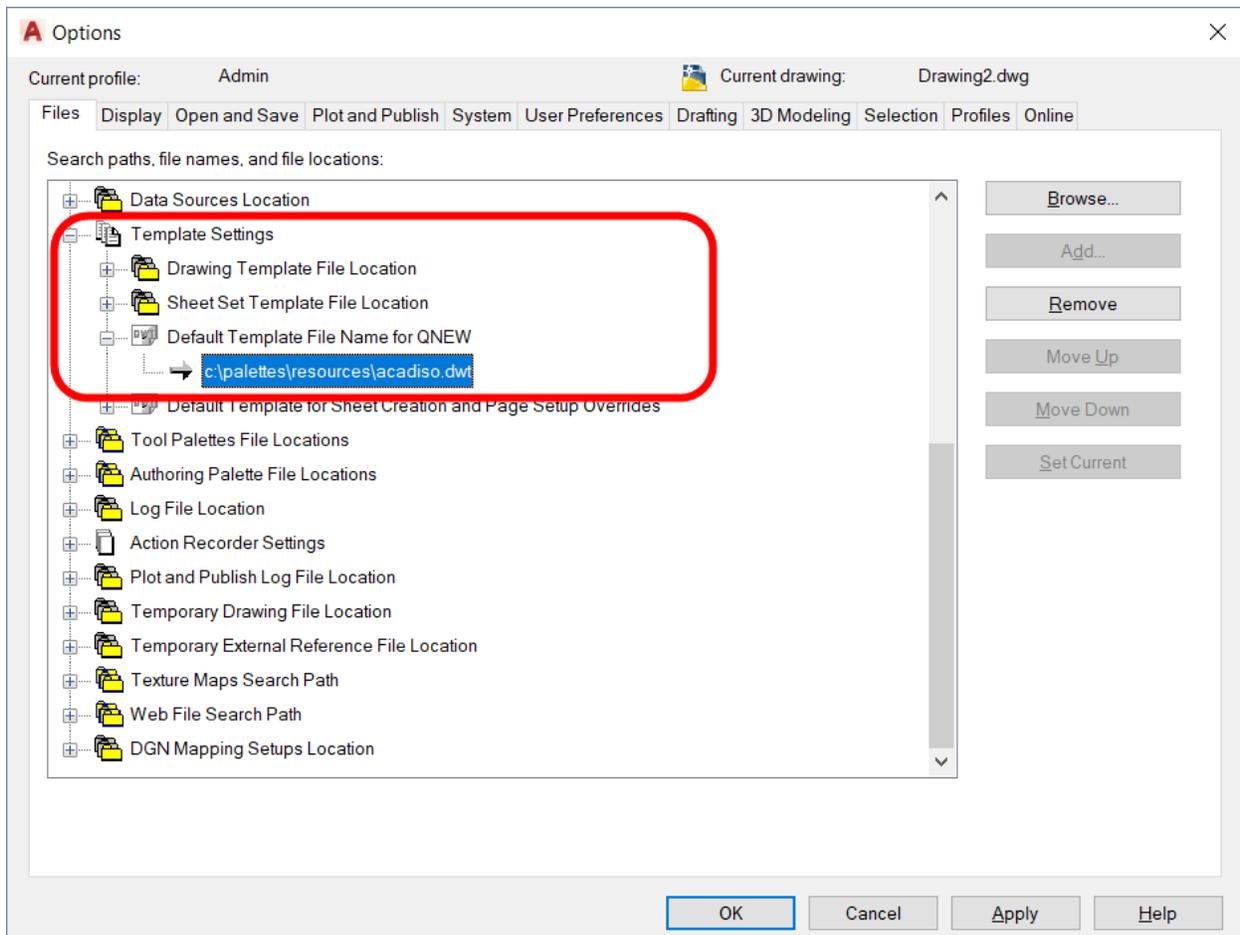


Add a default template.

This technique of using Tool palettes to deploy CAD standards, uses a completely blank template. We then add all styles and standards via our tool palette tools.

So, let's set AutoCAD to use a blank template now.

1. In windows explorer, check that you copied the 'acadiso.dwt' template from the class data set Resources folder, to your Resources folder - 'C:\Palettes\Resources'.
2. Back in AutoCAD, with the 'Options dialog still open, scroll down to the 'Template settings' node.
3. Expand Template settings, and expand 'Default Template File Name for QNEW'.
4. Click on 'None' and select browse...
5. AutoCAD's template folder will open by default, browse to your 'Resources' folder, select 'acadiso.dwt' and click 'Open'.

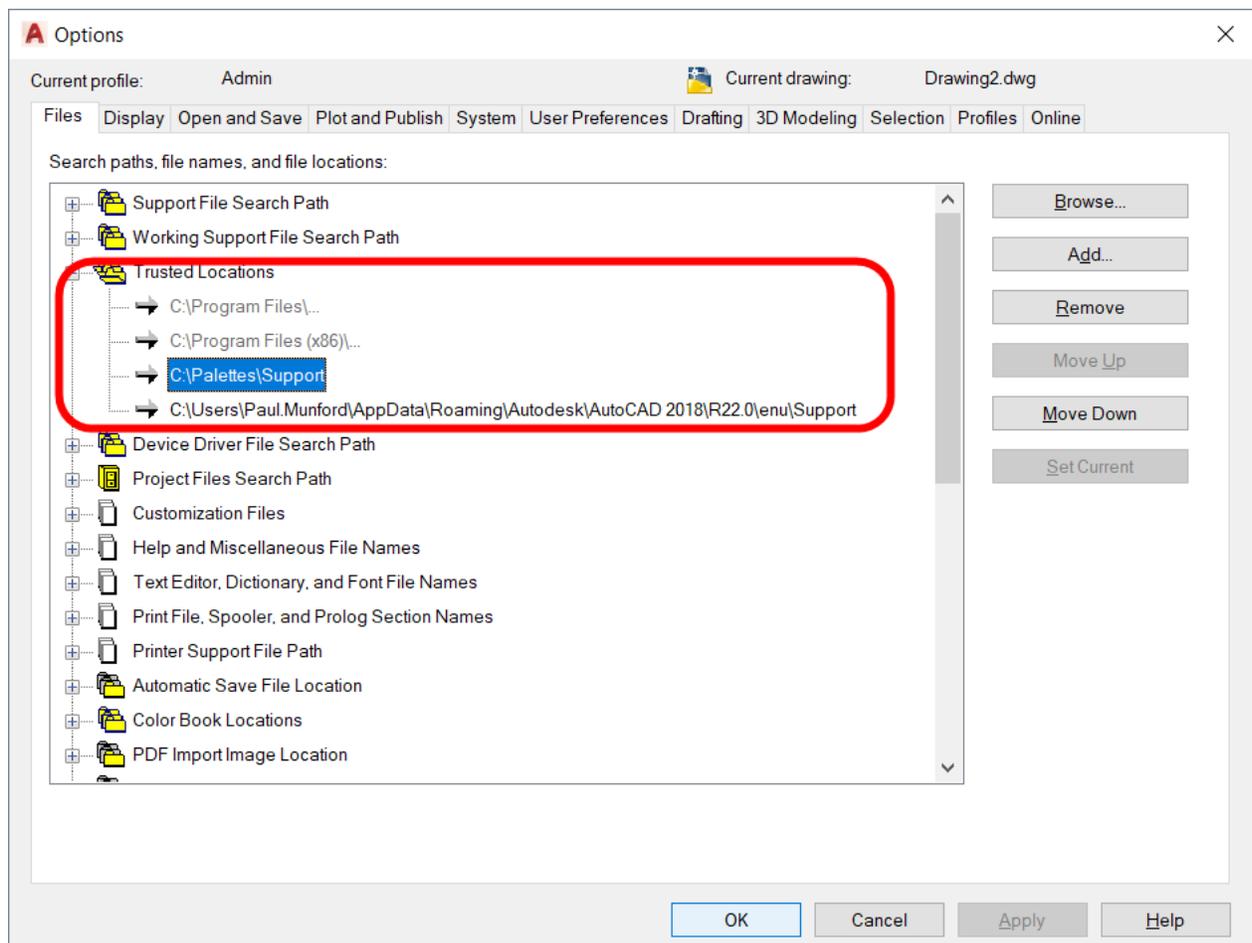
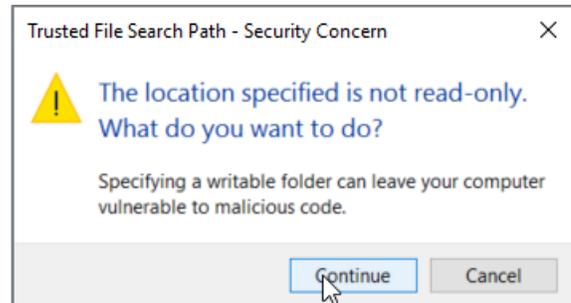


Set your trusted locations

To help improve security, AutoCAD will only load customisation files from 'Trusted' locations.

To set your 'Support' folder as a trusted location:

1. With AutoCAD open, and your Admin profile set current.
2. At the AutoCAD command line type 'Options' and press your 'Enter' (Return) key.
3. In the options dialog, click on the 'Files' tab.
4. Browse to the 'Trusted Locations' node, and expand it by clicking on the 'Plus' symbol.
5. Click on an empty path, and click 'Browse'.
6. Browse to 'C:\Palettes\Support'
7. Select your 'Support' folder, click 'OK'
8. AutoCAD will warn you that this folder is not read-only, click 'Continue'.
9. Click 'Apply'.

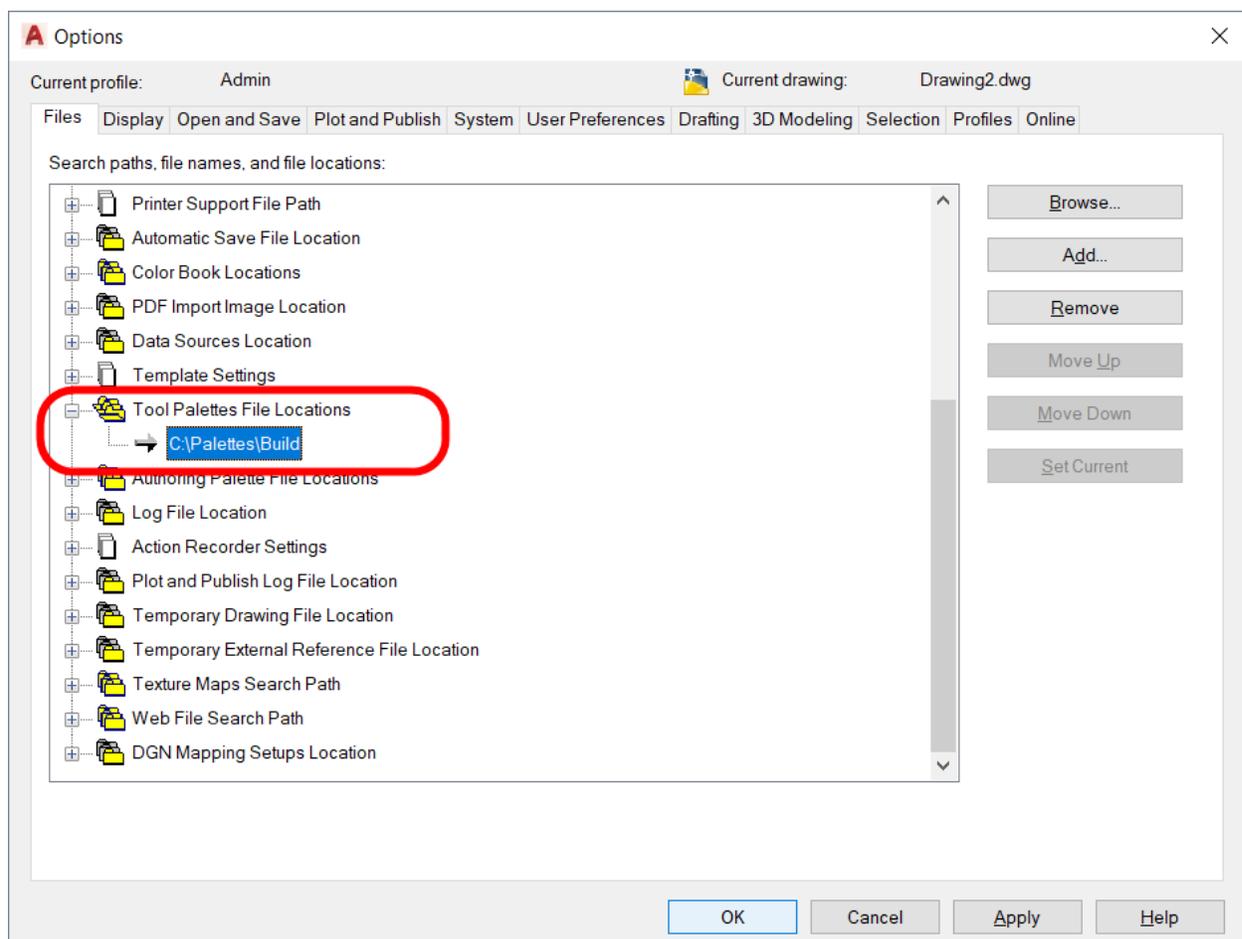


Add a path to your new Tool Palette location

Finally, let's add a path to our new tool palette folder location – the 'Build' folder.

1. In AutoCAD, with the 'Options' dialog still open, scroll down to the 'Tool Palette file locations' node.
2. Expand the node, and select the existing path below with a left click.
3. Click on the 'remove' button to remove the path to AutoCAD's existing tool palettes.
4. Click 'Browse', and browse to your 'C:\Palettes\Build' folder.
5. Select your Build folder with a left click. Click 'OK' to close the dialog and add the Build folder as your tool Palette file location.
6. You can now click on the options dialog 'OK' button to close the dialog.

TIP: You can add multiple tool palette folder locations here using the 'add' button. AutoCAD will create palettes in the *FIRST* location in the list.

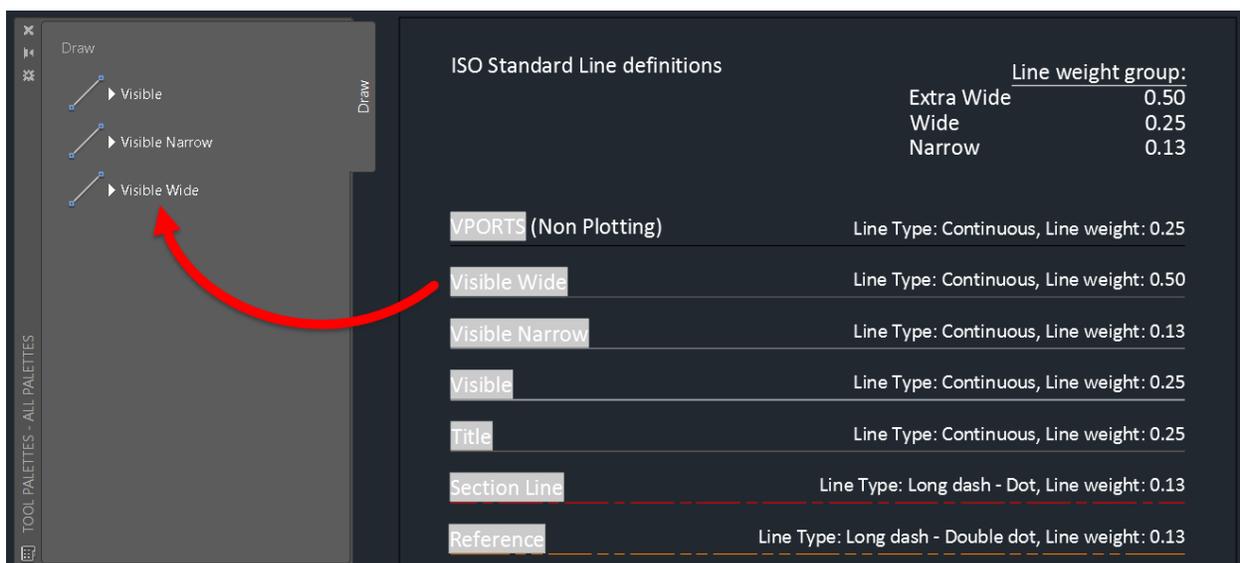


Create a tool palette

Now we have set AutoCAD up, we are ready to create our own tool palette in our 'Build' folder.

To create a new palette:

1. Make sure that you have copied the AutoCAD 'Global_Template.dwg' file from the class data set Resources folder, to your 'Resources' folder, using Windows file explorer.
2. Open the Global Template from your resources folder in AutoCAD.
3. To open your tool palettes, type 'TOOLPALETTES' at AutoCAD's command line.
4. Right click on your new palette, and choose 'Rename Palette'.
5. Call your palette 'Draw'.
6. Right click on your new palette and choose 'Add text', add the text 'Draw'
7. Zoom in on the ISO standard line definitions.
8. Left click on the line in the AutoCAD drawing titled 'Visible wide'. Right click and drag the line onto the tool palette.
9. Right click on the new 'Line' icon in the tool palette.
Change 'Name:' to 'Visible Wide'.
Change 'Description:' to 'Draw lines on the Visible Wide Layer'.
(Note that the description becomes a tool tip, you'll see it when you hover over a tool).
10. Repeat steps 8 and 9 for the line on the 'Visible narrow' layer and the line on the 'Visible' layer.
11. Left click and drag on the tool icon to re-order your new tools. The new order is:
Visible
Visible Narrow
Visible Wide



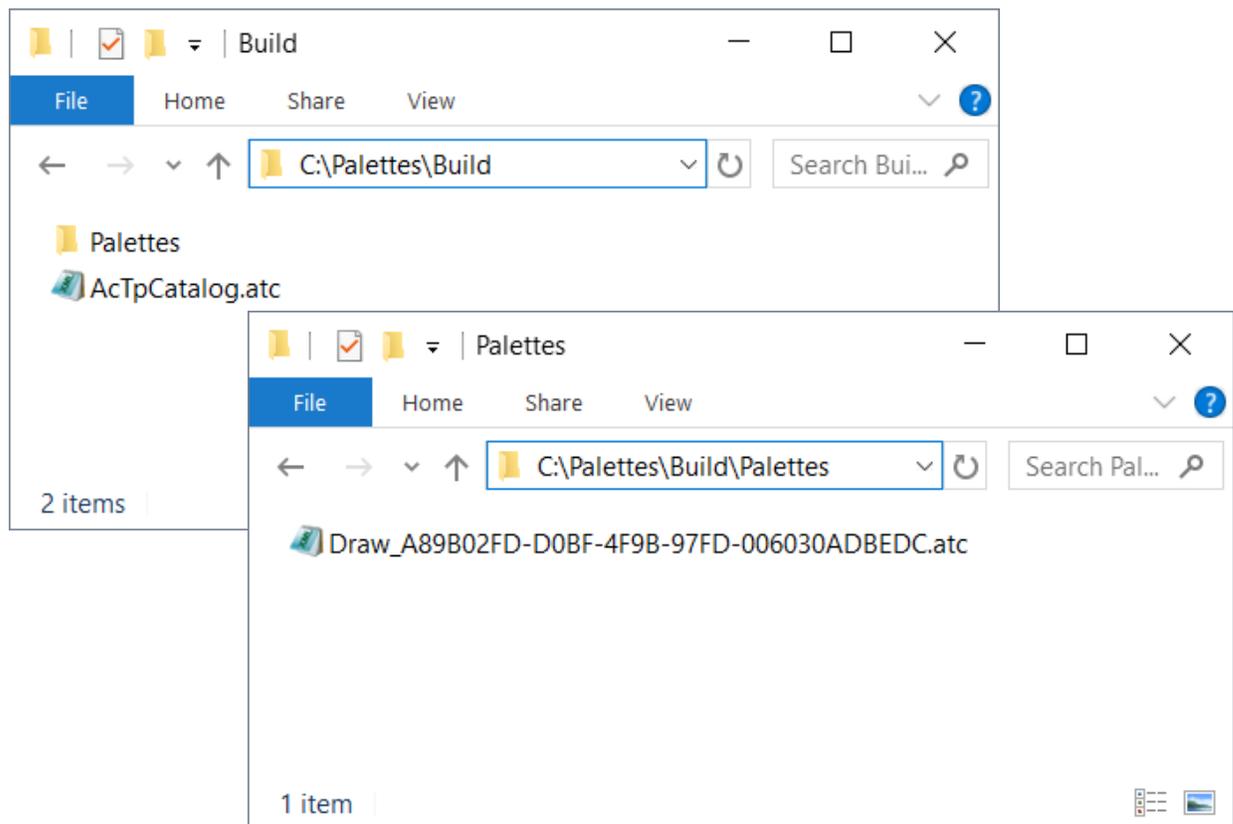
Close AutoCAD to write out changes

Remember that AutoCAD only writes out change to tool palettes when we close AutoCAD.

Let's close AutoCAD now and see what we get.

1. Close (But don't save changes to) the 'Global_Template' file.
2. Close AutoCAD.
3. In Windows Explorer, browse to your AutoCAD 'Build' folder.
4. You should find an 'AcTpCatalog.atc' file and a subfolder called 'Palettes'.
5. Double click into the Palettes folder.
6. You should find a file called 'Draw_[Big_Long_GUID].atc'

This is your tool palette file! Well done 😊



AutoCAD Tool Palettes - tool order.

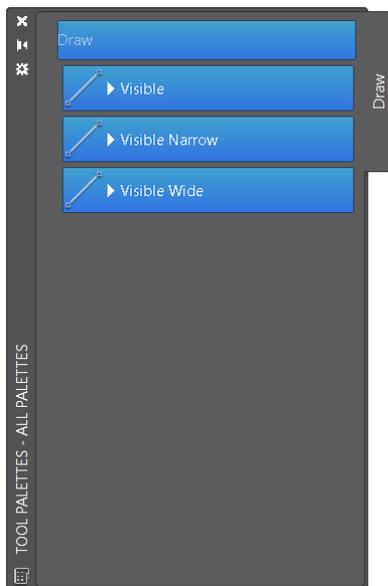
Have you ever built a set of tools on an AutoCAD tool palette, then re-ordered them?

When you closed AutoCAD to write out the changes, then re-open AutoCAD, was your new order remembered?

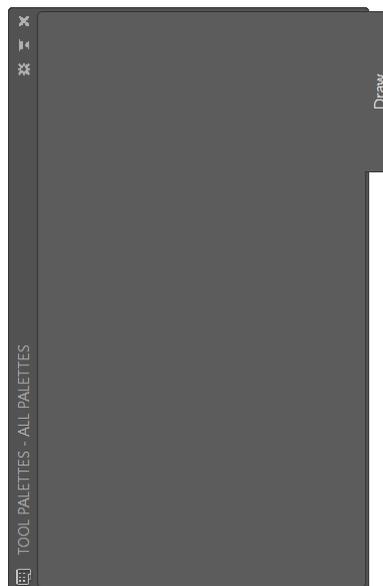
If you've been having problems with AutoCAD remembering your tool order, try this technique.

To preserve tool order changes:

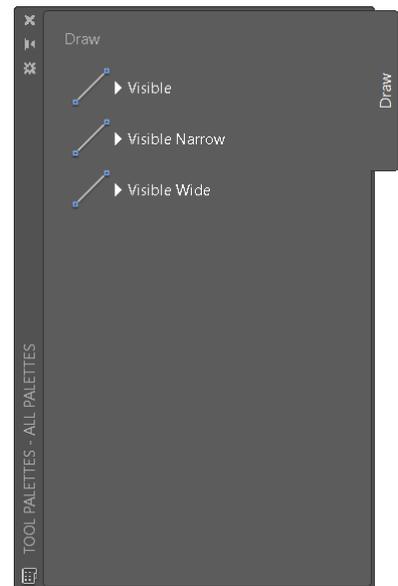
1. Drag and drop your tools until they are in your required order on your tool palette.
2. Select on your tool palette, to make sure that it's current.
3. Press the control key and 'A' (CTRL+A) on your keyboard to select all. All your tools should be highlighted.
4. Press CTRL+X to 'Cut' your tools. This will delete the tools from the tool palette, while copying them to the Windows clipboard.
5. Press CTRL+V to 'Paste' your tools back onto your Tool Palette.
6. Now close AutoCAD to write out your changes.
7. When you open AutoCAD, your tool order should be remembered!



CTRL+A



CTRL+X



CTRL+V

Palette & Tool Creation

Watch the Screencast: <http://autode.sk/2IWx28B>

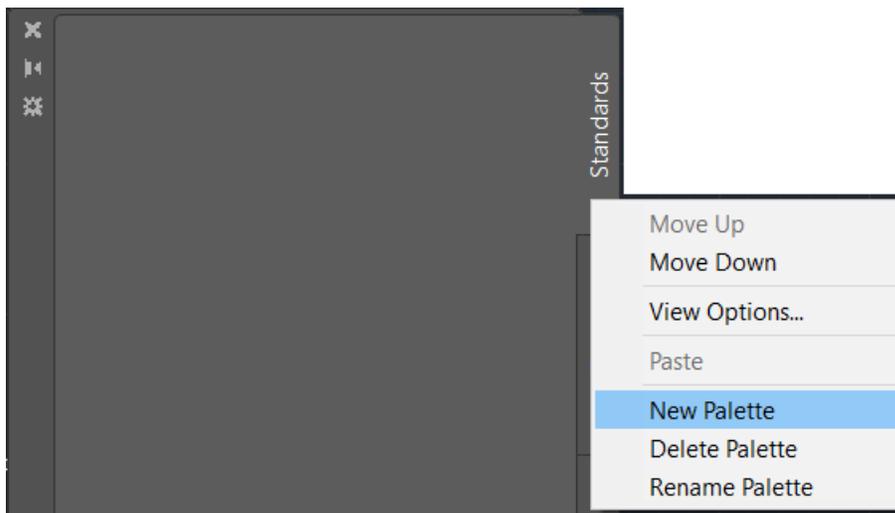
Create palettes

Now, let's create some new tool Palettes.

Open AutoCAD by double clicking on the desktop icon.

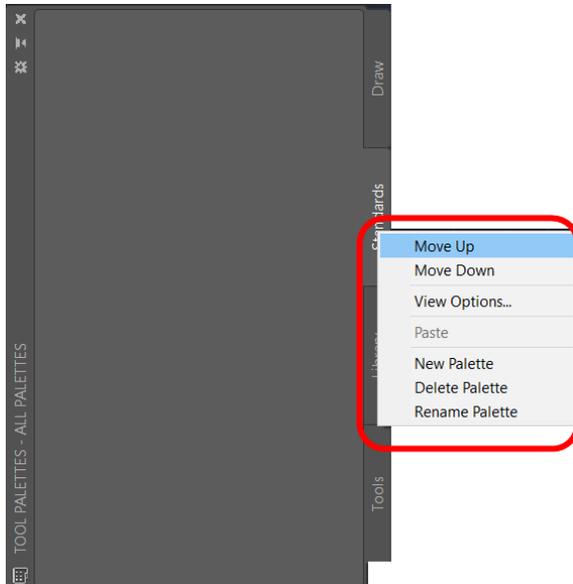
To create new tool palettes.

1. Right click over your Tool Palette.
2. Select 'New Palette'. Name the palette 'Standards'.
3. Repeat step 2. Create a palette called 'Library',
4. Repeat step 2. Create a palette called 'Tools'.

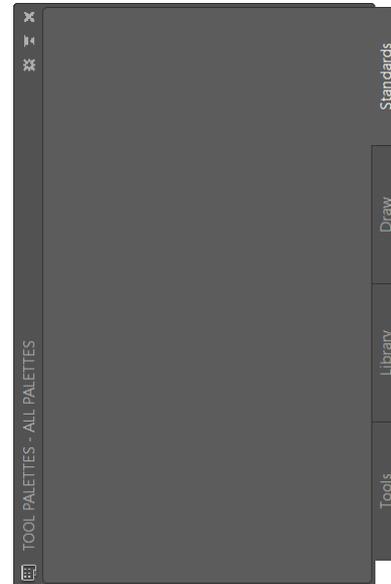


Re-order Palettes.

1. Right click over the tab of your 'Standards' tool palette.
2. Select 'Move up'.
1. Your palettes should now be in the order:
Standards
Draw
Library
Tools



OLD ORDER



NEW ORDER

AutoCAD Tool Palettes - Palette order.

AutoCAD saves your preferred order of palettes in your Profile.

Tip: Make sure that your tool palettes are in the correct order as an Admin user before we use the Admin user profile to create a User profile.

Create a tool to run a macro using the CUI

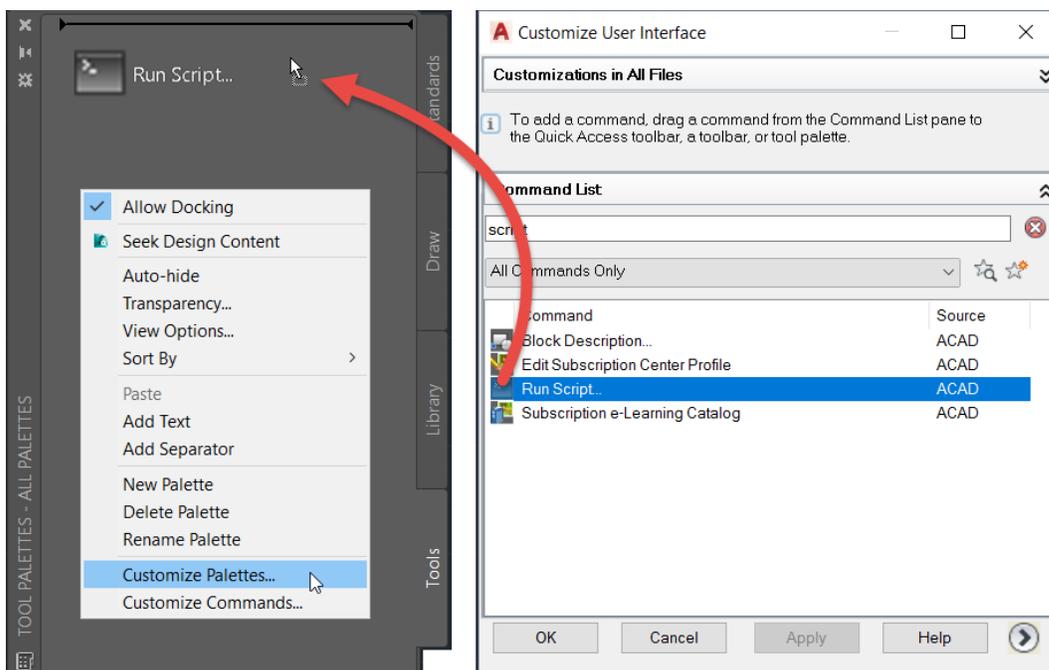
Not all your tools will be created from entities in your template file.

Let's add a tool which will run a custom macro.

First – make sure that you copied the 'CAD_Standard.pdf' from the class data set Resources folder to your 'C:\Palettes\Resources' folder.

1. Click on the tab of your 'Standards' palette to make it active.
2. Right click on your palette and choose 'Customise commands', to open the 'Customise User Interface' dialogue.

(Take a moment to notice all the commands that you could drag and drop onto your palette from here!)



3. Search in the command list for 'script'.
4. Drag and drop the 'Run Script' tool from the command list to your palette.
5. Click 'OK' to close the Customise user interface dialog.

Editing tool properties

We can edit our tool's properties to give a more descriptive name to the tool, or a description of how the tool works.

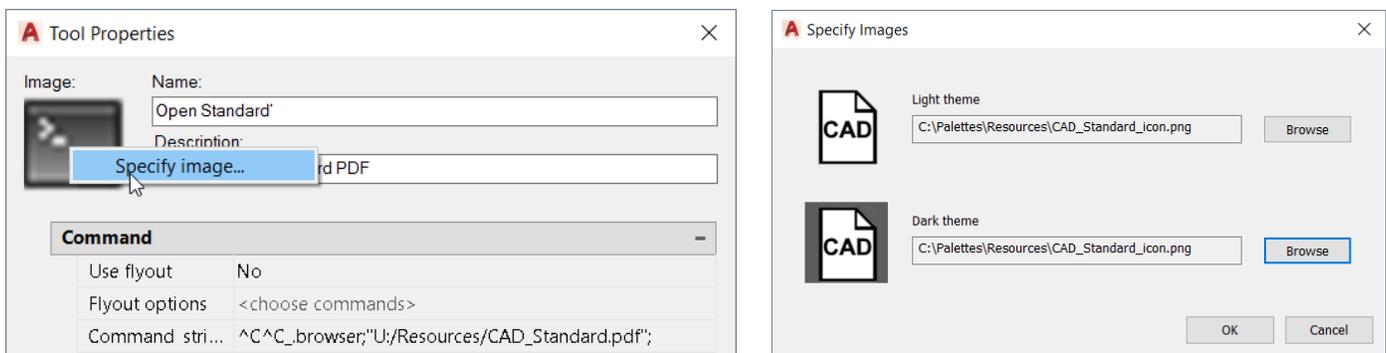
TIP: The 'Description' field of your tool will become a tool tip that your users will see when they roll their mouse over your tool.

Finally, we can add our own image to the tool button – to make it look super-awesome! To give our users a visual cue to what the tool button will do.

1. Right click on your new script tool and choose 'properties'.
2. Edit the tool name: 'Open Standard'
3. Edit the description: 'Open the CAD standard PDF'
4. Edit the Command String:

```
^C^C_.browser;"C:/Palettes/Resources/CAD_Standard.pdf";
```

5. Right click over the script icon, and choose 'Specify Image'.



6. Choose the 'CAD_Standard_icon.png' from your C:\Palettes\Resources folder, for both the light and dark theme.
7. Click 'OK' to close the specify image dialogue box.
8. Click 'OK' to close the tool properties dialogue.

Click on your new tool to test it – your CAD standard PDF should open in your internet browser!

9. Close AutoCAD to write out your changes.
10. Navigate to your 'Build – Palettes' folder. You should now find a folder called 'Images'.

C:\Palettes\Build\Palettes\Images

Tip: When we set our palettes up for deployment, make sure that this folder is copied into your deploy folder, with the rest of your palette files.

Action Recorder Tool

Watch the Screencast: <http://autode.sk/2IWmzh>

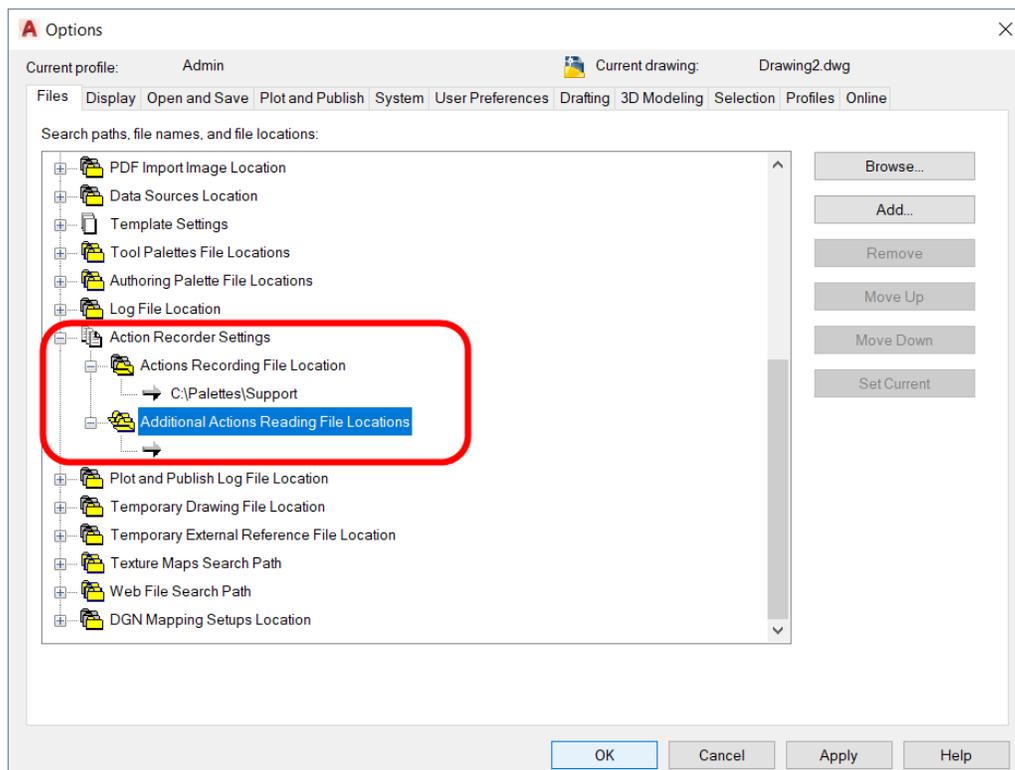
Create an Action Recorder tool – File location

The Action Recorder is an excellent way to create tools that include multiple AutoCAD commands.

Before we add a recorded action to a tool pallet, we need to make sure that the recorded actions will be available to all our users, by placing them on the network.

1. With AutoCAD open, type 'Options' at the command line to bring up the options dialog.
2. Click on the 'Files' tab.
3. Scroll down to, and expand, the 'Action Recorder Settings' node.
4. Expand the 'Actions Recording File Location' node.
5. Select the current path with a left click of your mouse.
6. Click on the 'Browse' button.
7. Browse to 'C:\Palettes\Support'.
8. Click OK to close the file explorer dialog.
9. Click OK to close the AutoCAD Options dialog.

Your Action recorder file save location should now be your 'Support' folder, on your network.

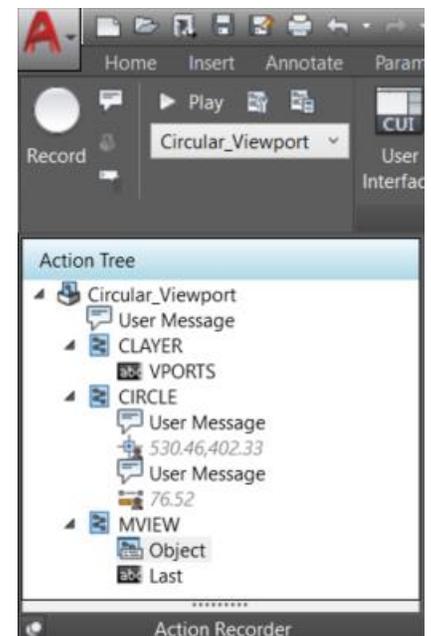


Create an Action Recorder tool – Recording an action

Now let's record a sequence of command to record. We will record a command which creates a circular viewport on the standard layer.

1. Open 'C:\Palettes\Resources\Circular_Viewport.dwg'
2. Switch to 'Layout1', using the tabs at the bottom of the AutoCAD window.
3. Click on the:
Manage tab > Action recorder panel > Record tool – and click 'Record'.
4. Switch to the:
Home tab > Layers panel > Layers drop down.
5. Pick the 'VPORTS' layers from the layers drop down.
6. Type 'circle' at the AutoCAD command line and press 'Enter' (Return) on your keyboard to draw a circle.
7. Pick a centre point for your circle, pick a radius point for your circle.
8. Type 'mview' at the command line to create a view port.
9. Type 'O' (Letter O) at the command line and press 'Enter' (Return) on your keyboard to pick an 'Object'.
10. Type 'L' at the command line and press 'Enter' (Return) on your keyboard to pick the 'Last' object created.
11. Switch back to:
Manage tab > Action recorder panel > Record tool – and click 'Stop'.
12. The Action Macro dialog will pop up:
Name your Macro: 'Circular_Viewport'
Include a description: 'This Action macro creates a circular viewport on the 'VPORTS' Layer'.
13. Click the 'OK' Button to create your Action Macro.

Test your action macro by deleting your circular viewport and then clicking 'Play' on the action recorder panel.



Create an Action Recorder tool – Creating a tool to play an action

Finally, we can create a tool which will run our recorded action.

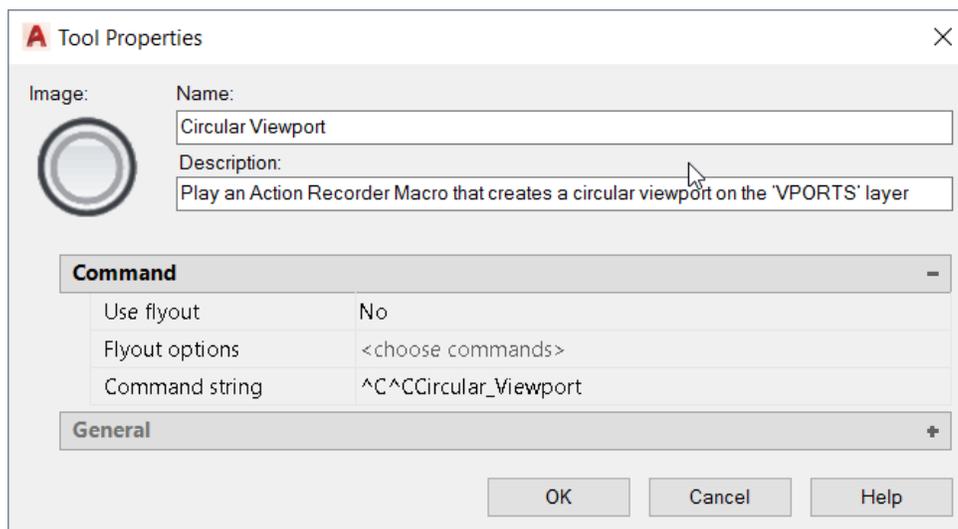
1. Make sure that your 'Tools' palette is active.
2. Right click on your palette and choose 'Customise commands', to open the 'Customise User Interface' dialogue.
3. Search in the command list for 'script'.
4. Drag and drop the Script tool from the command list to your palette.
5. Right click on your new tool, change the following:
Name: Circular Viewport
Description: Play an Action Recorder Macro that creates a circular viewport on the 'VPORPTS' layer
6. Edit the command string:

```
^C^CCircular_Viewport
```

7. Right click over the script icon, and choose 'Specify Image'.
8. Chose the 'Circular_Viewport_icon.png' from your Resources folder, for both the light and dark theme.
9. Click 'OK' to close the specify image dialogue box.
10. Click 'OK' to close the tool properties dialogue.

Click on your new tool to test it – Your tool should run your action macro, which will create a circular Viewport on the 'VPORPTS' layer.

11. Close AutoCAD to write out your changes.



Deploying Tool Palettes

Watch the Screencast: <http://autode.sk/2yAz3x4>

Creating a 'Deploy' set of palettes.

Because AutoCAD writes out changes to tool palettes when we close AutoCAD, we can't work of the 'Live' tool palette files.

Instead we will create a copy of our tool palettes that we will use for deployment.

To Copy your tool palettes to your deployment folder:

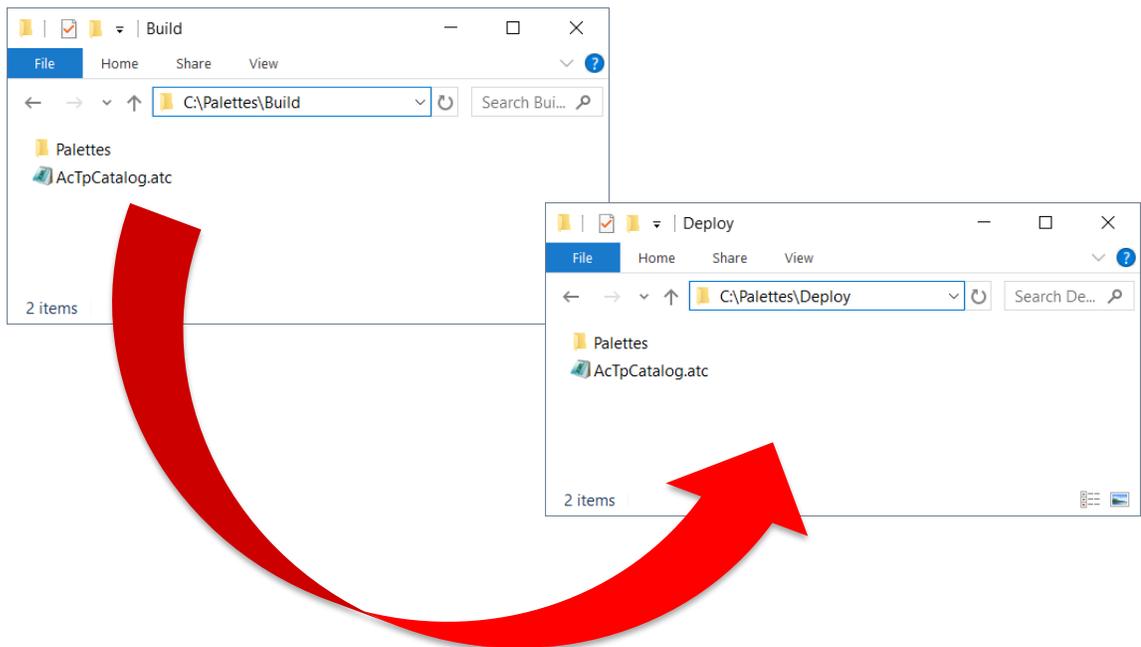
1. Make sure that AutoCAD is closed, to ensure that any pending changes have been written out to disk.
2. Start Windows File Explorer, and browse to:

C:\Palettes\Build

3. Copy EVERYTHING from your Build folder to:

C:\Palettes\Deploy

4. Your tool palettes are now ready to be deployed.



Locking your tool palettes

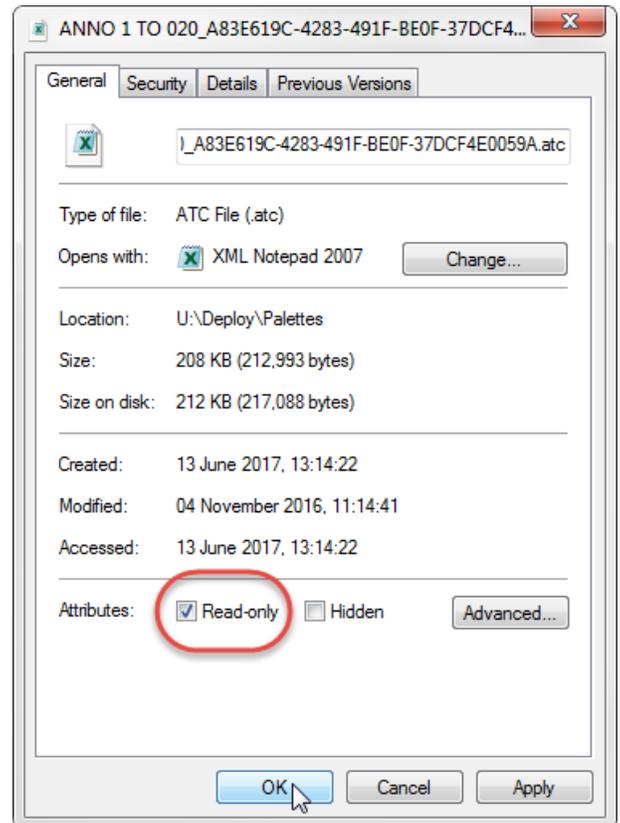
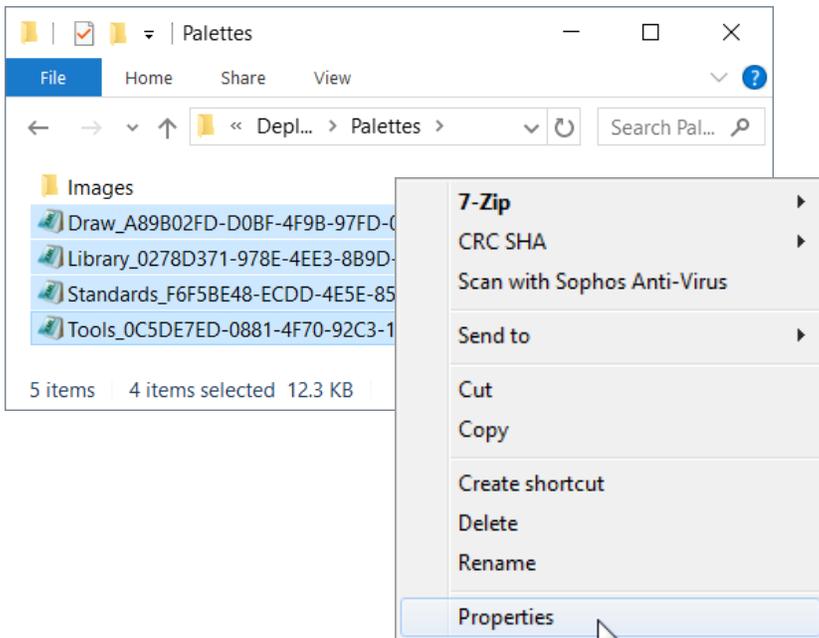
Next, we will lock our deploy set of palettes, so that our users can't write out any changes they make.

1. In windows explorer, navigate to:

C:\Palettes\Deploy\Palettes

2. Left click on the first Tool Palette .atc file in this folder, then hold down the SHIFT key on your keyboard and select the last Tool Palette .atc file in this folder. You should now have all your Tool Palette .atc files selected.
3. Right click, and select 'Properties'.
4. Tick the 'Attributes', 'Read Only' check box.
5. When we open our locked deployment set of palettes in AutoCAD, we will see a 'padlock' symbol on the bottom right hand corner of our tool palettes, to indicate that they are read only.

TIP: DO NOT make the tool palettes folder itself read only! Make only the .atc files read only, or you will break AutoCAD ☹



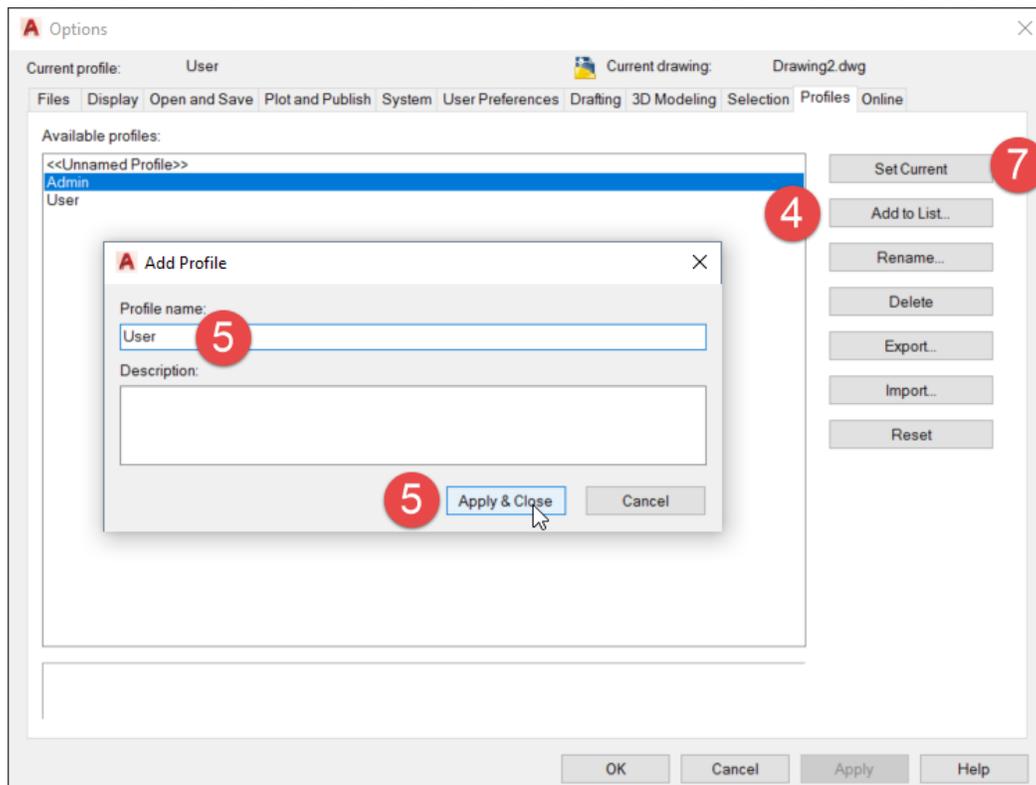
Creating a user profile

Now that we have created a deployment set of palettes, we want to make sure that our users are picking up our deployment set (not our 'Build' set).

We will do this by creating a copy of our CAD Admin profile called the CAD User profile. We will then point the CAD user profile to the Deployment set of palettes.

We will be able to switch profiles to switch which set of Tool Palettes are loaded.

1. Open AutoCAD (If you need to open a new blank file).
2. At the AutoCAD command line, type 'Options' and press your Return (Enter) key.
3. In the options Dialog, click on the 'Profiles' tab.
4. Select 'Add to list'.
5. Name your new profile 'User', click 'Apply & Close' to create your new profile.
6. In the 'Available Profiles' list, left click on your new 'User' profile.
7. Pick on the 'Set Current' button.



Editing your user profile

You can check that your user profile is now current by looking in the top left of the dialog.

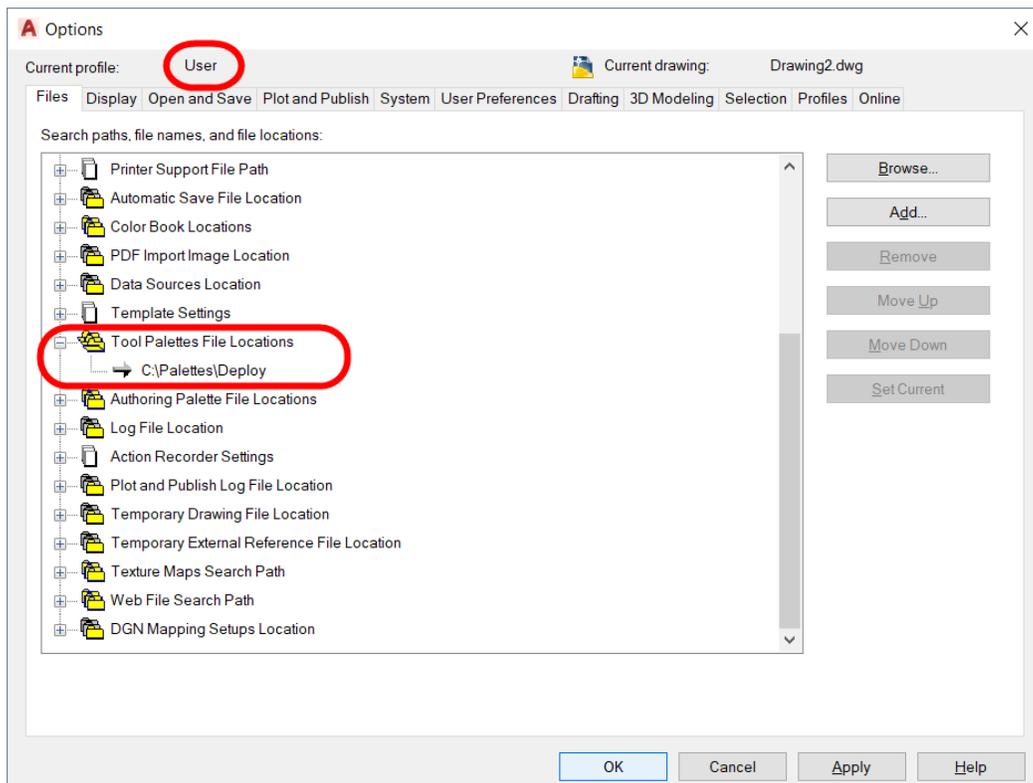
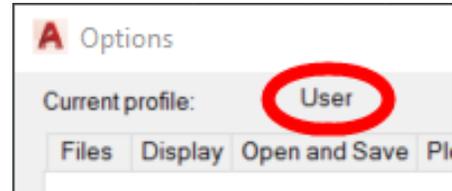
1. Switch to the Options dialog > Files tab
2. Expand the 'Tool Palettes file locations' Node.
3. Select the current file location with a left click.
4. Click on the 'Browse' button.
5. Navigate to 'C:\Palettes\Deploy', and select it with a left click.
6. Click OK to close the browse dialog.
7. *Keep an eye on your tool palettes...*

Click 'Apply', in the bottom right of the Options dialog.

You should see your tool palettes flicker as the palettes from your Deployment folder are loaded. Do you see a padlock icon in the bottom right of your tool palettes?

You can test your profiles by switching back to the option dialog > Profiles tab, select the Admin profile, and pick 'Set current'. Watch the palettes flicker again as your Build set of palettes are loaded.

Finish by clicking on the User profile, and choose 'Set Current' to make sure that your Deployment set of palettes are loaded.



Deploying a profile from the network

We can now control who gets which set of palettes by loading the Admin or the User profile.

But we don't want to have to load the user profile onto every individual machine!

Instead, we will use an Acad.Isp file to load an Initialisation file called Init.Isp

The Acad.Isp file can be included in your network deployment for AutoCAD.

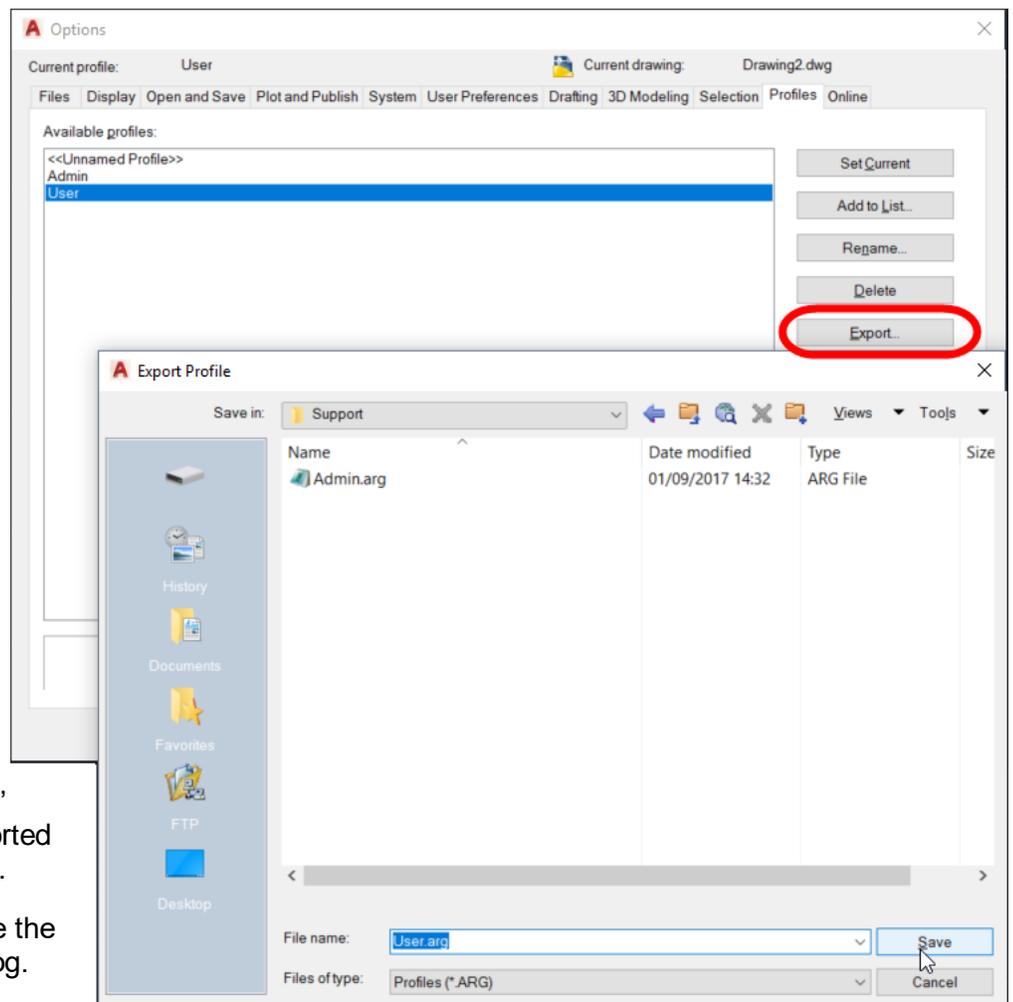
The initialisation file will be located in your 'Support' folder. You can edit the Init.Isp at any time. The next time your user starts AutoCAD, the Acad.Isp will load the Init.Isp, and any changes you have added will be loaded into AutoCAD.

The Init.Isp file is a great way to standardise AutoCAD settings across your organisation.

Exporting your user profile.

To export your new user profile, so that we can load it from the server.

1. At the AutoCAD command line, type 'Options' and press 'Enter' (Return).
2. In the Options dialog, click on the 'Profiles' tab.
3. Select your 'User' profile with a left click.
4. Click on the 'Export' button.
5. Navigate to



C:\Palettes\Support'
and save your exported
profile as 'User.arg'.

6. Click 'Save' to close the 'Export Profile' dialog.

7. Click 'OK' to close the options dialog.

Automating Deployment

Watch the Screencast: <http://autode.sk/2ya1UE5>

Creating an Acad.lsp

The Acad.lsp file is a text file which resides in AutoCAD's support path location.

We will add code to load our init.lsp file from our 'Support' folder.

We will rename the Text file as 'Acad.lsp'.

1. Close AutoCAD.
2. Open Windows explorer, and navigate to:
C:\Users\Mainframe2\AppData\Roaming\Autodesk\AutoCAD 2018\R22.0\enu\Support
3. Right click, and chose New > Text Document.
4. Save the text document with the default name.
5. Double click on 'New Text Document.txt' to open it in windows Notepad.

Add the following code:

```
;set the path
(setq lisp_path "C:\\Palettes\\Support\\")

;If you can find a file called 'init.lsp'
(if (findfile (strcat lisp_path "init.lsp"))

;Load the file called 'init.lsp'
(load (strcat lisp_path "init.lsp")))
```

6. Save and close the Text file.
7. In windows explorer, right click on the text file and chose 'Rename'
8. Rename the Txt file 'Acad.lsp'
9. Windows explorer will give you a warning about changing the file extension, (Ignore Windows) click 'OK'.

Create an Init.lsp

Our init.lsp lives in our 'Support' folder, and is loaded by our Acad.lsp.

We can add whatever code we like to the init.lsp, and it will be loaded into AutoCAD for every user when the user re-boots AutoCAD.

To create your init.lsp:

1. With AutoCAD still closed.
2. Open Windows explorer, and navigate to:
C:\Palettes\Support
3. Right click, and chose New > Text Document.
4. Save the text document with the default name.
5. Double click on 'New Text Document.txt' to open it in windows Notepad.

Add the following code:

```
;Load Visual Lisp
(vl-load-com)

;Import the "User" Profile from the network
(vl-catch-all-apply 'vla-importprofile (list

    (vla-get-profiles (vla-get-preferences (vlax-get-acad-object)))

    "User"
    "C:\\Palettes\\Support\\User.arg"
    1)
    )

;Set "User" Profile current
(vla-put-ActiveProfile (vla-get-Profiles (vla-get-Preferences (vlax-get-acad-object))))"User")

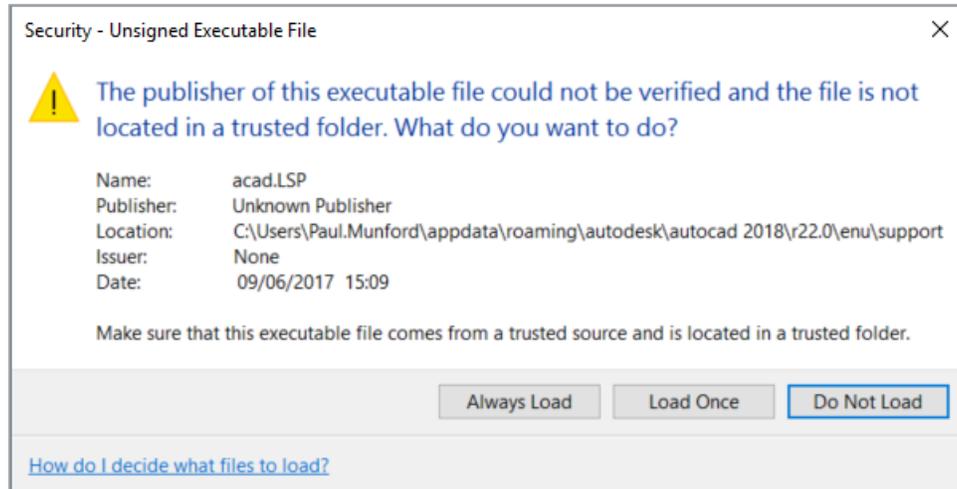
;Set the "modemacro" sysvar to report the latest profile
(SETVAR "modemacro"(STRCAT "PROFILE: $(getvar, cprofile)"))
```

6. Save and close the Text file.
7. In windows explorer, right click on the text file and chose 'Rename'
8. Rename the Txt file 'init.lsp'
9. Windows explorer will give you a warning about changing the file extension, (Ignore Windows) click 'OK'.

Testing our deployment strategy.

To test that our Acad.lsp is loading when AutoCAD starts up – start up AutoCAD.

Note: If you see the following image, click 'Always load'.



You should be able to see an extra item in the tool tray, telling you the currently active profile name.



Tip: Setting the Mode Macro in this way provides you with a quick visual check over which profile your CAD user currently has active.

Update & Re-Deploy

Watch the Screencast: <http://autode.sk/2yAH05t>

Updating our tool palettes

We are always coming up with new ideas for our standard palettes.

Now we have set our palettes up across the network, we can update them at any time.

The update process is as follows:

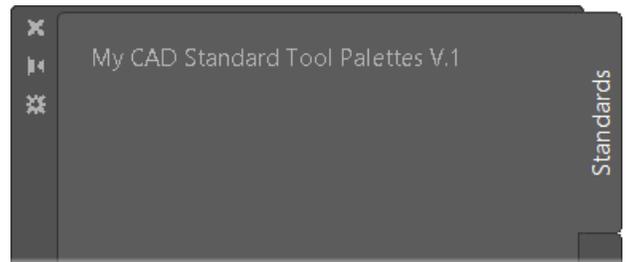
- Set the Admin profile current.
- Make your changes to your tool palettes.
- Close AutoCAD to write out your changes to your build folder.
- Copy the contents of the 'Build' folder to the 'Deploy' folder.
- Make sure that the tool palette. atc files in the 'Deploy' folder are read only.

The next time your users open AutoCAD, they will receive your updated palettes 😊

Let's try the process now.

1. Open AutoCAD
2. Open the AutoCAD options dialogue.
3. Switch to the 'profiles' tab and set your 'Admin' profile to be current.
4. Close the Options Dialog.
5. With your tool palettes open, switch to your standards palette.
6. Right click over your standards palette and choose 'Add text'.
7. Add the following text to your Standards palette:

 'My CAD Standard Tool Palettes V.1'
8. Close AutoCAD to write out the changes to your tool palette.
9. In Windows Explorer, copy the contents of your 'Build' folder, to your 'Deploy' folder.
10. In your 'Deploy' folder. Lock your Palette files.
11. Open AutoCAD.
12. Check for your changes.



Thanks

Thank you very much for attending this lab at Autodesk University. I hope that you now feel confident to try this technique out back at your office, and adapt it to suit your company's needs.

I'd like to thank Anthony Mason who inspired this class with his article in an early copy of AEC edge magazine. There is a link to AEC Edge in this post on the AUGI forums:

<http://forums.augi.com/showthread.php?138781-What-s-the-best-way-to-share-tool-palettes>

I'd also like to thank our Awesome Lab assistants, Sam Lucido, R.K. McSwain, Kimberley Fuhrman, Richard Binning, Chad Franklin and Shaun Bryant.

Resources

If you would like to learn more about AutoCAD's tool palettes, I can recommend the following resources:

Here is a link to the original presentation that this lab is based on. You can watch a video recording of the Tool Palettes Master class here.

AutoCAD Tool Palettes Master Class (Planning and Preparation, Not Perspiration)

<http://au.autodesk.com/au-online/classes-on-demand/class-catalog/classes/year-2015/autocad/it10856#chapter=0>

This class from Matt Murphy will teach new users everything you need to know about AutoCAD Tool Palettes.

The Productivity Power of AutoCAD Tool Palettes—Revealed

<http://au.autodesk.com/au-online/classes-on-demand/class-catalog/classes/year-2015/autocad/gen11407#chapter=0>

Matt Murphy's second class on Tool Palettes digs deeper into the use of tool palettes for CAD standardisation.

Managing Your Standards and Reusable Content with AutoCAD Tool Palettes Revealed

<http://au.autodesk.com/au-online/classes-on-demand/class-catalog/classes/year-2014/autocad/ac5546>

This class from R.K McSwain covers the use of an 'init' file in far more detail, including an alternative method to using profiles to standardise AutoCAD system variables across your network.

Deployments and AutoLISP: Strategies for Easy Installations and Maintenance

<http://au.autodesk.com/au-online/classes-on-demand/class-catalog/classes/year-2015/autocad/it9952#chapter=0>

For more on Tool Palette Macro's, Check out Sam Lucido's class.

Pumping up Productivity in the LAB with Macros, One Character at a Time

<http://au.autodesk.com/au-online/classes-on-demand/class-catalog/classes/year-2016/autocad/gen16077-l>