

# SD468505 Which Editor to Use for AutoLISP Development: Notepad to Visual Studio Code

**Lee Ambrosius**

Principal Learning Experience Designer | @leeambrosius (Twitter)



# Who's this Session For

Those that want to learn how to:

- Utilize a specialized AutoLISP editor
- Improve AutoLISP workflows used to
  - Edit
  - Debug
  - Manage

What you should already know:

- AutoCAD 2021 (or AutoCAD 2016 and later)
- AutoLISP programming

# About the Speaker

My name is Lee Ambrosius:

- **Principal Learning Experience Designer at Autodesk, Inc.**
  - Technical writer and data analyst
  - Customization, Developer, and CAD Administration documentation
- **Over 20+ years of AutoCAD customization and programming experience**
- **Authored AutoCAD Customization Platform book series published by Wiley & Sons**

My job in a nutshell:

- Document the past and present AutoCAD releases for the future

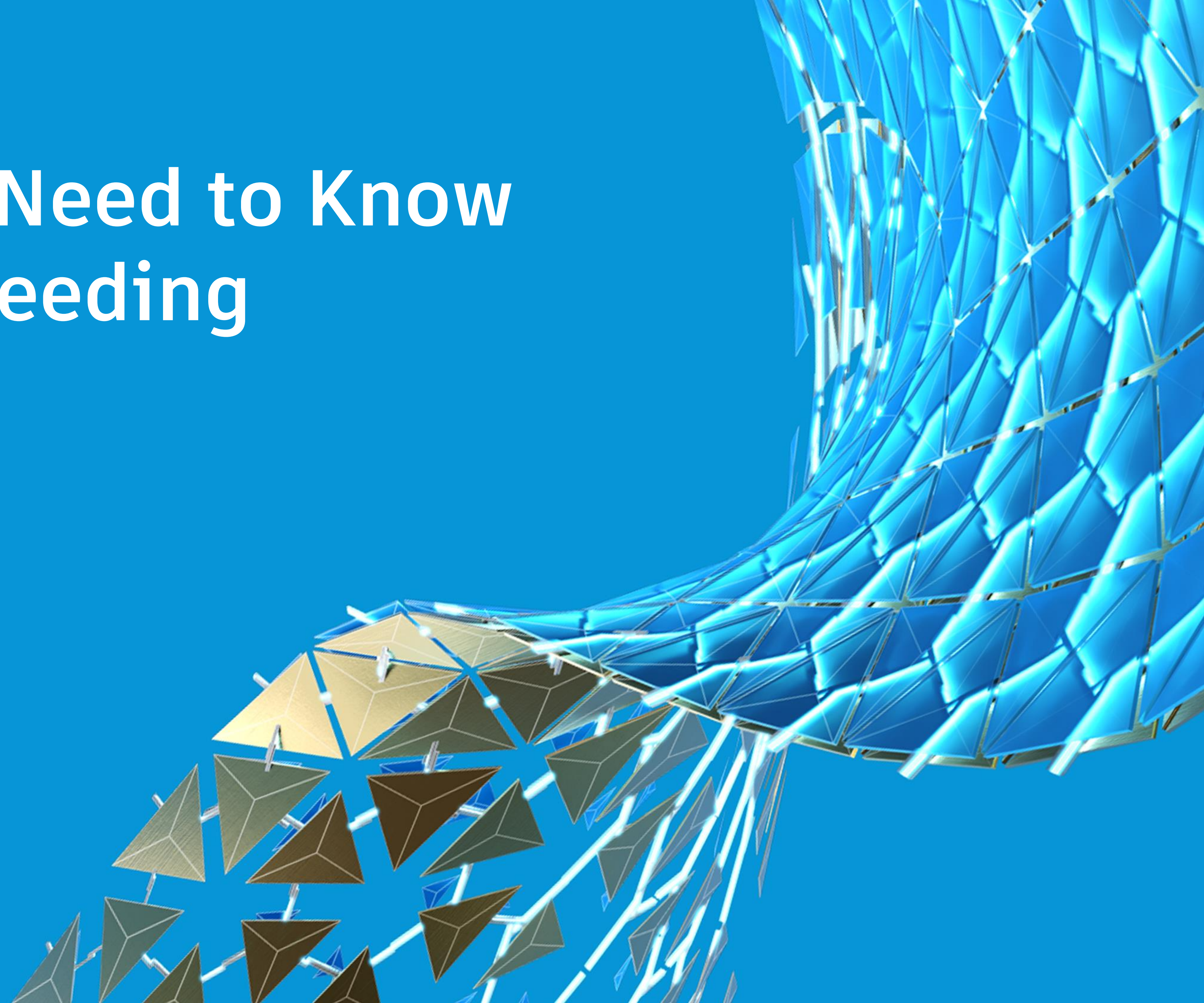


Yeah, running 48.6 miles  
in 4 Days is Dopey





# Things You Need to Know Before Proceeding





# What You Need to Get Started

For this session, you will need/want:

- AutoCAD 2021 (or AutoCAD 2016 and later)
- Notepad
- Visual LISP Integrated Development Environment (VLIDE)
- Visual Studio (VS) Code and the AutoCAD AutoLISP Extension
- Materials for this session from the AU website
  - Handout
  - Additional Materials
    - Extract to *C:\Datasets\SD468505*
- Setup the *AutoLISP Files* folder under the *Documents* folder
  - See *Things You Should Know* in the handout

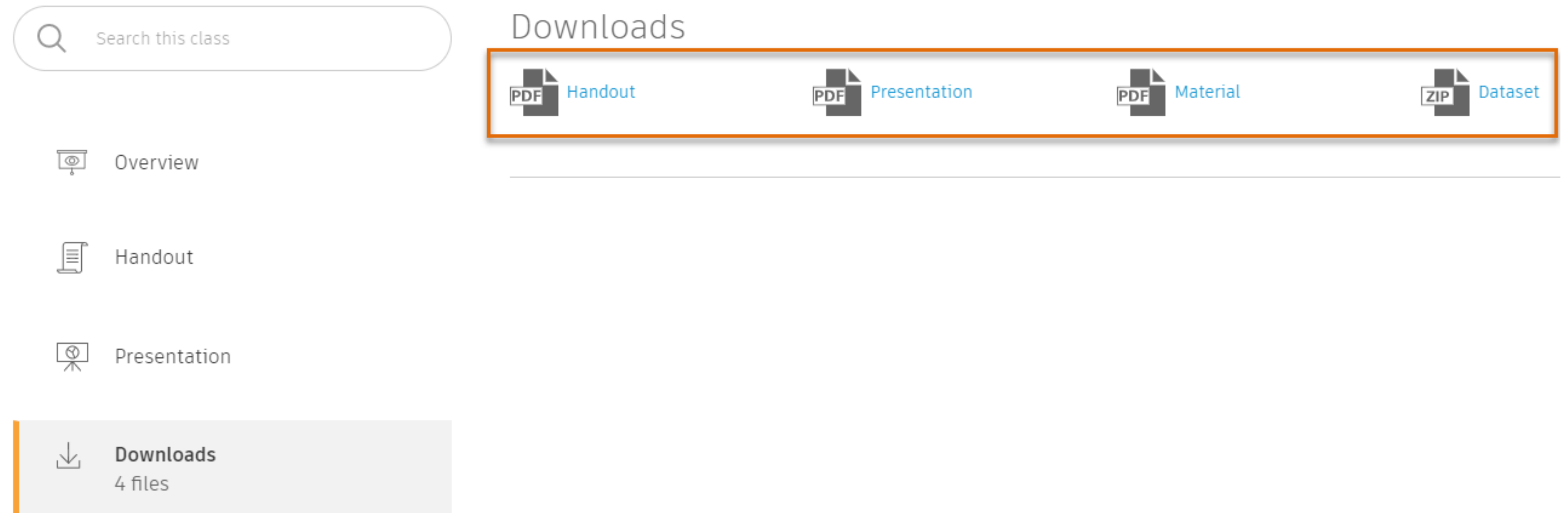
# Setting Up for this Session

Materials for this session can be obtained by:

1. Going to the Autodesk University website and search on this session's ID of **SD468505**.
2. In the search results, click the entry for this session.
3. On the session page, click Downloads and then download

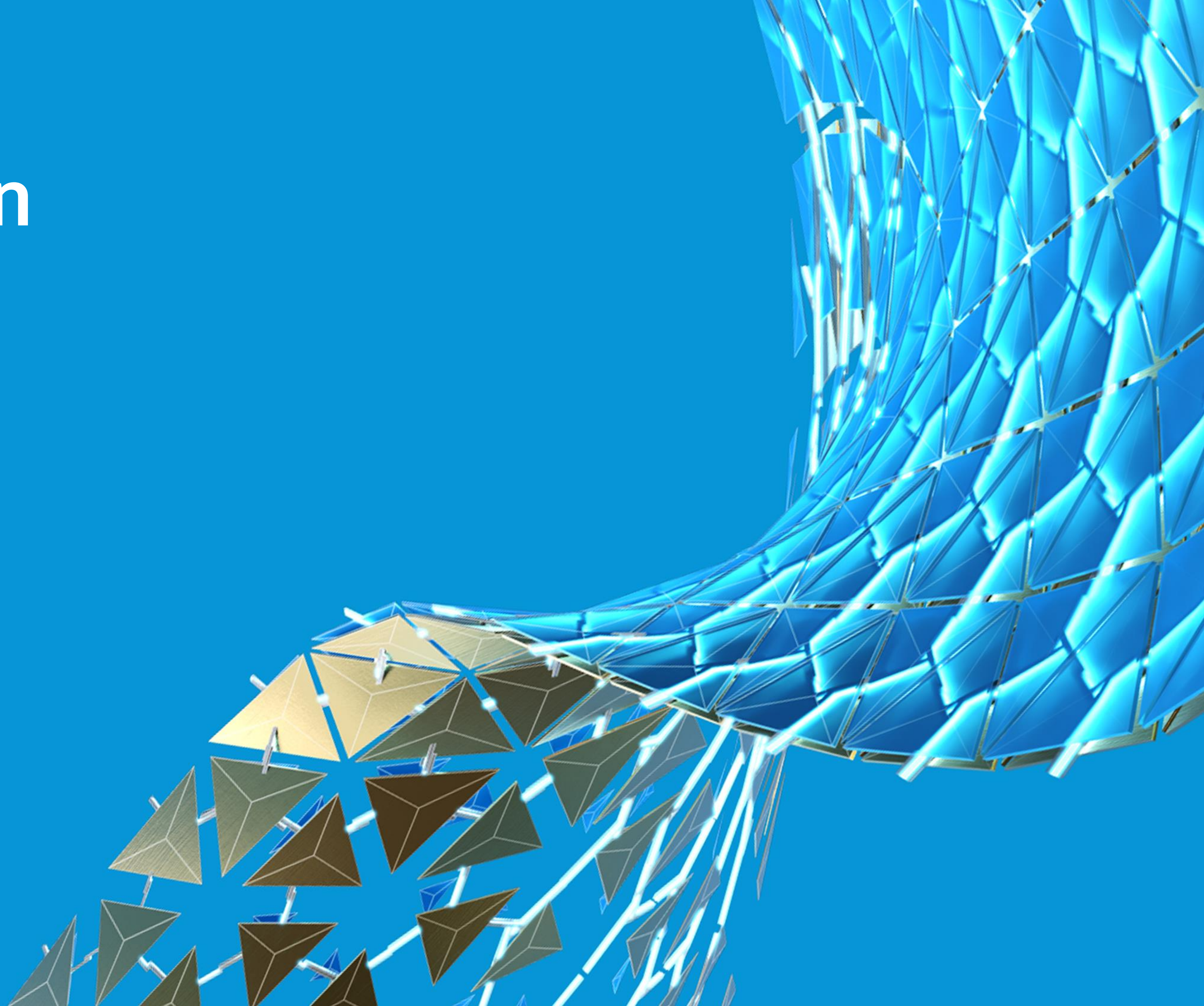
a. Handout

b. Material





# Introduction





# What You Will Learn Today

At the end of this session, you will have learned to:

- Work with LSP files in
  - Visual LISP
  - VS Code
- Format and debug LSP files
- Manage LSP files with AutoLISP projects
- Choose which specialized editor is right for you



# Introduction

AutoLISP has been around since 1986

Many editors have been used to develop LSP programs

- Edlin
- Notepad
- TextEdit
- LispPad by Tony Tanzillo
- LispLink by CAE-Link Corporation
- Vital LISP by WSSW



# Introduction

Vital LISP acquired around 1997

- Renamed to Visual LISP and shipped with AutoCAD 2000

With AutoCAD 2021, Visual LISP was deprecated

Support for VS Code was introduced with AutoCAD 2021

- Cross-platform
- Unicode support



# Introduction

During this session, I will be talking these editors:

Editor	Supported Releases
Notepad	All releases of AutoCAD on Windows
TextEdit	All releases of AutoCAD on Mac OS
Visual LISP	AutoCAD 2000 and later on Windows
VS Code with AutoLISP Extension	AutoCAD 2021 on Windows or Mac OS



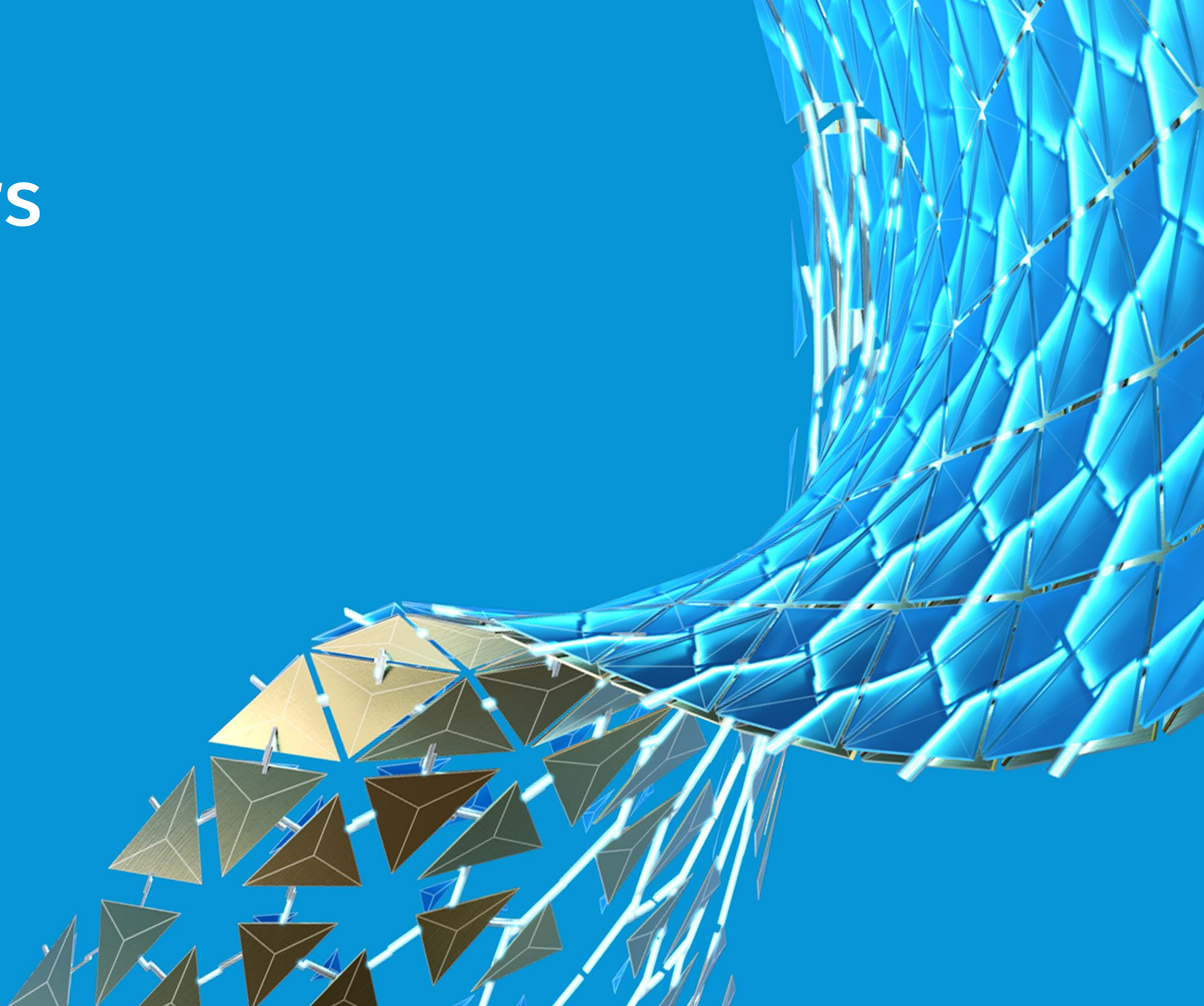
# Related Commands and System Variables

**VLISP command** – Opens the default AutoLISP development environment from inside AutoCAD on Windows

**LISPYSYS system variable** – Controls which AutoLISP environment is used to execute and edit LSP files (AutoCAD 2021)



# Basic Editors





# Basic Editors

Notepad on Windows

TextEdit on Mac OS

Both allow you to

- Edit ASCII and Unicode file formats
- Find/replace text strings
- Move and duplicate text with the Clipboard
- Control font size in the editor window



# Format and Syntax Checking

Loading an AutoLISP file might produce the error:

- ; error: malformed list on input

Format checking can be done at the AutoCAD Command prompt

```
(defun c:MISSINGPAREN ()  
  (prompt "\nMissing Paren"  
)
```

```
(defun c:MISSINGPAREN ()  
  (_> (prompt "\nMissing Paren"  
  ((_> )  
  (_>
```

```
(defun c:MISSINGQUOTE ()  
  (prompt "\nMissing Paren)  
)
```

```
(defun c:MISSINGQUOTE ()  
  (_> (prompt "\nMissing Paren)  
  ("_> )  
  ("_>
```

# Format and Syntax Checking

```
(defun c:INVALIDDOTTEDPAIR1 ()  
  (setq pair ("DOOR" . 36))  
)  
  
(defun c:INVALIDDOTTEDPAIR1 ()  
  (_> (setq pair ("DOOR" . 36))  
    (_> )  
  ; error: bad argument type: consp 36
```



# Debugging

Debugging must be done as part of the program

- **Output variable values during execution**
  - `princ` function
- **Output messages, Here I am!... Past ABC statement**
  - `prompt` function
- **Trace the execution of a custom function**
  - `trace` function
  - `untrace` function

Even if you use a specialized editor, these functions can be helpful

- “Going on a Bug Hunt: Debugging and Handling Errors in AutoLISP” from AU 2013

# Basic Editors: Notepad and TextEdit

Workflow of editing and loading files:

1. Create or open a LSP file.
2. Add/edit AutoLISP statements in the LSP file.
3. Save the LSP file.
4. Load and test the LSP file in AutoCAD.

Remember: No format checking or debugging tools are available



# Basic Editors: Notepad and TextEdit

Workflow of editing and loading files:

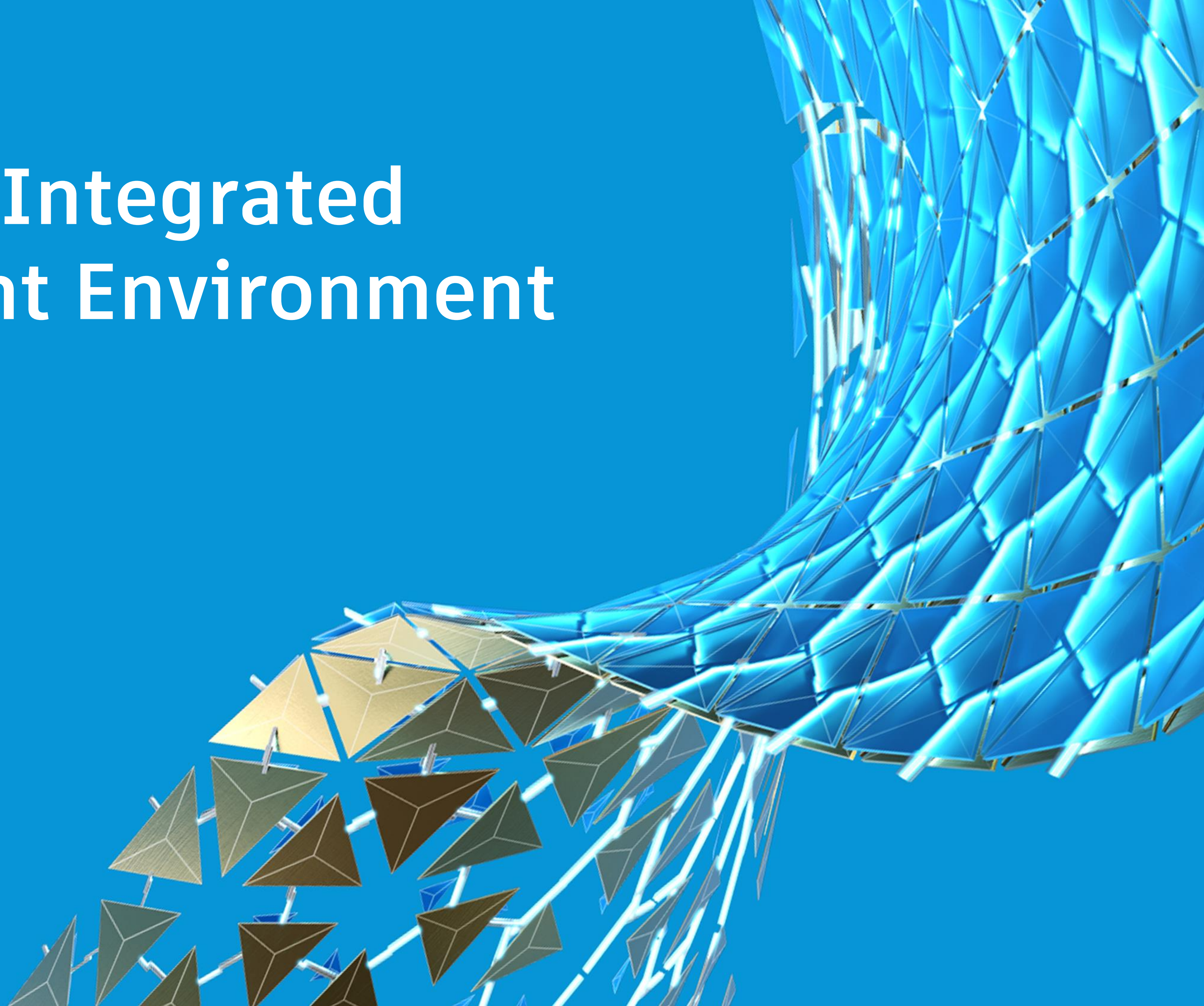
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2. Add/edit AutoLISP statements in the LSP file.
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Remember: No format checking or debugging tools are available

DEMO



# Visual LISP Integrated Development Environment





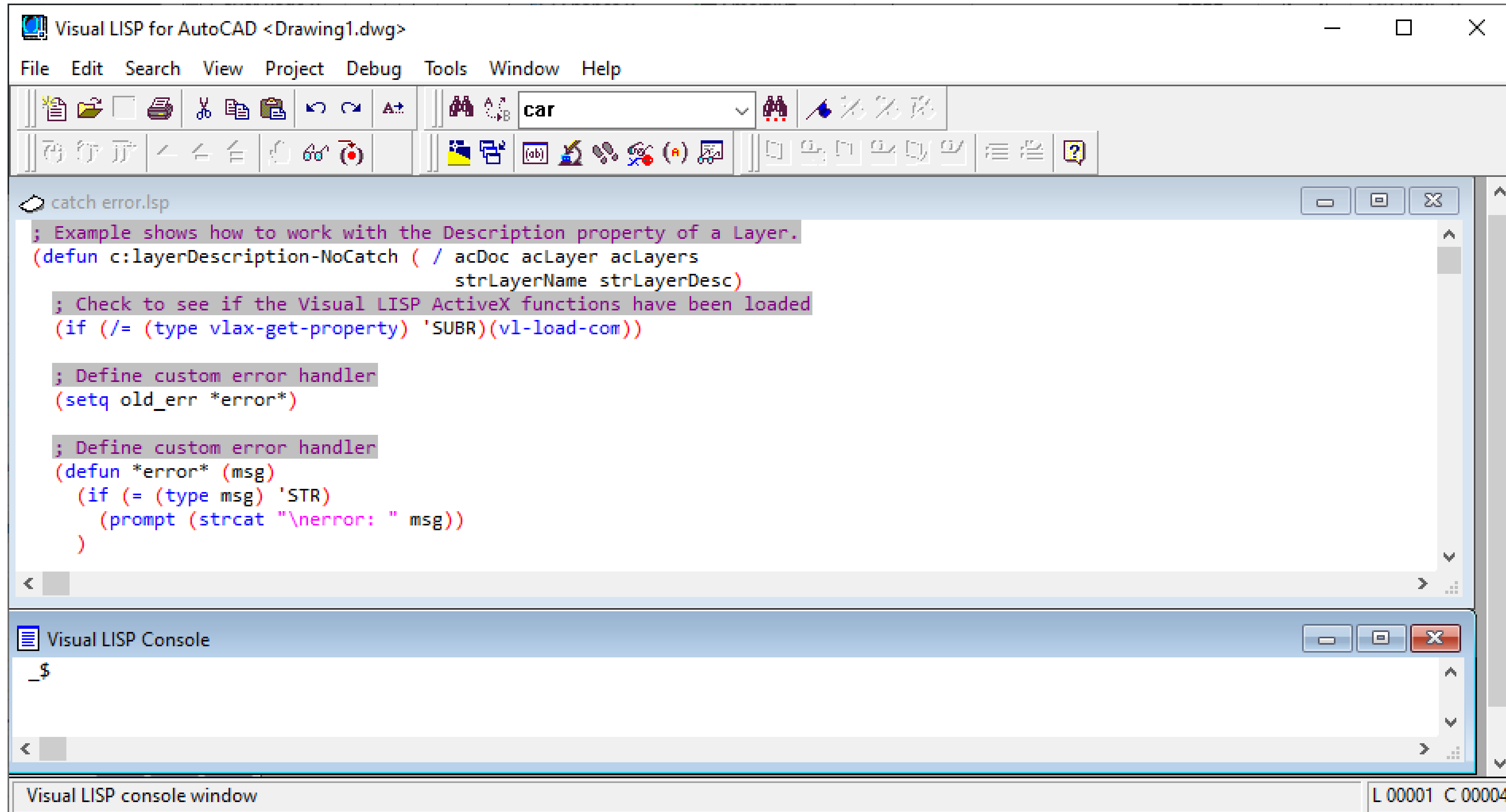
# Visual LISP Integrated Development Environment

Allows you to

- Create and edit LSP files
- View AutoLISP statements with syntax highlighting
- Format and check AutoLISP statements
- Load and debug AutoLISP statements
- Manage LSP files with AutoLISP projects
- Compile and protect LSP files

Not available in AutoCAD for Mac OS

# Visual LISP Integrated Development Environment



# Launch Visual LISP

Launch the Visual LISP Editor

- Manage tab > Applications panel > Visual LISP Editor (VLISP command)



LISPSYS system variable must be set to 0

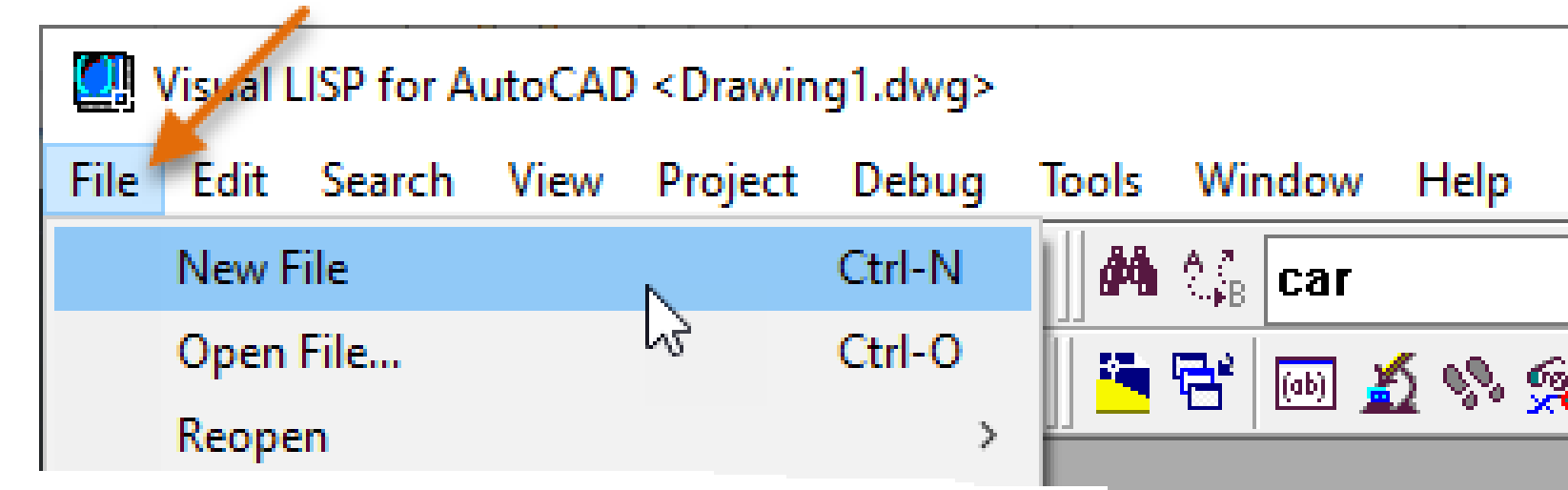


# Create and Open LSP Files

## Create and open LSP files

- File menu > New File
- File menu > Open
- File menu > Save as (specify file format)

File menu > Reopen to open a previous file

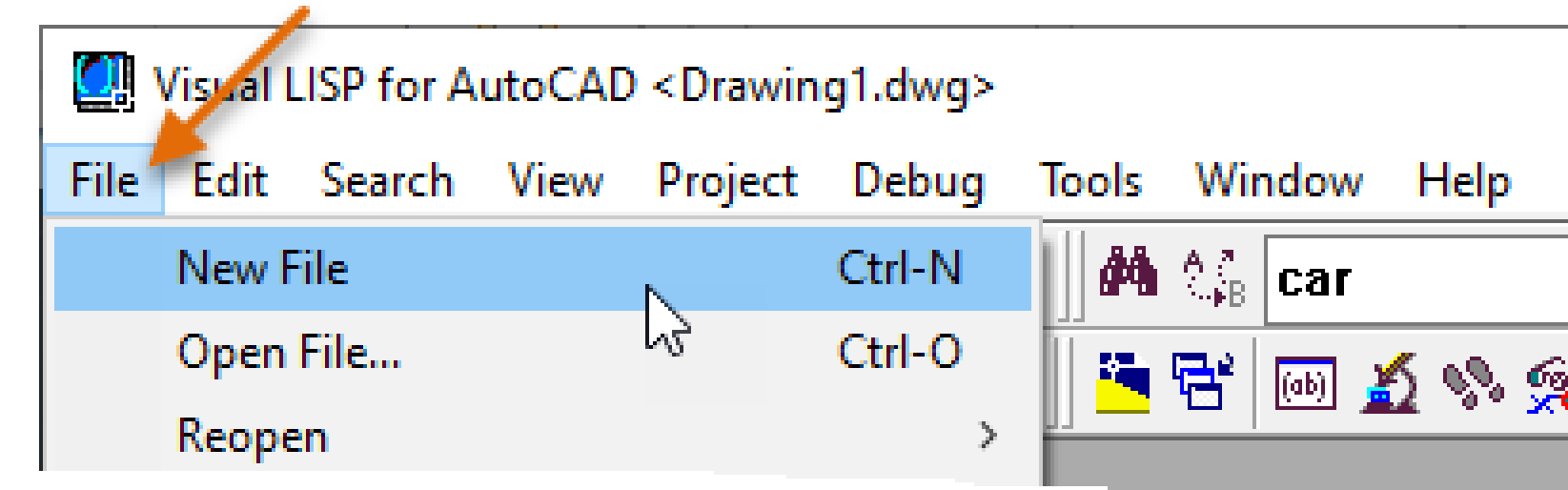


# Create and Open LSP Files

## Create and open LSP files

- File menu > New File
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File menu > Reopen to open a previous file



DEMO

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file



# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting

```
(foreach dir dirs
  (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
    (progn
      (setq indent "\n|")

      (repeat level
        (setq indent (strcat indent "  ")))
      )

      (prompt (strcat indent dir))
      (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
    )
  )
)
```

```
; Recurse folders
; (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)
(defun recurse_folders (path level / indent dir dirs)
  (setq dirs (vl-directory-files path nil -1))

  (foreach dir dirs
    (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
      (progn
        (setq indent "\n")

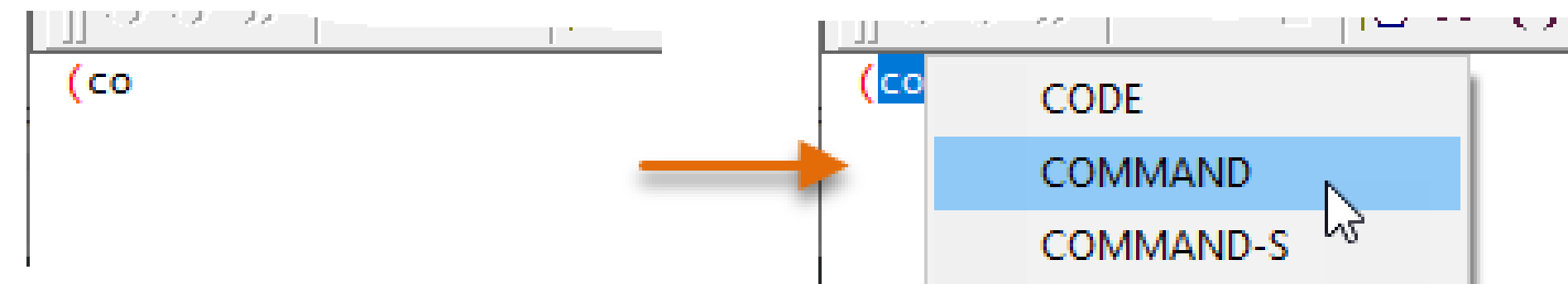
        (repeat level
          (setq indent (strcat indent "  ")))
        )

        (prompt (strcat indent dir))
        (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
      )
    )
  )
  (princ)
)
```

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Complete word by match or Apropos
  - Typing in partial function name and pressing Shift+Ctrl+Spacebar

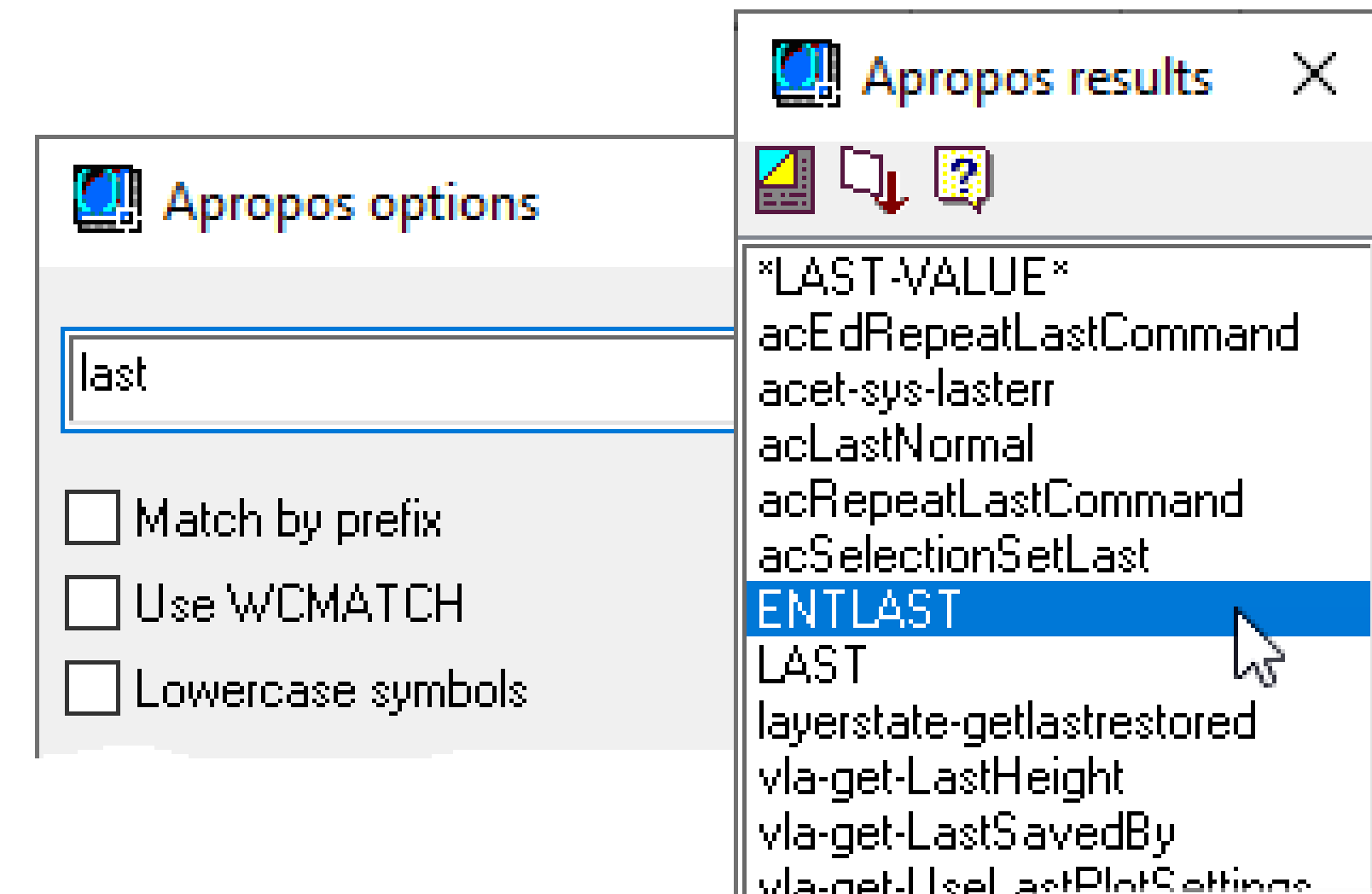




# Edit LSP Files



You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Complete word by match or Apropos
- List available functions with the Apropos window



# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Complete word by match or Apropos
- List available functions with the Apropos window
- Toggle statements as comments
  - Mark selected lines as comments
    - Edit menu > Extra Commands > Comment Block
    - Comment Block on the Tools toolbar 
  - Unmark selected lines as comments
    - Edit menu > Extra Commands > Uncomment Block
    - Uncomment Block on the Tools toolbar 

```
;;; Program created by Lee Ambrosius  
;;; Last updated on: 8/22/2020
```



# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Complete word by match or Apropos
- List available functions with the Apropos window
- Toggle statements as comments
- Select elements and statements between parentheses
  - Selecting and matching open parenthesis
    - Edit menu > Parentheses Matching > Match Backwards
    - Edit menu > Parentheses Matching > Select Backwards
  - Selecting and matching closing parenthesis
    - Edit menu > Parentheses Matching > Match Forwards
    - Edit menu > Parentheses Matching > Select Forwards

```
; Recurse folders
; (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)
(defun recurse_folders (path level / indent dir dirs)
  (setq dirs (vl-directory-files path nil -1))

  (foreach dir dirs
    (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
      (progn
        (setq indent "\n")

        (repeat level
          (setq indent (strcat indent " ")))

        (prompt (strcat indent dir))
        (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
      )
    )
  )
  (princ)
)
```

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Complete word by match or Apropos
- List available functions with the Apropos window
- Toggle statements as comments
- Select elements and statements between parentheses
- Save and insert code statements
  - Selected statements can be saved to a LSP file
  - LSP files can be inserted into a LSP file



# Edit LSP Files


You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Complete word by match or Apropos
- List available functions with the Apropos window
- Toggle statements as comments
- Select elements and statements between parentheses
- Save and insert code statements


DEMO

# Format LSP Statements

## Selected statements

- Tools menu > Format Code in Selection
- Format Selection on the Tools toolbar 

## All statements

- Tools menu > Format Code in Editor
- Format Edit Window on the Tools toolbar 

```
(defun c:NINSERT ( / lastEnt)
  (setq lastEnt (entlast))
  (initdia)
  (command "INSERT")
  (while (not (zerop (getvar "CMDACTIVE"))))
    (command PAUSE)
  )
  (if (eq lastEnt (entlast))
    (alert "No block was inserted.")
    (alert "Block was inserted")
  )
  (princ)
)
```




```
(defun c:NINSERT (/ lastEnt)
  (setq lastEnt (entlast))
  (initdia)
  (command "INSERT")
  (while (not (zerop (getvar "CMDACTIVE"))))
    (command PAUSE)
  )
  (if (eq lastEnt (entlast))
    (alert "No block was inserted.")
    (alert "Block was inserted")
  )
  (princ)
)
```

# Check LSP Statements

## Selected statements

- Tools menu > Check Selection
- Check Selection on the Tools toolbar 

## All statements

- Tools menu > Check Text in Editor
- Check Edit Window on the Tools toolbar 

```
(defun c:NINSERT (/ lastEnt)
  (setq lastEnt (entlast))
  (initdia)
  (command "INSERT"
    (while (not (zerop (getvar "CMDACTIVE"))))
      (command PAUSE)
    )
  (if (eq lastEnt (entlast))
    (alert "No block was inserted.")
```

**Missing  
quotation  
mark**

```
(defun c:NINSERT (/ lastEnt)
  (setq lastEnt (entlast))
  (initdia)
  (command "INSERT")
  (while (not (zerop (getvar "CMDACTIVE"))))
    (command PAUSE)
  )
  (if (eq lastEnt (entlast)
    (alert "No block was inserted.")
    (alert "Block was inserted")
  )
  (princ)
)
```

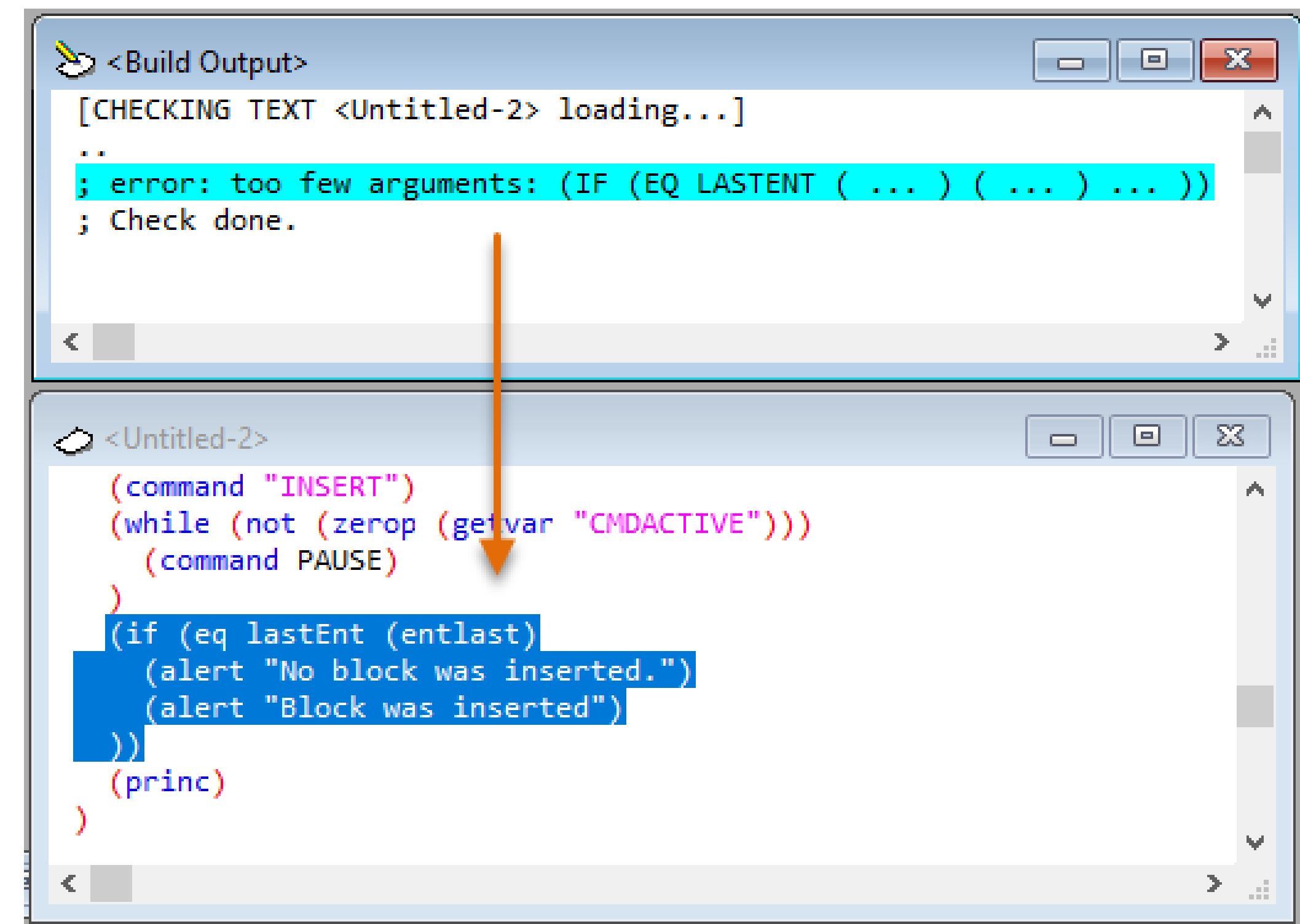
**Missing  
closing  
parenthesis**



# Check LSP Statements


Statement errors output to the Build Output window

Double-click an error to navigate to it




# Load LSP Statements

## Selected statements

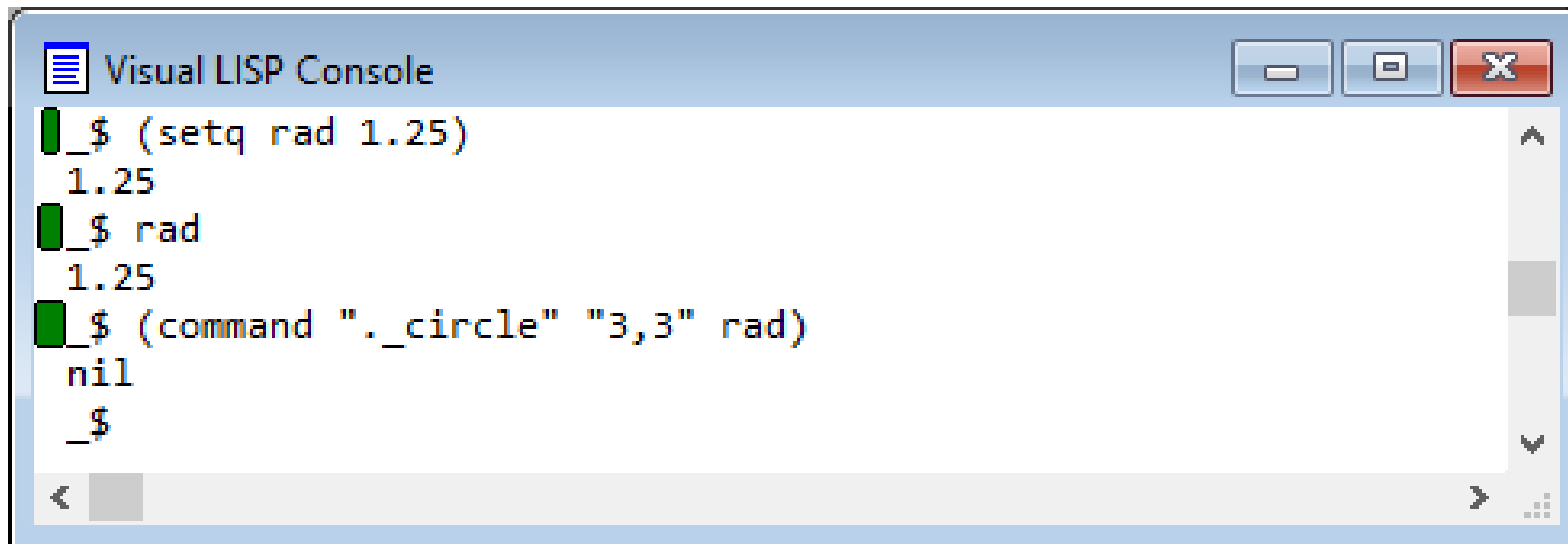
- Tools menu > Load Selection
- Load Selection on the Tools toolbar 

## All statements

- Tools menu > Load Text in Editor
- Load Active Edit Window on the Tools toolbar 

# Load LSP Statements

Statements can also be entered in the Visual LISP Console window



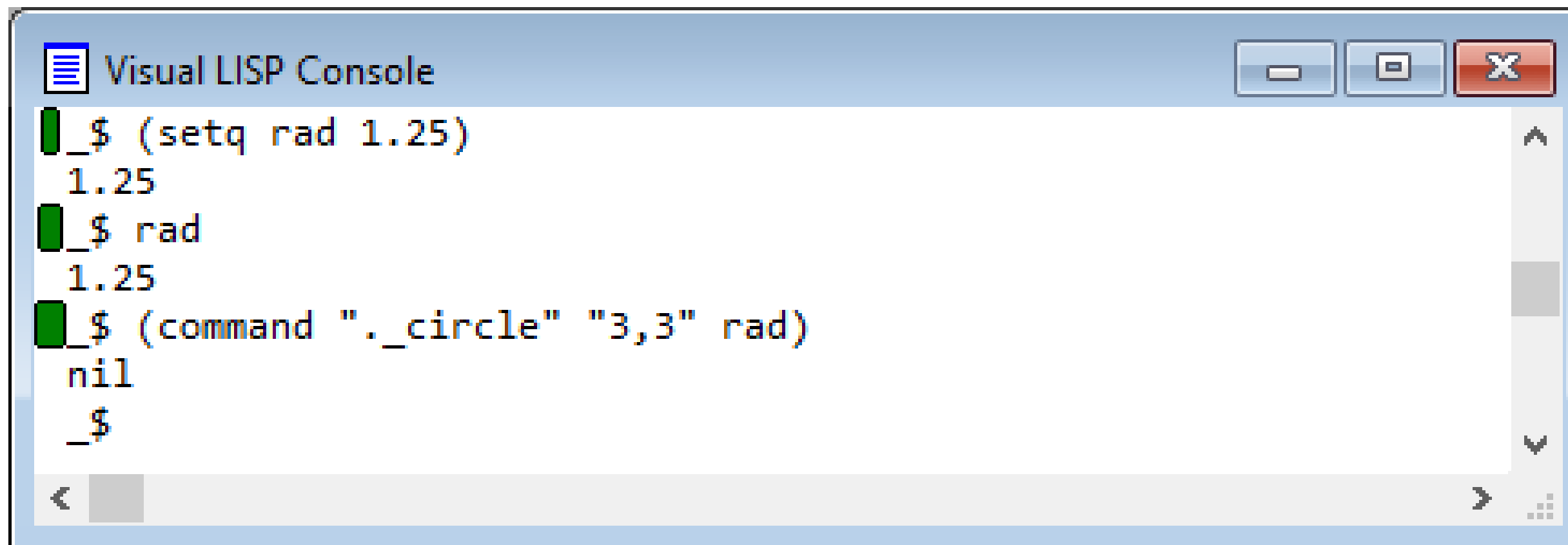
```
Visual LISP Console
_$ (setq rad 1.25)
1.25
_$ rad
1.25
_$ (command "._circle" "3,3" rad)
nil
_$
```

The screenshot shows a window titled "Visual LISP Console" with standard Windows window controls (minimize, maximize, close). The console contains three lines of input and output. Each line starts with a green prompt character followed by a dollar sign and underscore (\$\_). The first line shows the command (setq rad 1.25) and the result 1.25. The second line shows the command rad and the result 1.25. The third line shows the command (command ".\_circle" "3,3" rad) and the result nil. The prompt character is followed by a space and then the command. The output is on the line immediately following the command. A horizontal scrollbar is visible at the bottom of the console area.



# Load LSP Statements

Statements can also be entered in the Visual LISP Console window



```
Visual LISP Console
_$ (setq rad 1.25)
1.25
_$ rad
1.25
_$ (command "._circle" "3,3" rad)
nil
_$
```

DEMO

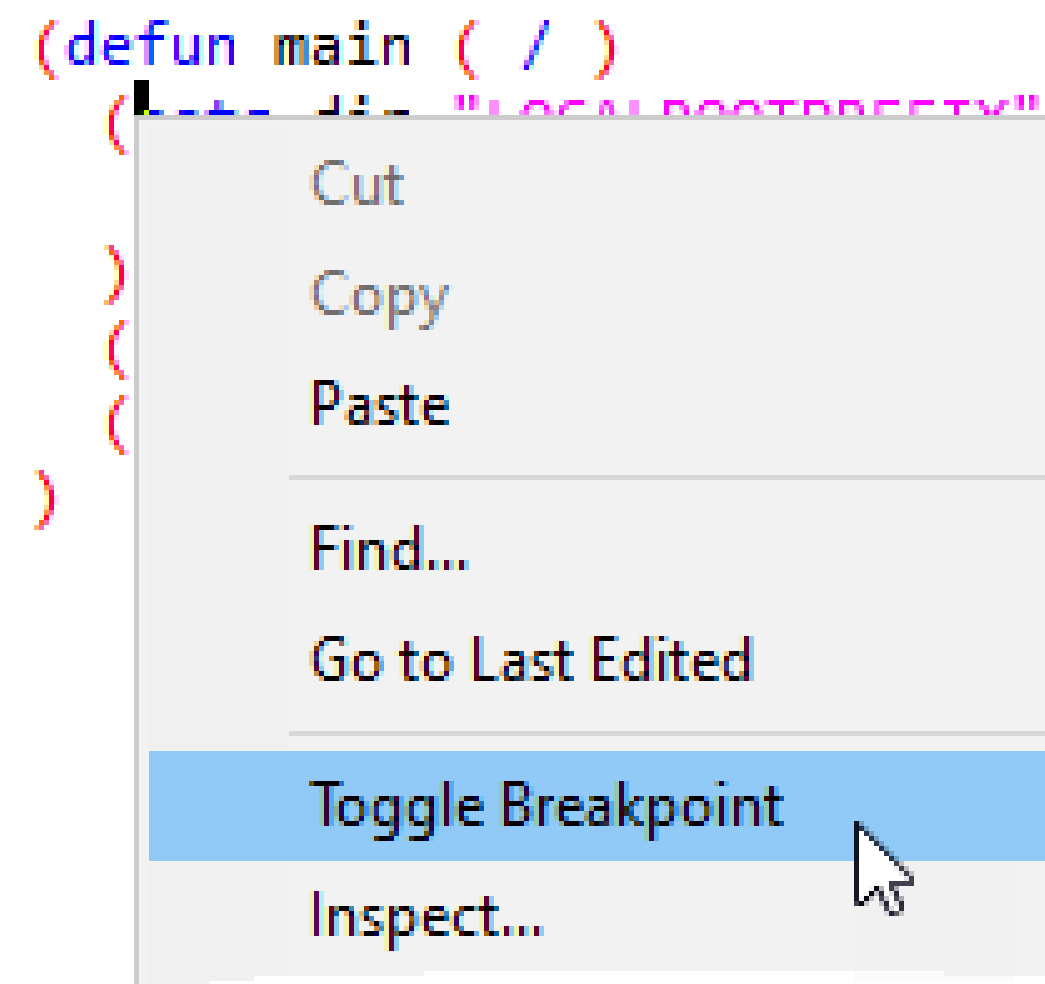
# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints



**Breakpoint**

```
(defun main ( / )  
  (setq dir "LOCALROOTPREFIX"  
    msg (strcat "\nListing directories in " dir)  
  )  
  (prompt msg)  
  (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)  
)
```

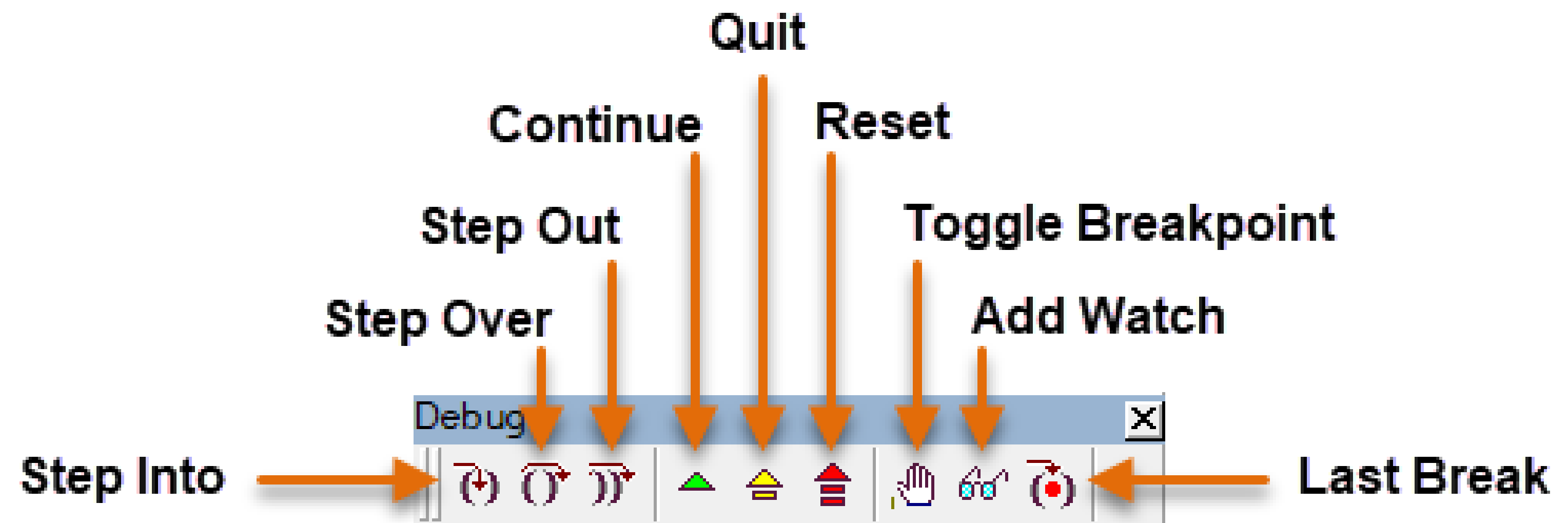
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  (setq dir "LOCALROOTPREFIX"  
    msg (strcat "\nListing directories in " dir)  
  )  
  (prompt msg)  
  (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)  
)
```



# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

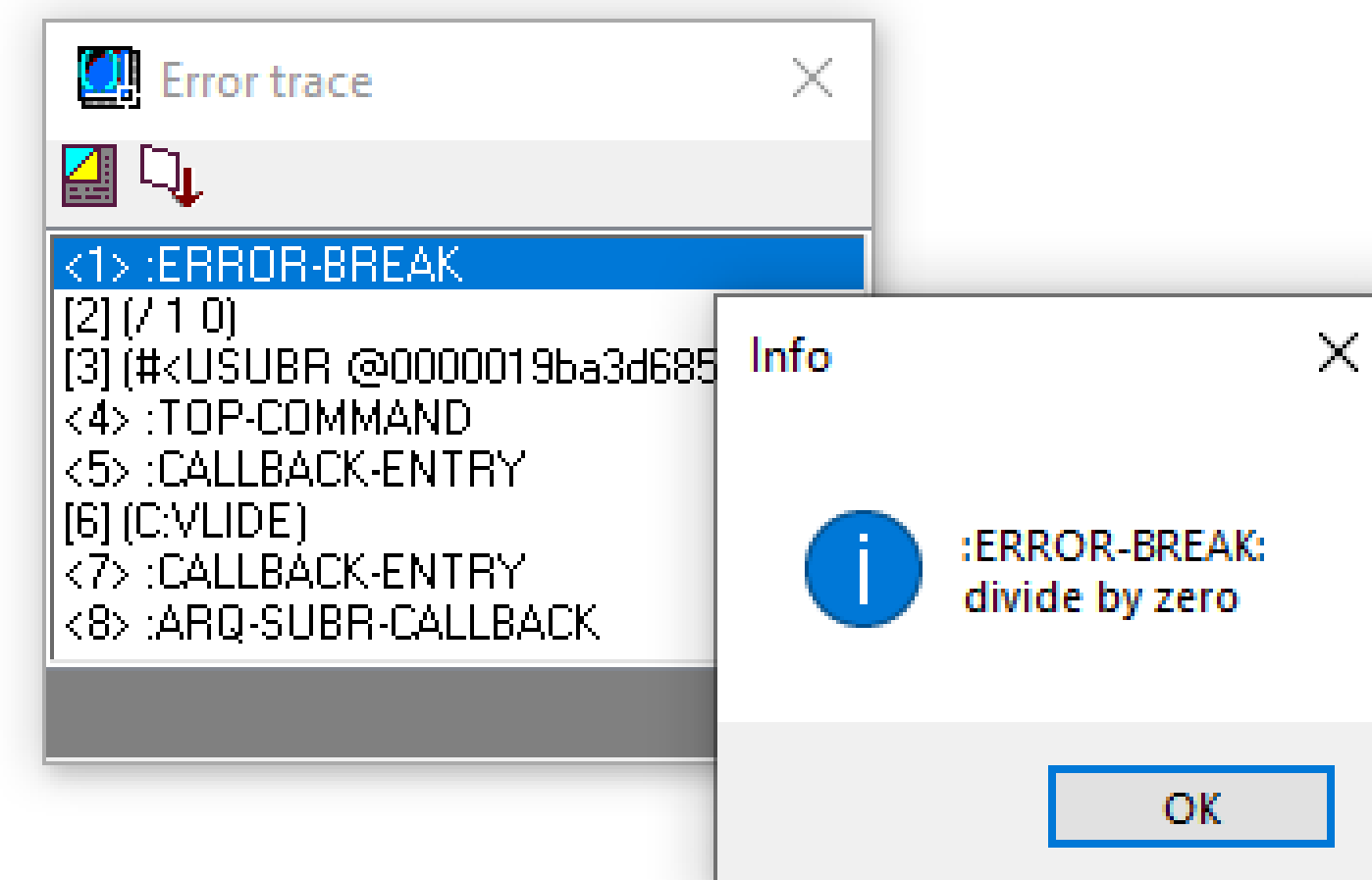
- Breakpoints
  - Debug toolbar



# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints
- Break on Error

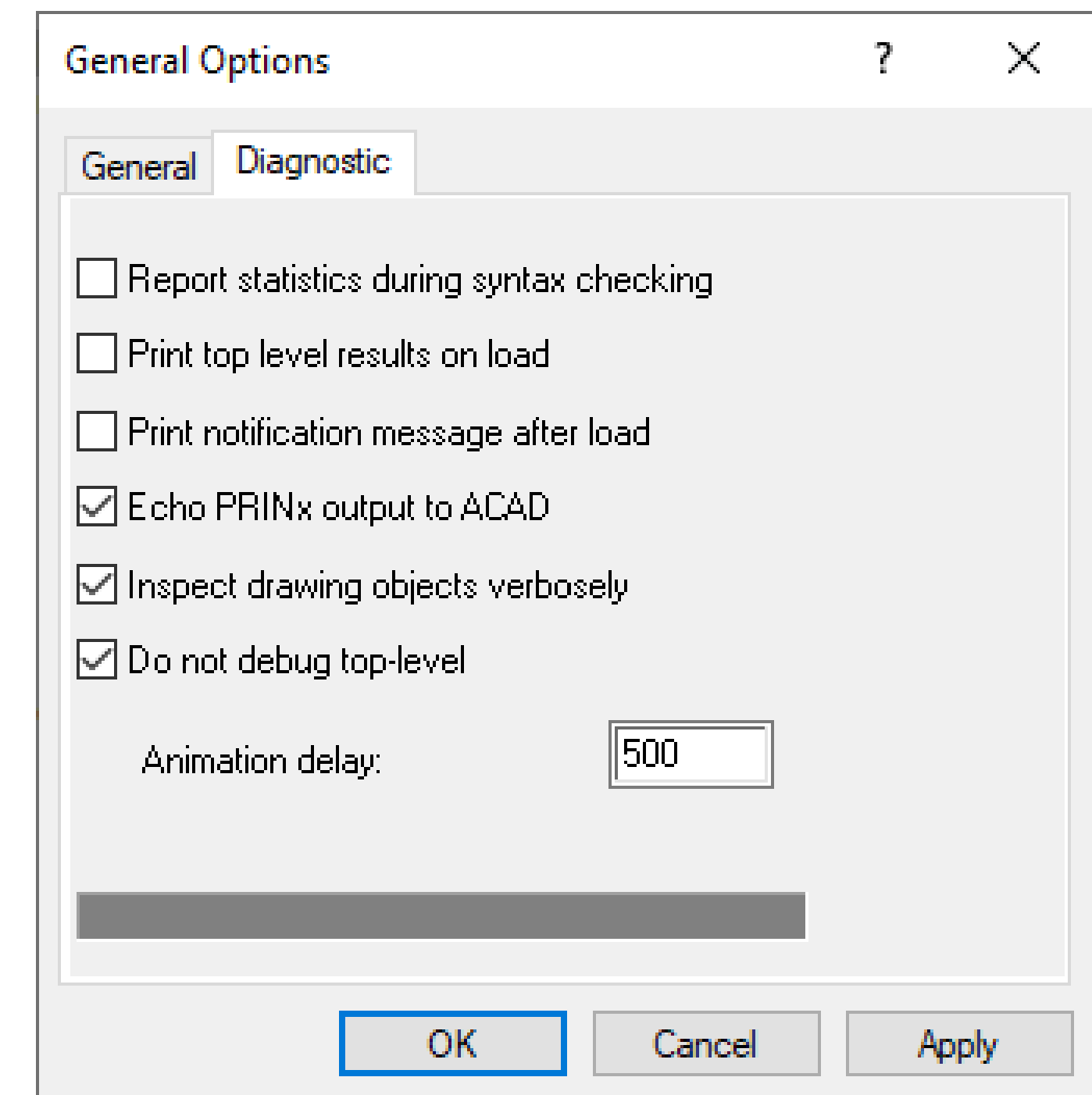


# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Debug animation

```
(defun main ( / )  
  (setq dir "LOCALROOTPREFIX"  
    msg (strcat "\nListing directories in " dir)  
  )  
  (prompt msg)  
  (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)  
)
```

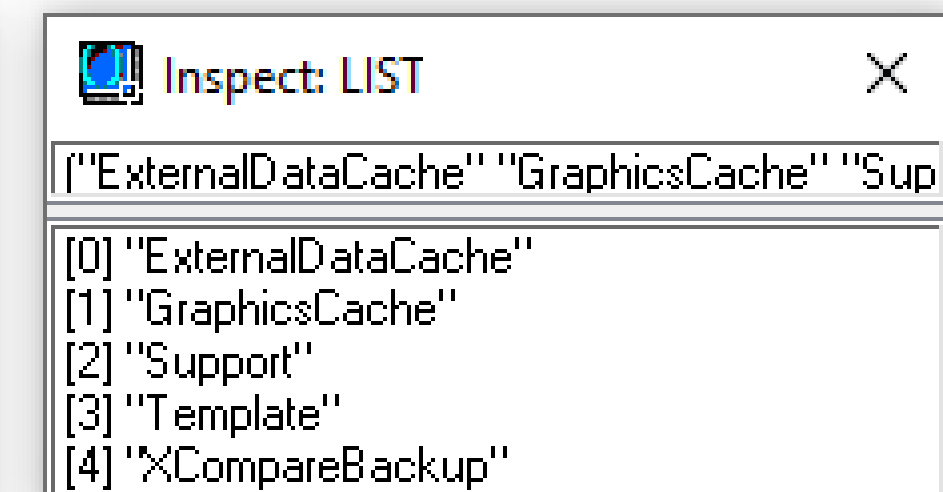
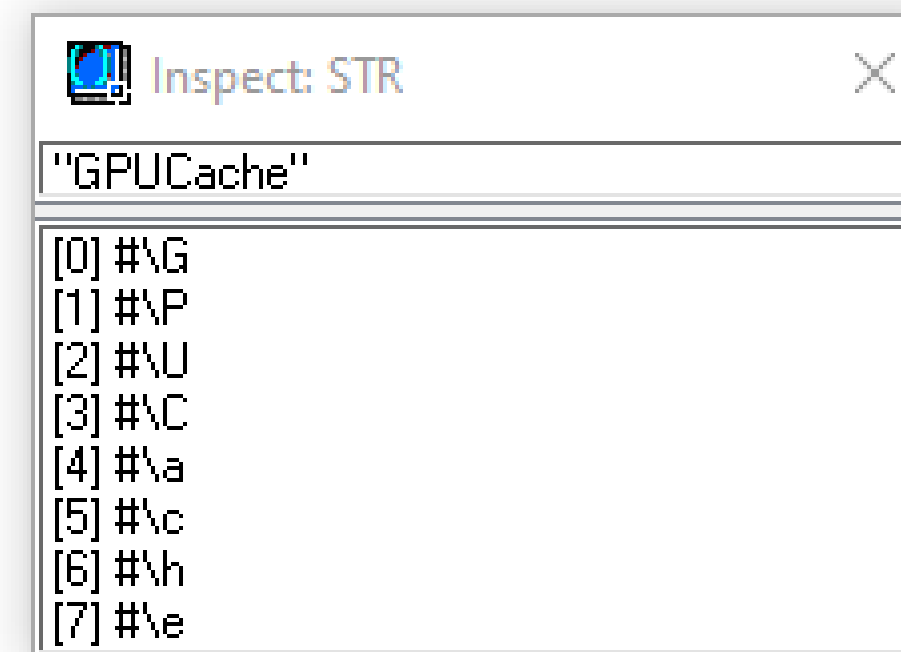
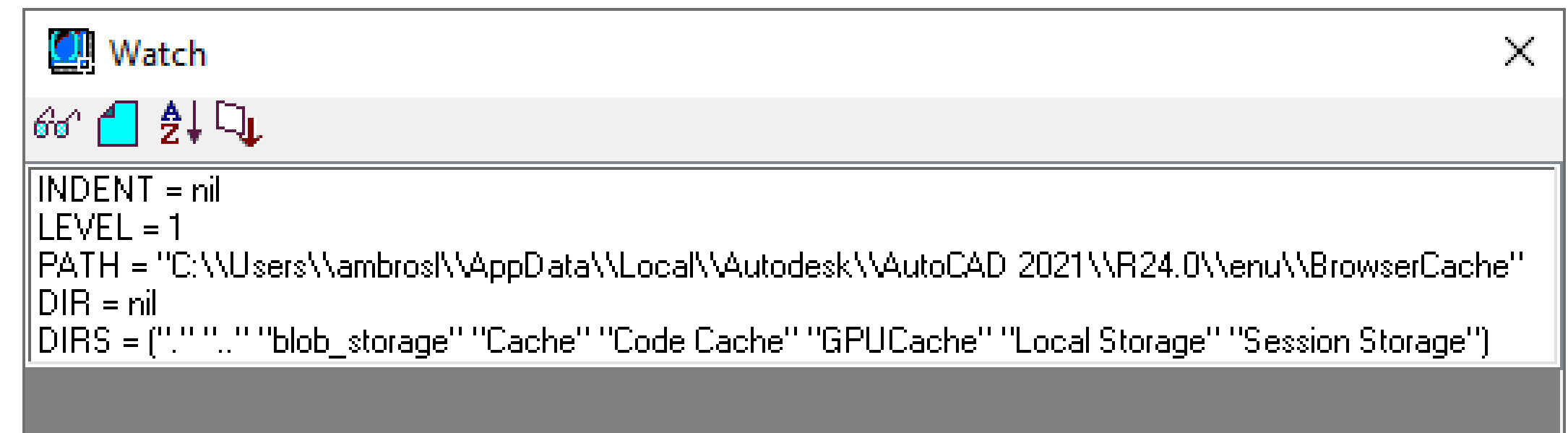




# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

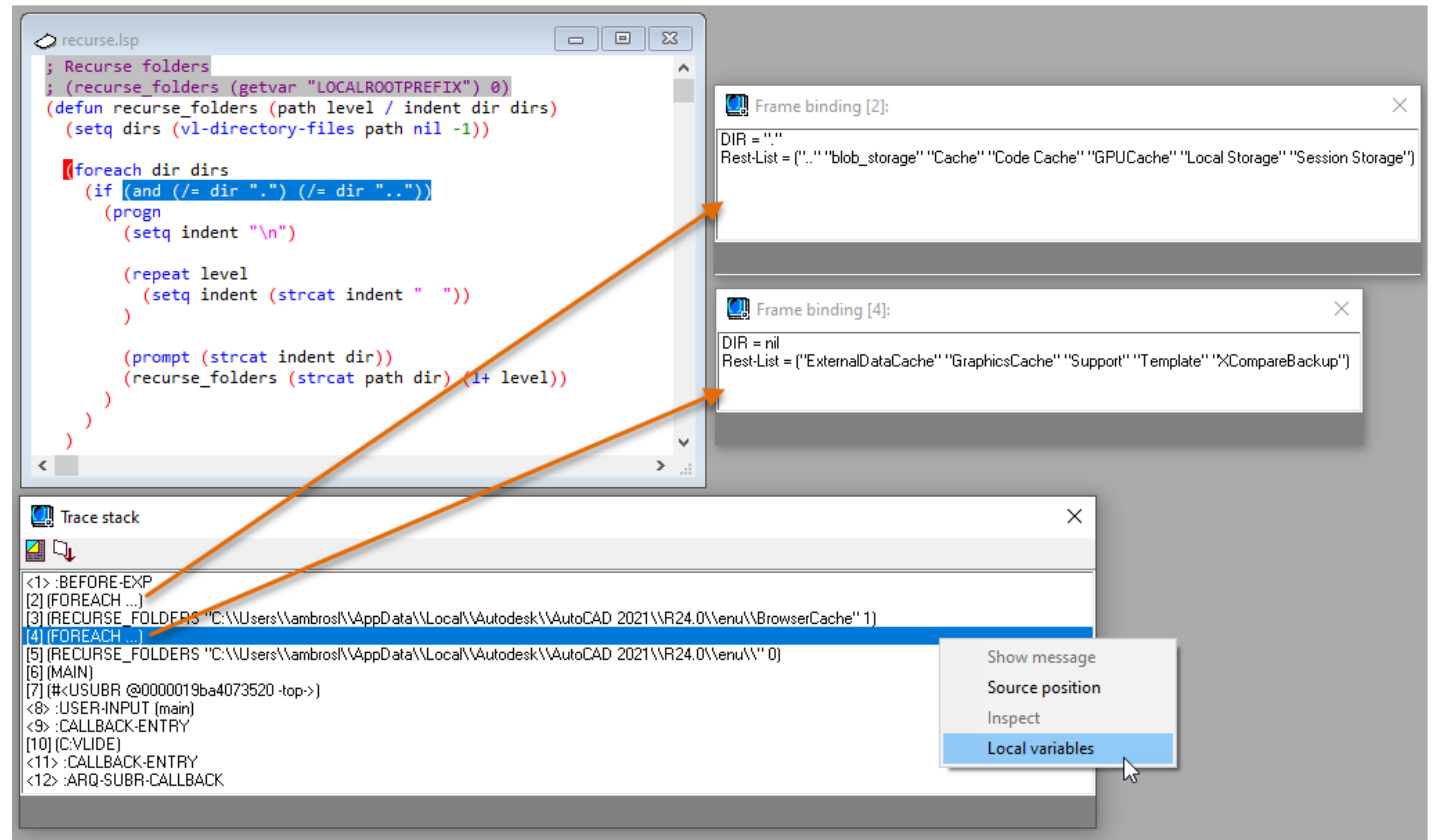
- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Debug animation
- Watches
  - Variables and statements can be watched for changes
  - Values in watches can be inspected



# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Debug animation
- Watches
- Trace custom functions



# Debug LSP Files

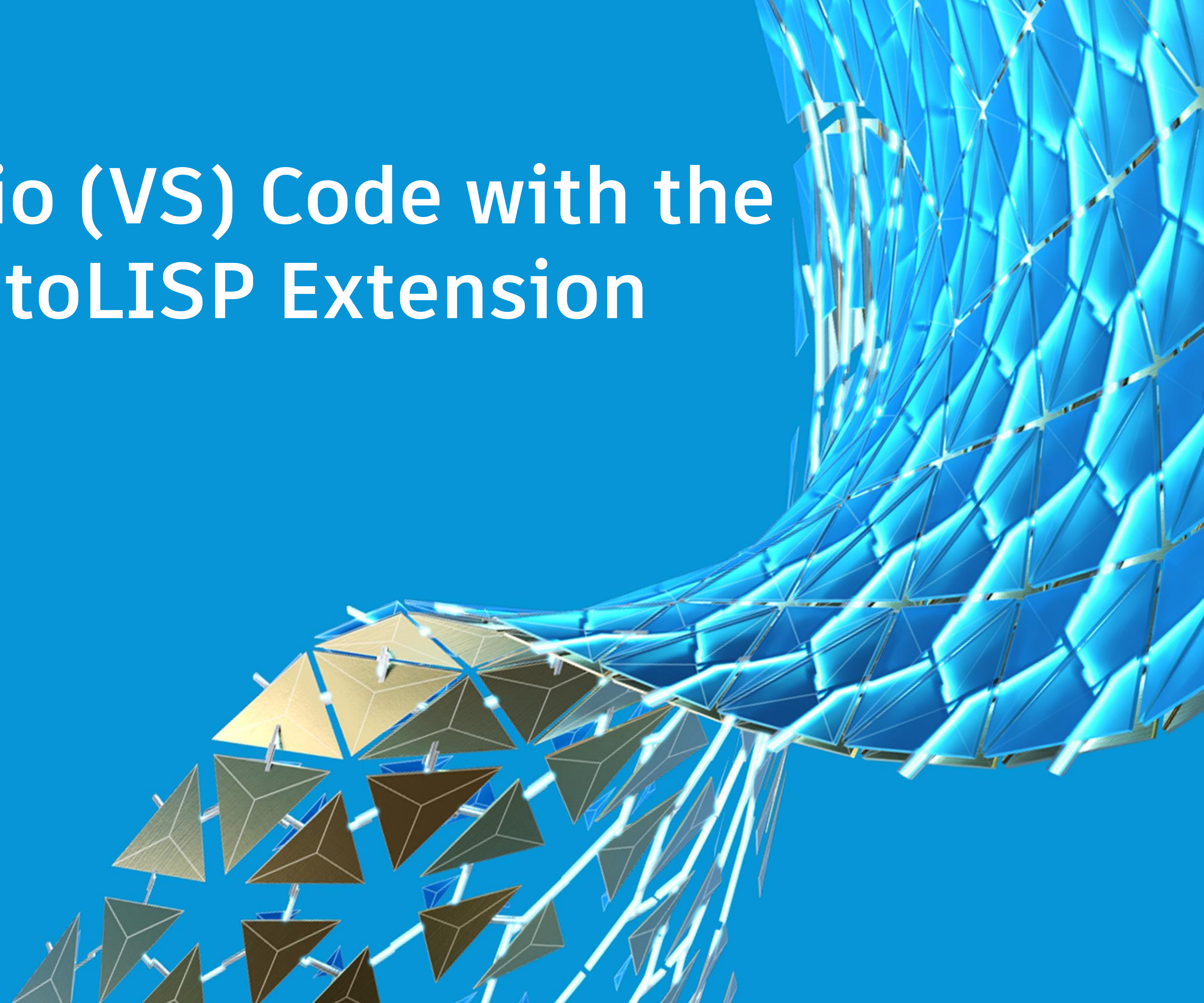
You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Debug animation
- Watches
- Trace custom functions

DEMO



# Visual Studio (VS) Code with the AutoCAD AutoLISP Extension





# VS Code with AutoCAD AutoLISP Extension

Allows you to

- Create and edit LSP files
- View AutoLISP statements with syntax highlighting
- Format AutoLISP statements
- Load and debug AutoLISP statements
- Manage LSP files with AutoLISP projects
- Compile and protect LSP files via AutoCAD command

Cross-platform support

- Windows
- Mac OS

# VS Code with AutoCAD AutoLISP Extension

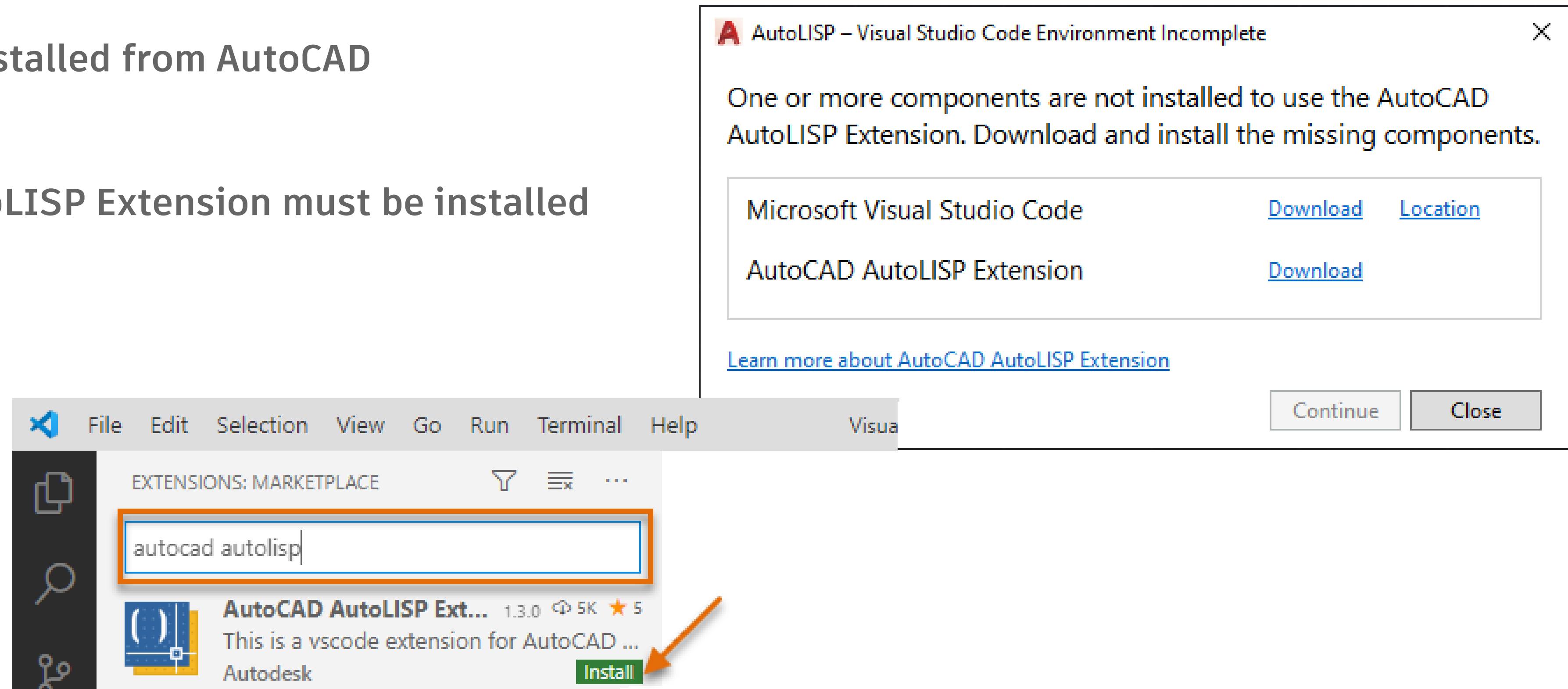
The screenshot shows the Visual Studio Code editor with the AutoLISP extension installed. The editor is open to a file named `recurse.lsp`. The left sidebar displays the 'VARIABLES' panel, which is divided into 'Locals' and 'WATCH' sections. The 'Locals' section shows the current state of variables: `PATH` is `C:\Users\ambros1\AppData\Local\A...`, `LEVEL` is `1`, `INDENT` is , `DIR` is `Local Storage`, and `DIRS` is a list of directories: `(. .. blob_storage Cache Code Ca...`. The 'WATCH' section shows the current values of `indent` and `dir`. The bottom status bar indicates the current line and column: `Ln 13, Col 10 (71 selected)`, and the file encoding: `Spaces: 2 UTF-8 CRLF AutoLISP`.

```
1 ; Recurse folders
2 ; (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)
3 (defun recurse_folders (path level / indent dirs)
4   (setq dirs (vl-directory-files path nil -1))
5
6   (foreach dir dirs
7     (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
8       (progn
9         (setq indent "\n")
10
11         (repeat level
12           (setq indent (strcat indent ".."))
13         )
14
15         (prompt (strcat indent dir))
16         (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
17       )
18     )
19   )
20   (princ)
21 )
22
```

# Before Using VS Code

Separately installed from AutoCAD

AutoCAD AutoLISP Extension must be installed



# Launch VS Code

Launch VS Code from inside AutoCAD (Windows only)

- Manage tab > Applications panel > Visual LISP Editor (VLISP command)



Launch VS Code from outside AutoCAD

- Windows Start menu > Visual Studio Code > Visual Studio Code
- Mac OS Finder > Go > Applications > Visual Studio Code

LISPSYS system variable must be set to

- 1 – Unicode file format; compile to Unicode
- 2 – Unicode file format; compile to “legacy” ASCII (MBCS)



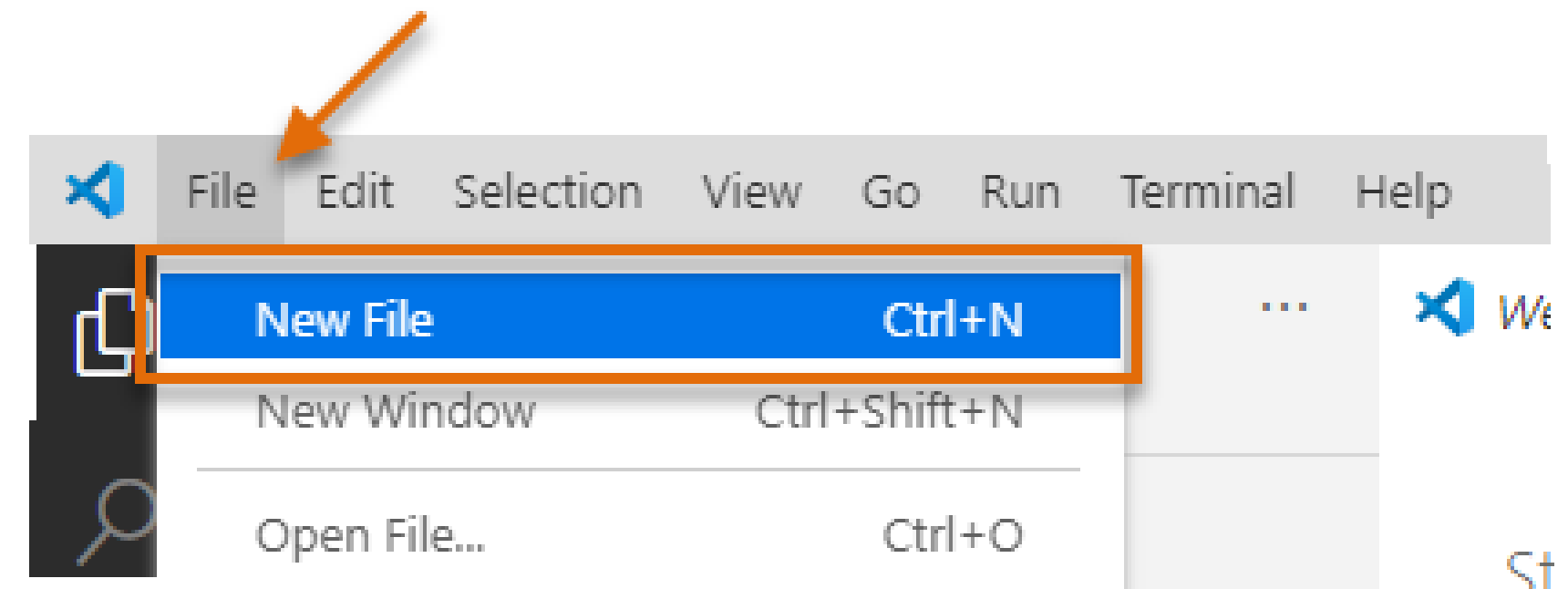
# Create and Open LSP Files

## Create and open LSP files

- File menu > New File
- File menu > Open File
- File menu > Save (specify .lsp extension)

File menu > Open Recent to open a previous file

File menu > Open Folder to open a folder



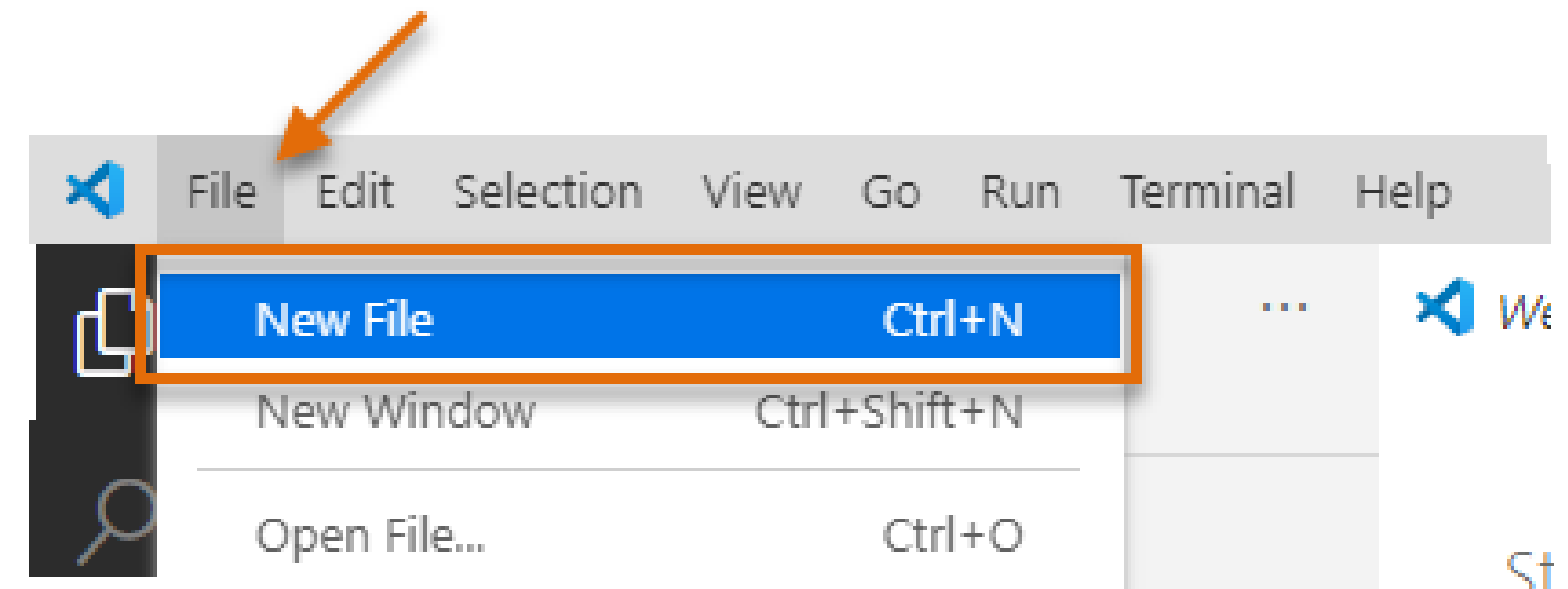
# Create and Open LSP Files

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DEMO

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting

```
6  (foreach dir dirs
7    (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
8      (progn
9        (setq indent "\n")
10
11        (repeat level
12          (setq indent (strcat indent "  "))
13        )
14
15        (prompt (strcat indent dir))
16        (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
17      )
18    )
19  )
```

```
1  ; Recurse folders
2  ; (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)
3  (defun recurse_folders (path level / indent dir dirs)
4    (setq dirs (vl-directory-files path nil -1))
5
6    (foreach dir dirs
7      (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
8        (progn
9          (setq indent "\n")
10
11          (repeat level
12            (setq indent (strcat indent "  "))
13          )
14
15          (prompt (strcat indent dir))
16          (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
17        )
18      )
19    )
20    (princ)
21  )
```



# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Smart brackets
  - Adds a closing when an open parenthesis is typed
  - Adds a second quotation mark when one is typed

30

31

32

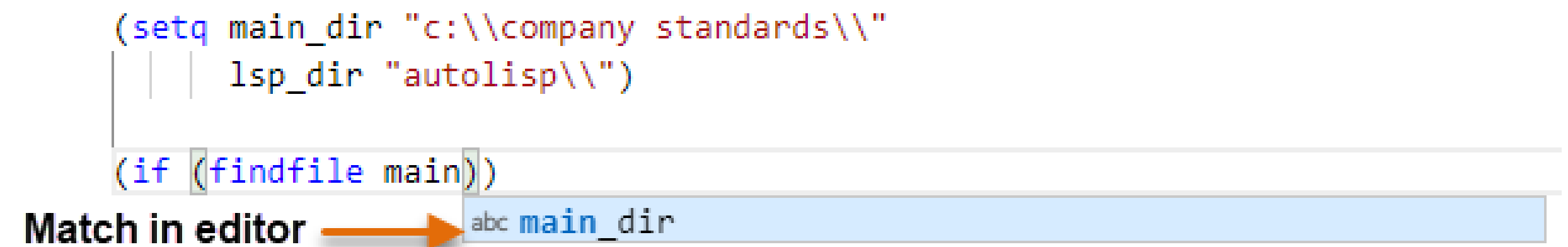
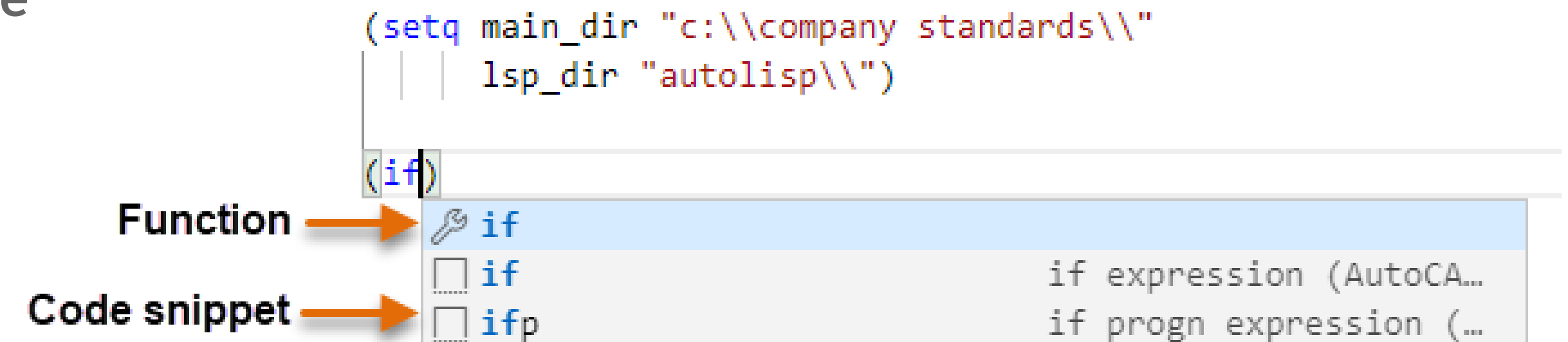
( )

" "

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Smart brackets
- Intellisense
  - Match standard AutoLISP function names
  - Match text in the active editor window
  - Insert of code snippets



# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Smart brackets
- Intellisense
- Toggle statements as comments
  - Edit menu > Toggle Line Comment
  - Edit menu > Toggle Block Comment

```
; Recurse folders  
; (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)
```

```
;| Program created by Lee Ambrosius  
| | Last updated on: 8/22/2020 |;
```

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Smart brackets
- Intellisense
- Toggle statements as comments
- Select elements and statements between parentheses
  - Select elements between parentheses
    - Click inside an AutoLISP statement
    - Click Selection menu > Expand Selection (multiple times)
  - Match parentheses
    - Click adjacent to a parenthesis

```
6 (foreach dir dirs
7   (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
8     (progn
9       (setq indent "\n")
10
11       (repeat level
12         (setq indent (strcat indent "  "))
13       )
14
15       (prompt (strcat indent dir))
16       (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
17     )
18 )
```

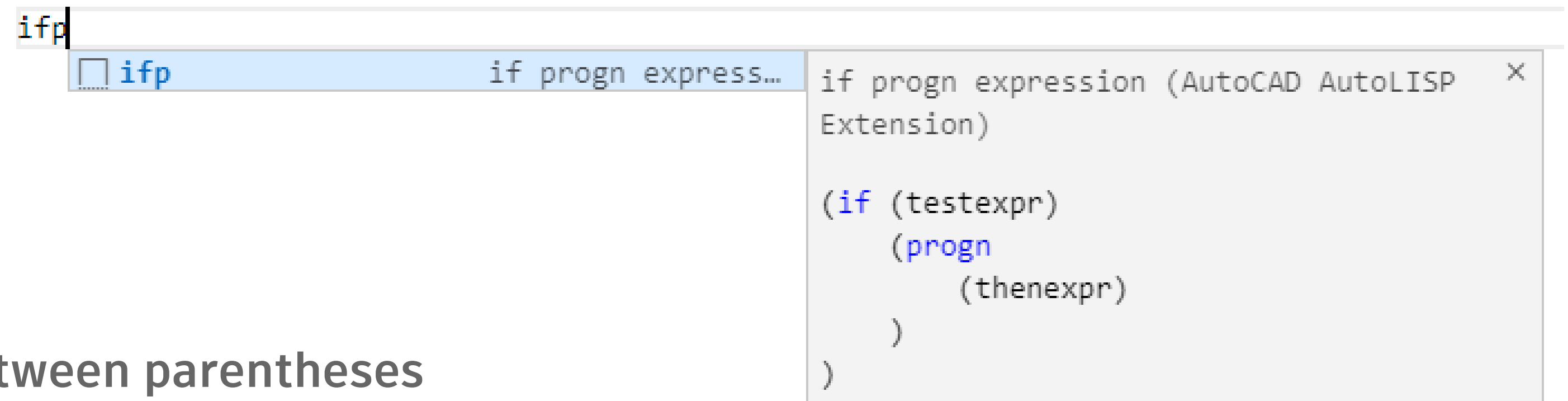
```
6 (foreach dir dirs
7   (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
8     (progn
9       (setq indent "\n")
10
11       (repeat level
12         (setq indent (strcat indent "  "))
13       )
14
15       (prompt (strcat indent dir))
16       (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
17     )
18 )
19 )
```



# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Smart brackets
- Intellisense
- Toggle statements as comments
- Select elements and statements between parentheses
- Insert code snippets
  - Per extension
  - Per user
  - Can contain placeholders



```
(if (testexpr)
    (progn
      (thenexpr)
    )
)
```

# Edit LSP Files

You can use these editing features with a LSP file

- Syntax highlighting
- Smart brackets
- Intellisense
- Toggle statements as comments
- Select elements and statements between parentheses
- Insert code snippets

DEMO

# Format LSP Statements

## Selected statements

- Right-click and choose Format Selection

## All statements

- Right-click and choose Format Document

```
(defun c:NINSERT ( / lastEnt)
  (setq lastEnt (entlast))
  (initdia)
  (command "INSERT")
  (while (not (zerop (getvar "CMDACTIVE"))))
    (command PAUSE)
  )
  (if (eq lastEnt (entlast))
    (alert "No block was inserted.")
    (alert "Block was inserted")
  )
  (princ)
)
```



```
(defun c:NINSERT (/ lastEnt)
  (setq lastEnt (entlast))
  (initdia)
  (command "INSERT")
  (while (not (zerop (getvar "CMDACTIVE"))))
    (command PAUSE)
  )
  (if (eq lastEnt (entlast))
    (alert "No block was inserted.")
    (alert "Block was inserted")
  )
  (princ)
)
```

# Configure Extension to Load and Debug Statements

Debug configurations must be setup to

- Load LSP files
- Execute AutoLISP statements
- Debug AutoLISP statements

Two debug configurations available

- AutoLISP Debug Attach (attachlisp)
- AutoLISP Debug Launch (launchlisp)

# Load LSP Statements

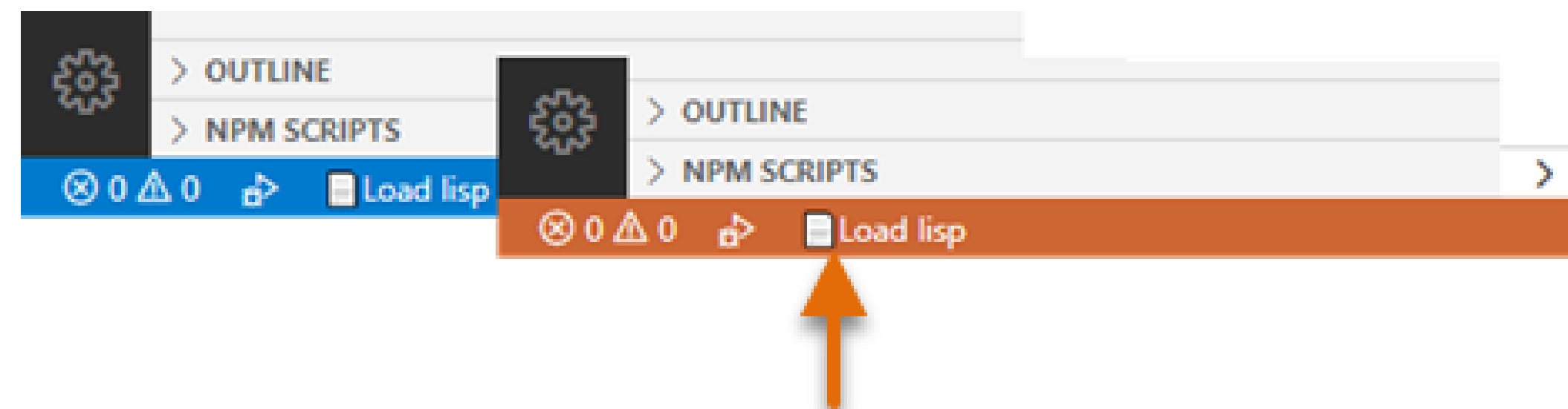
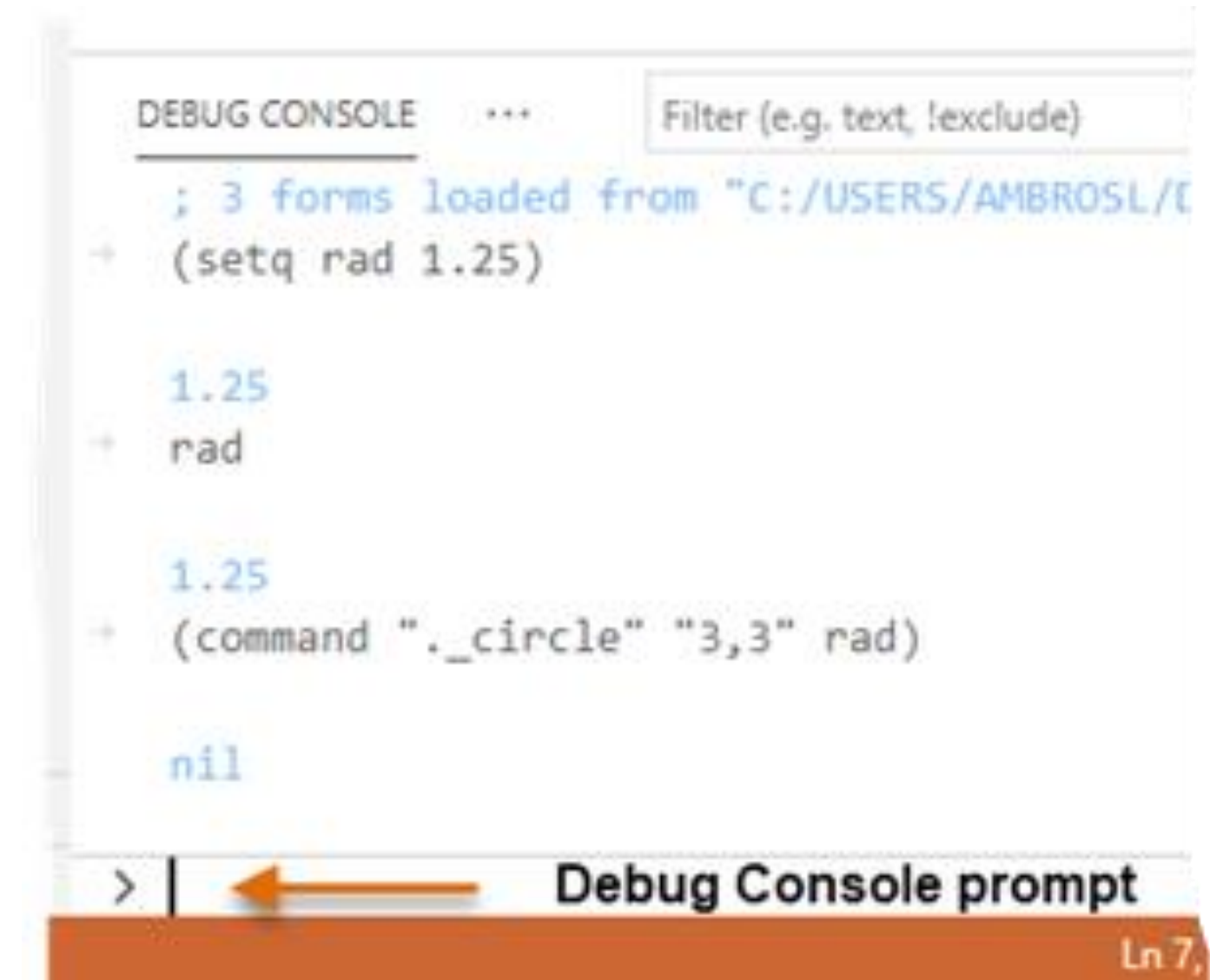
Debugging must first be started

Select statement

- Right-click and choose Evaluate in Debug Console

All statements

- Right-click and choose Load File in AutoCAD
- “Load Lisp” on the status bar





# Load LSP Statements

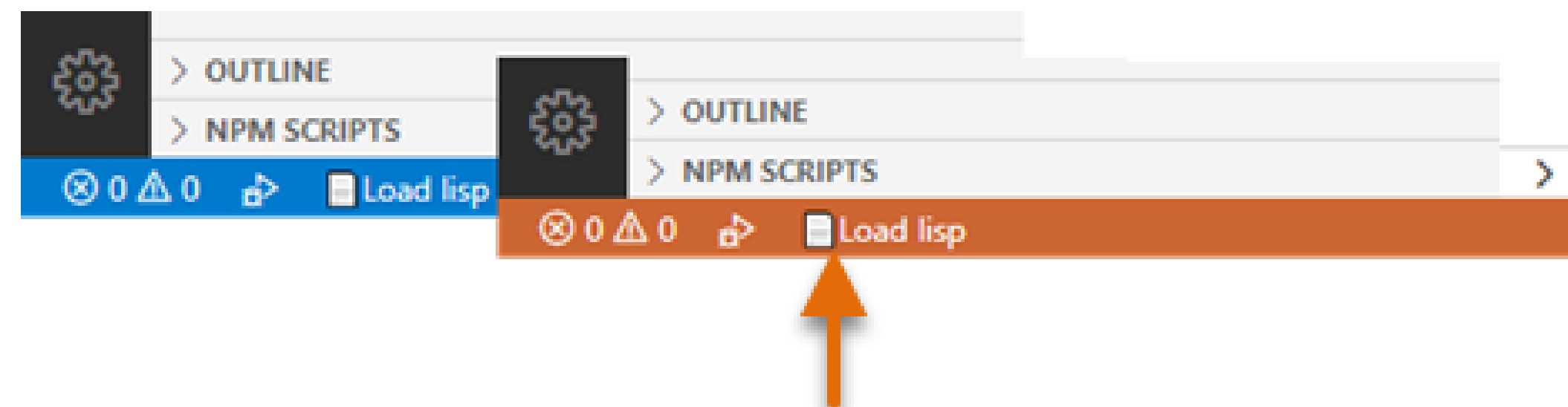
Debugging must first be started

Select statement

- Right-click and choose Evaluate in Debug Console

All statements

- Right-click and choose Load File in AutoCAD
- “Load Lisp” on the status bar



DEMO

# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints

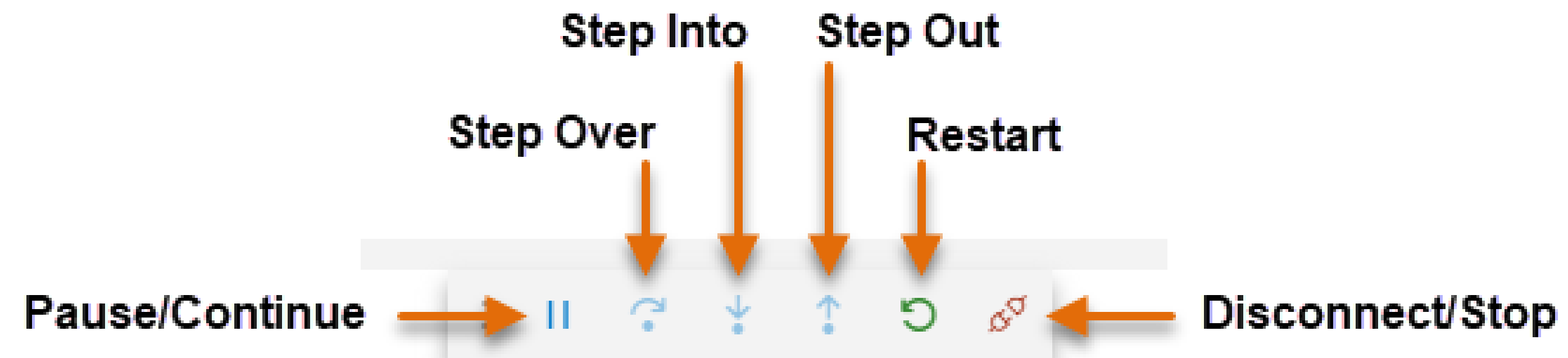
```
5
6  (foreach dir dirs
7  (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
8  (progn
9    (setq indent "\n")
10
11  (repeat level
12    (setq indent (strcat indent "  "))
13  )
```

```
5
6  (foreach dir dirs
7  (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
8  (progn
9    (setq indent "\n")
10
11  (repeat level
12    (setq indent (strcat indent "  "))
13  )
14
15  (prompt (strcat indent dir))
16  (recurse_folders (strcat path dir) (1+ level))
17  )
18  )
19  )
20  (princ)
21  )
```

# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

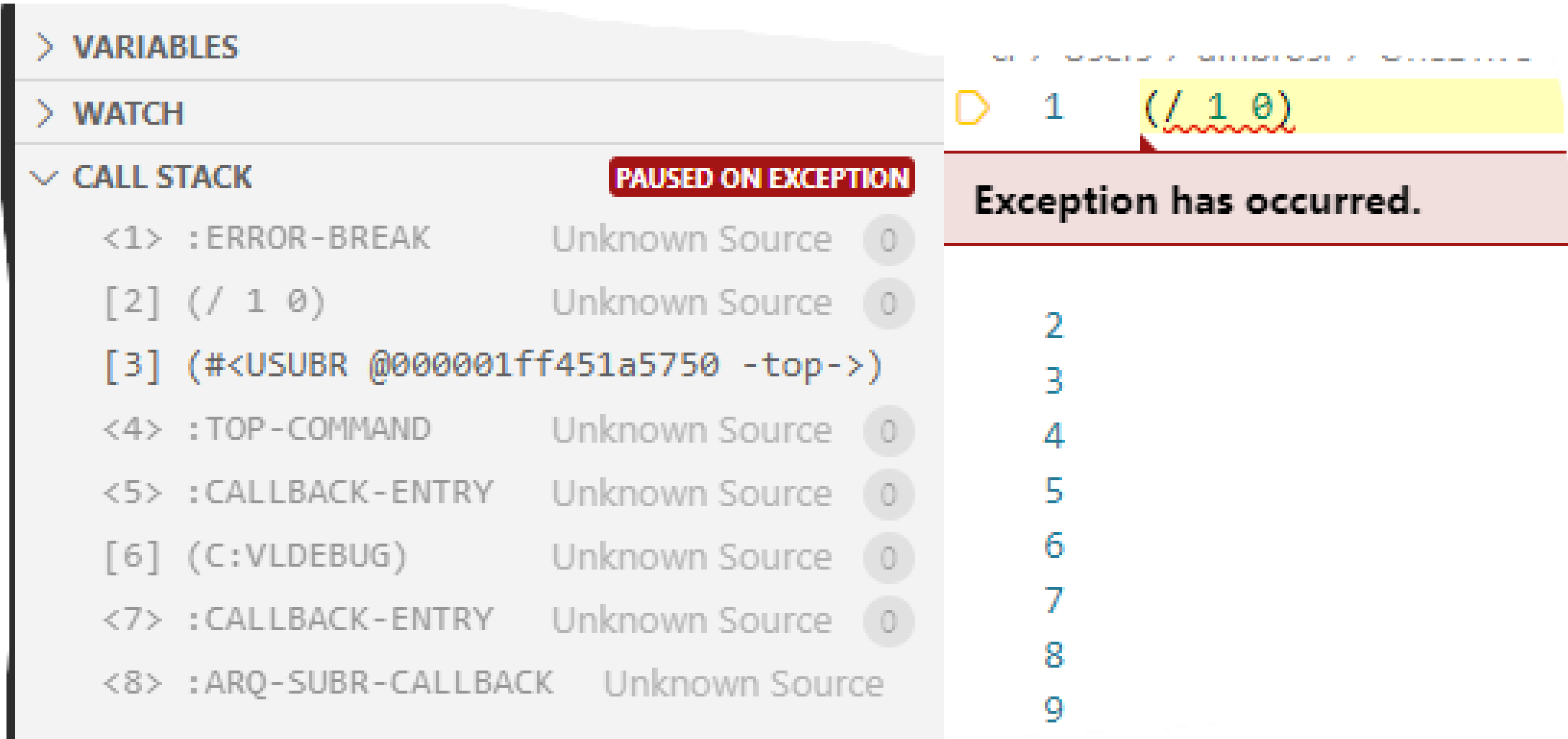
- Breakpoints
  - Debug toolbar



# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints
- Break on Error

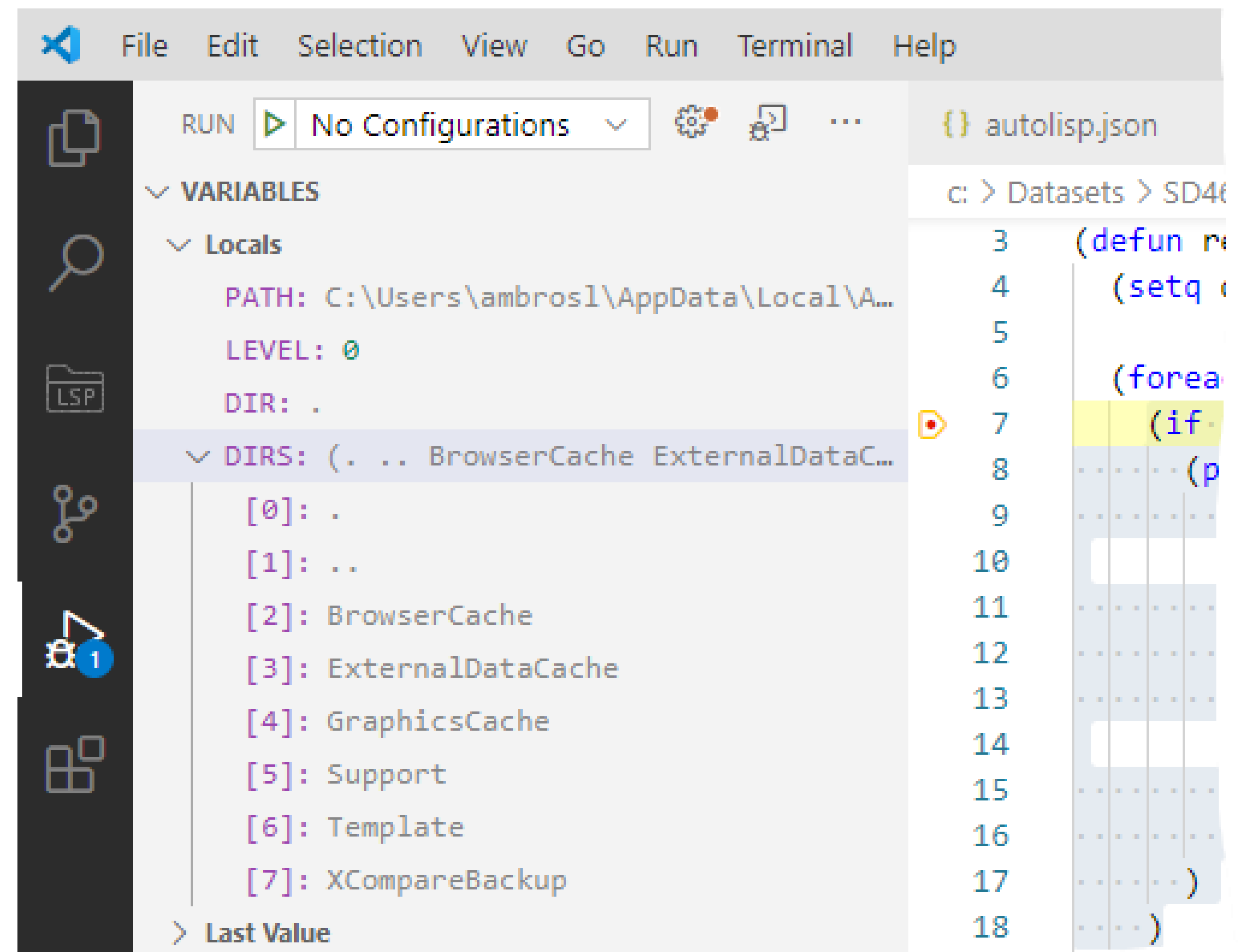




# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

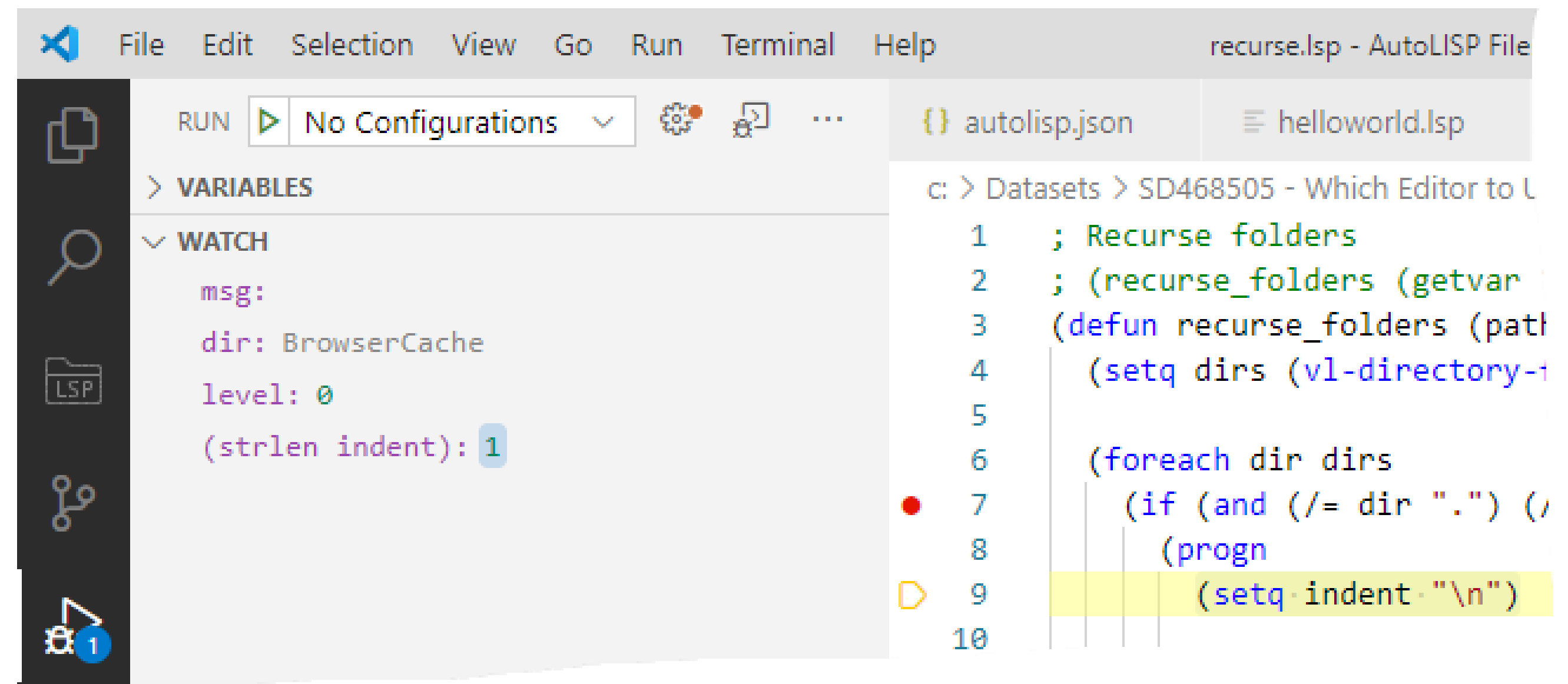
- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Local variables and last statement value



# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

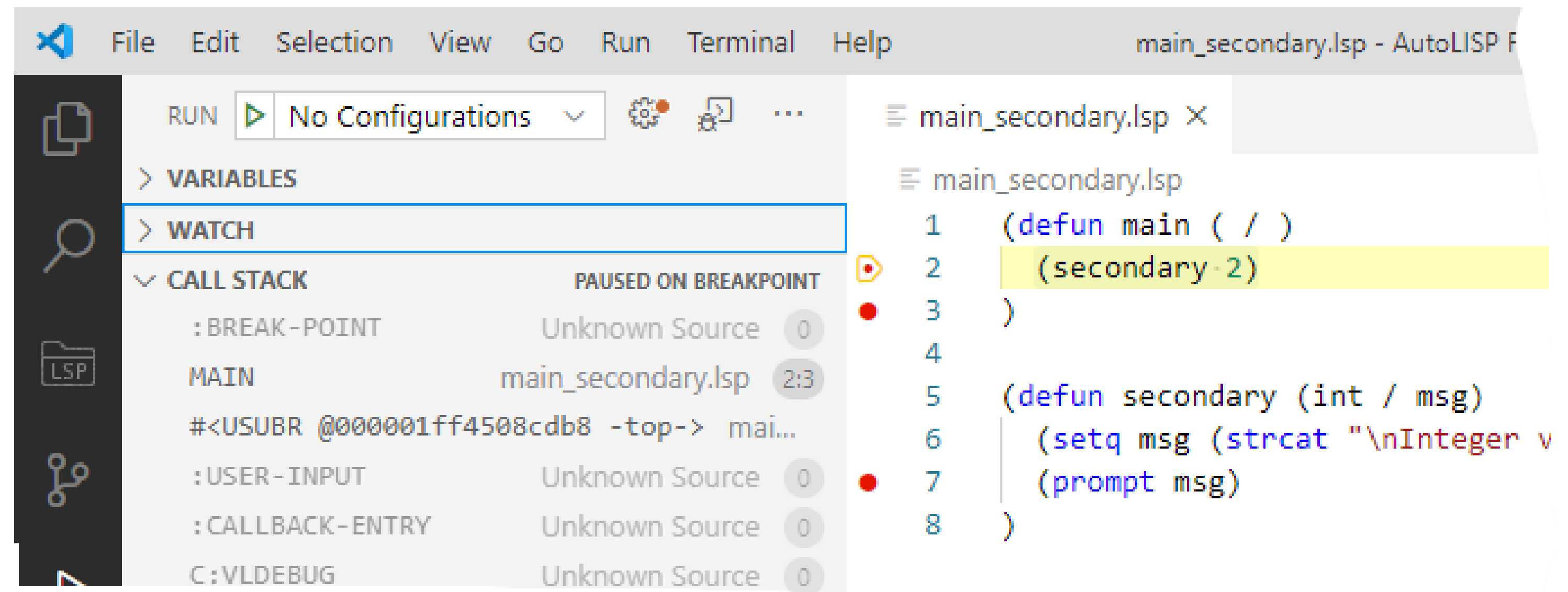
- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Local variables and last statement value
- Watches



# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Local variables and last statement value
- Watches
- Call stack



# Debug LSP Files

You can use these debugging features on a LSP file

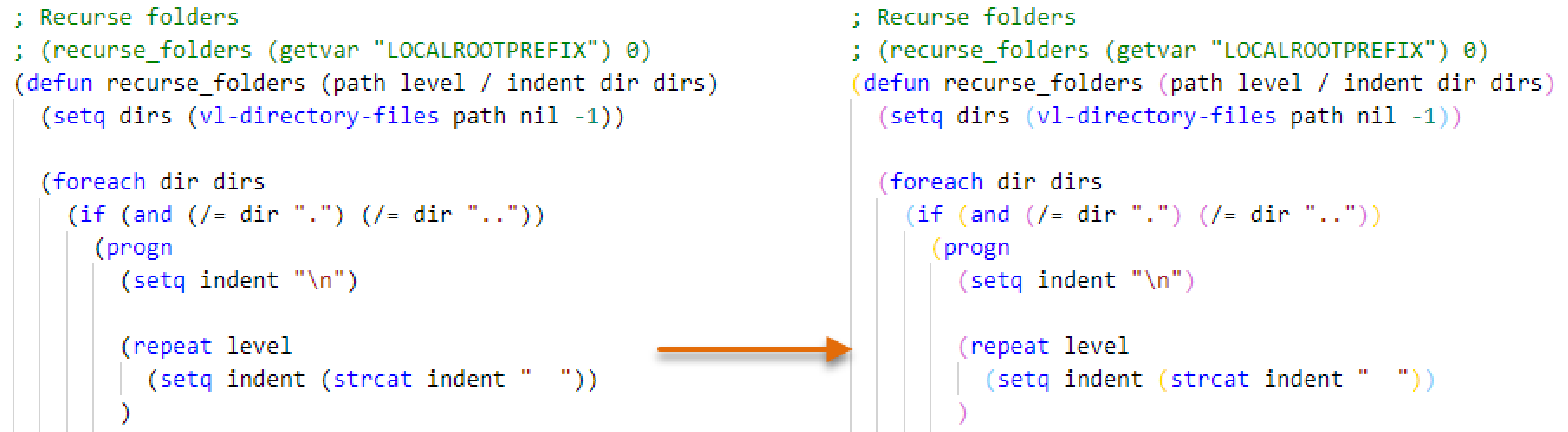
- Breakpoints
- Break on Error
- Local variables and last statement value
- Watches
- Call stack

DEMO

# Other Extensions

Extensions can be installed to improve editing functions

- Bracket Pair Colorizer 2 – Different parentheses coloring by nesting levels



The diagram illustrates the Bracket Pair Colorizer 2 extension. It shows a code snippet on the left with standard monochrome parentheses. An orange arrow points to the right, where the same code snippet is shown with parentheses color-coded by nesting level: the outermost level is blue, the next level is purple, and the innermost level is yellow.

```
; Recurse folders
; (recurse_folders (getvar "LOCALROOTPREFIX") 0)
(defun recurse_folders (path level / indent dir dirs)
  (setq dirs (vl-directory-files path nil -1))

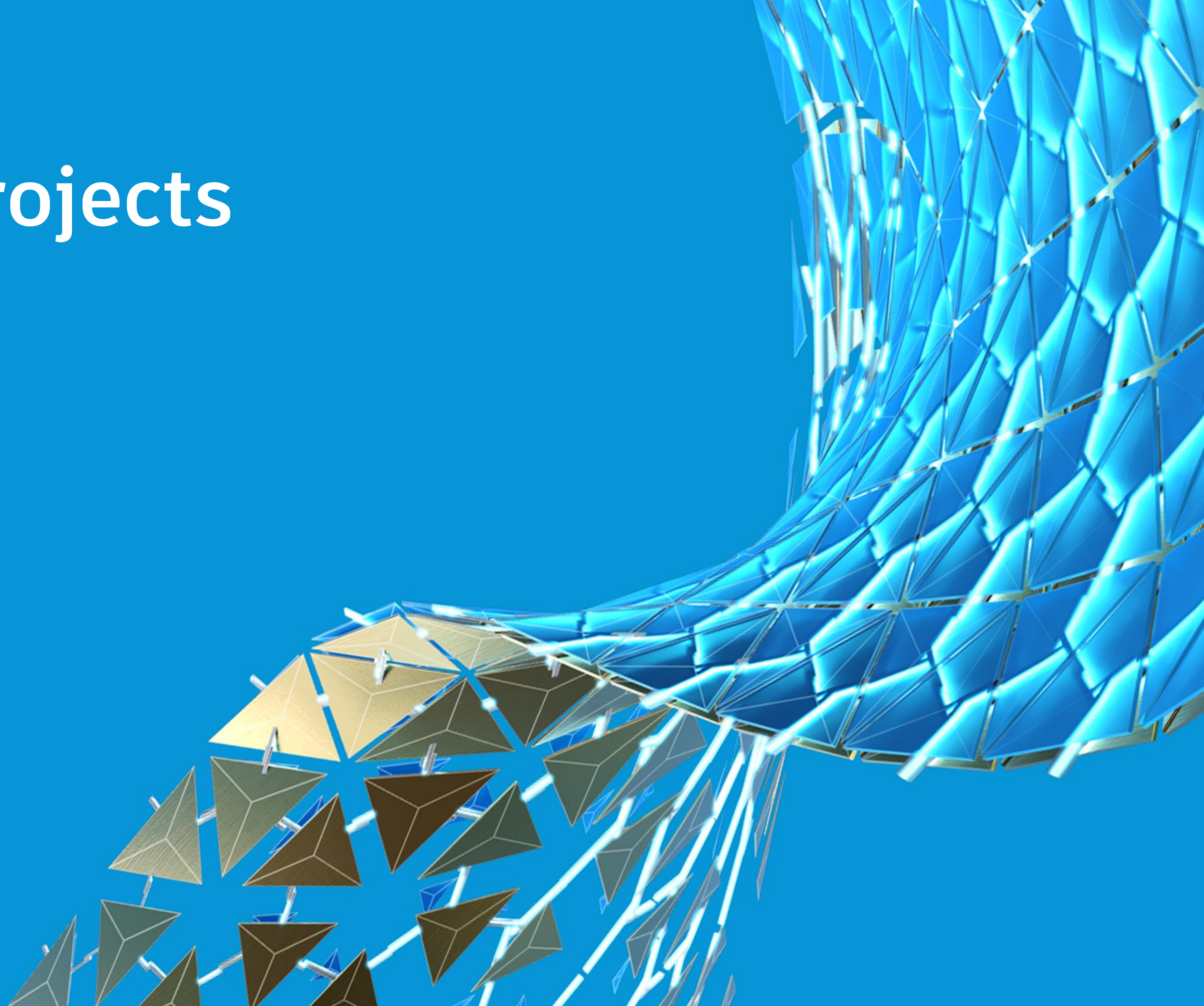
  (foreach dir dirs
    (if (and (/= dir ".") (/= dir ".."))
      (progn
        (setq indent "\n")

        (repeat level
          (setq indent (strcat indent " ")))
        )
      )
    )
```

- Quick and Simple Text Selection – Improved selection of elements between parentheses
- vscode-position – Shows character position of the cursor in the status bar



# AutoLISP Projects



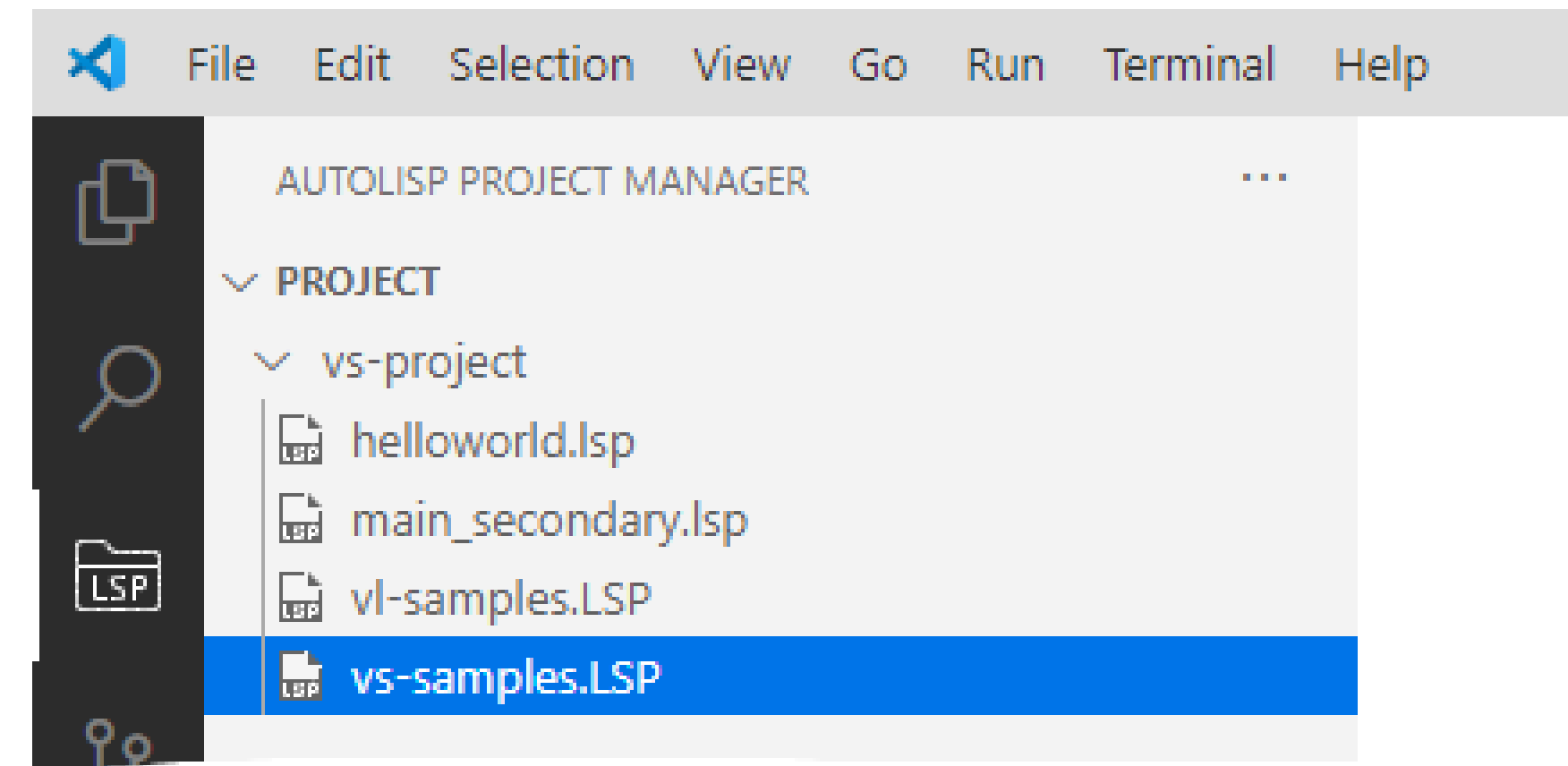
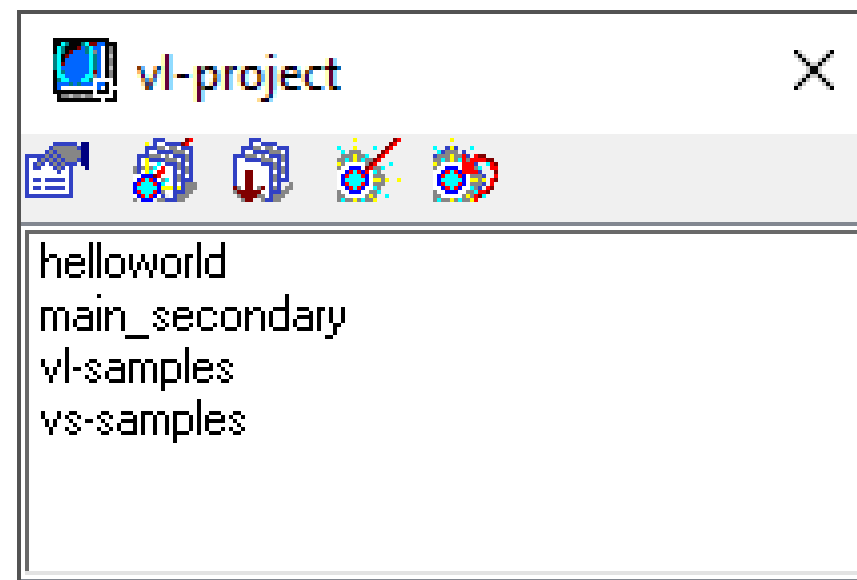


# AutoLISP Projects

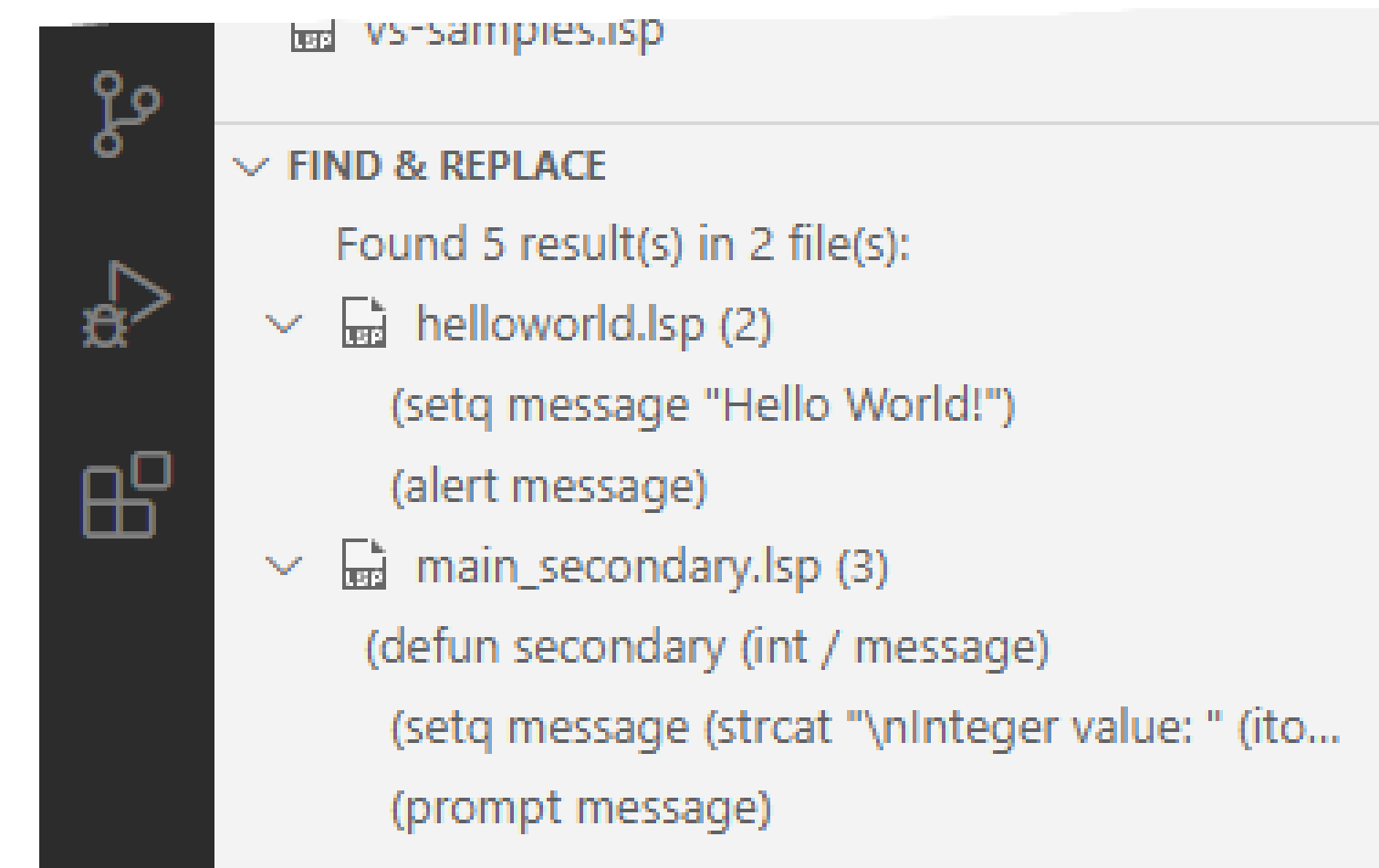
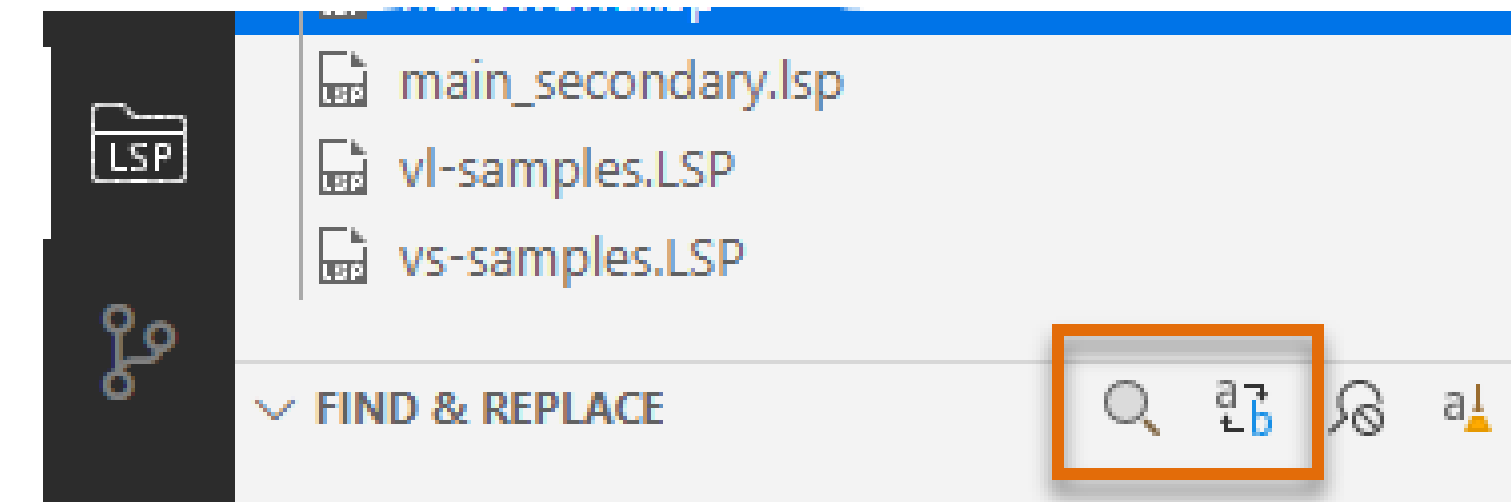
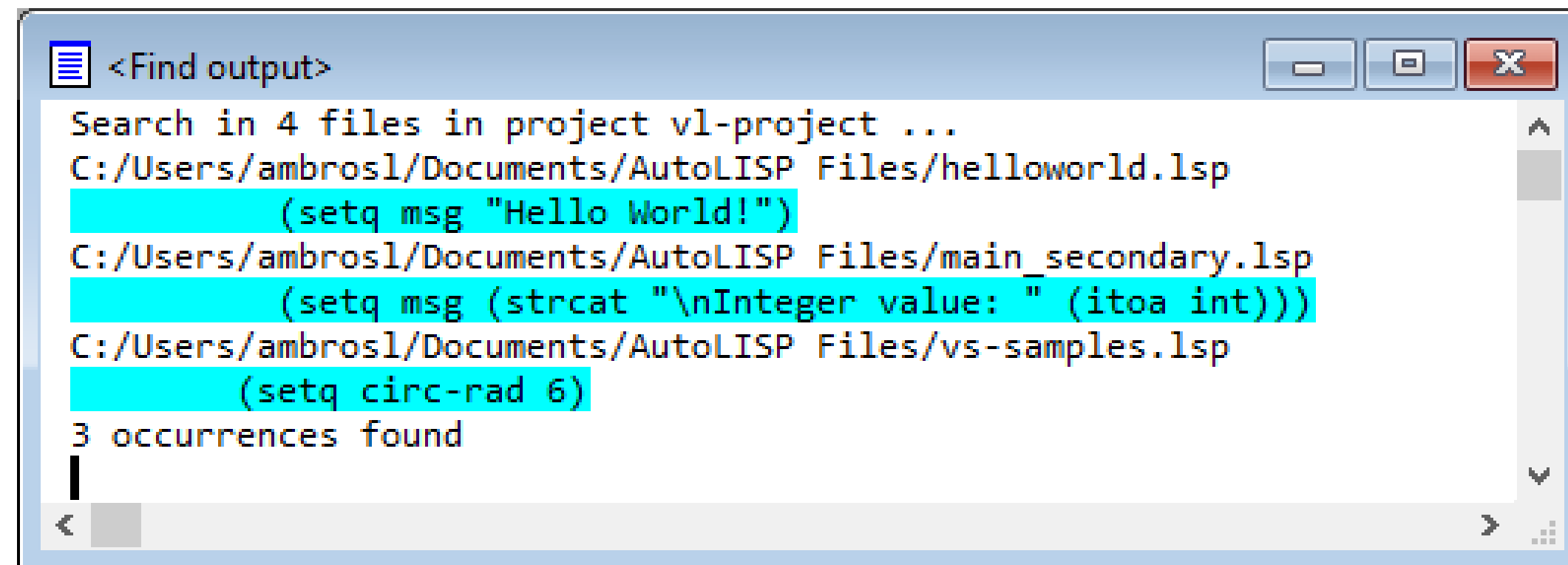
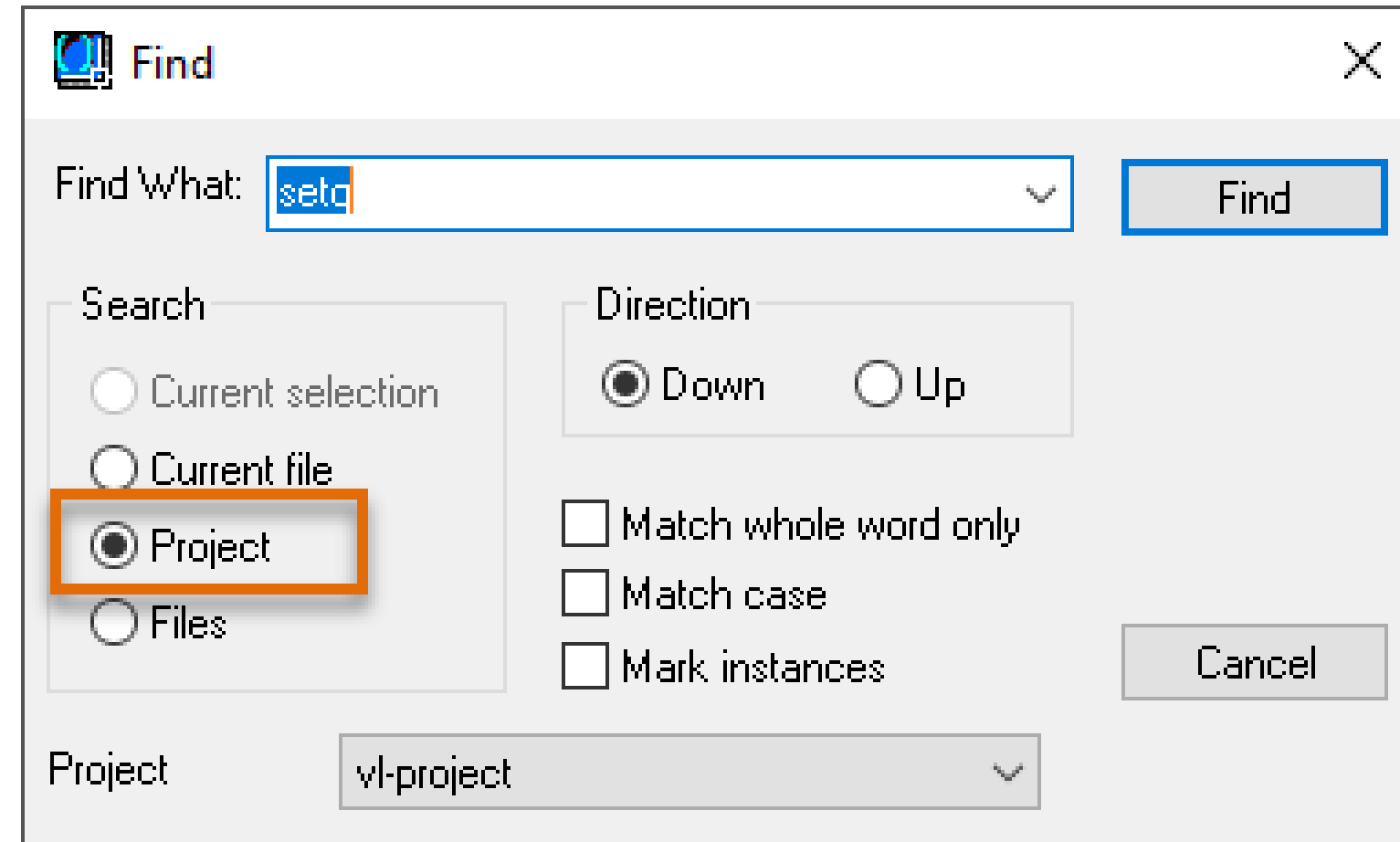
Allow you to

- Manage LSP files
- Open a LSP file
- Find/replace text
- Compile and protect LSP files

# Manage and Open LSP Files



# Find and Replace Text in LSP Files



# Compile and Protect LSP Files

LSP files can be compiled into

- FAS – FAST load AutoLISP files (Windows and Mac OS)
- VLX – Visual LISP Executable file (Windows only)

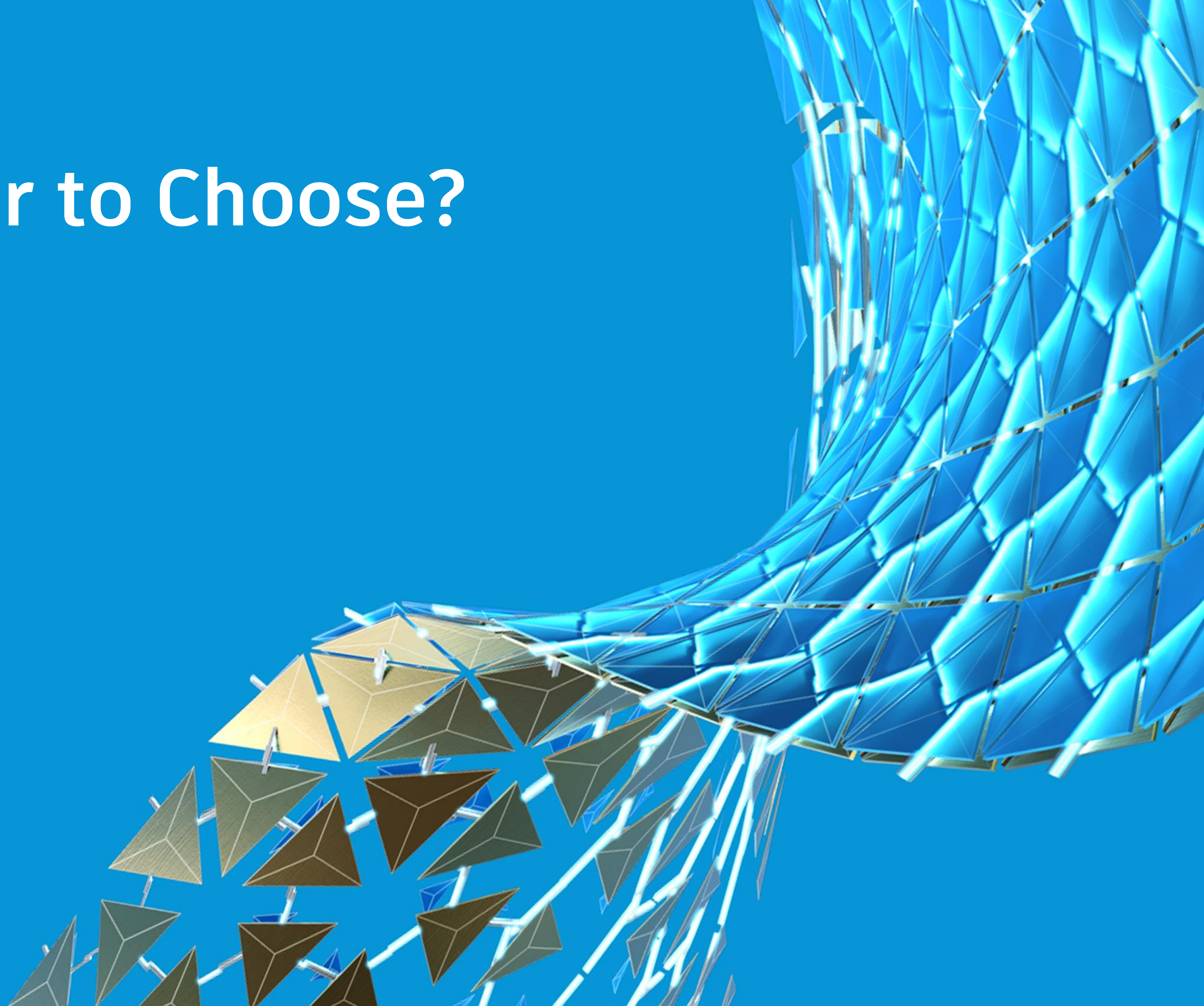
AutoLISP projects can make it easier to compile multiple LSP files

These approaches can be used to compile LSP files

- In Visual LISP, File menu > Make Application > New Application Wizard
- MAKELISPAPP command when LISPSYS is set to 1 or 2



# Which Editor to Choose?





# Which Editor to Choose?

If you are using

- Visual LISP – AutoCAD 2020 or earlier (Windows only)
- VS Code – AutoCAD 2021 (Windows or Mac OS)

VS Code can be used with AutoCAD 2020 or earlier

- Debugging isn't supported

# Which Editor to Choose?

See the handout for a list of editor feature differences

Feature	Visual LISP	AutoLISP Extension for VS Code
Unicode support		X
Autocomplete function/variable name	X	X
Code snippets	/, Save Block <a href="#">As</a> and Insert File	X, snippets file
Auto-indentation while typing	X	X
Smart brackets		X
Find and replace in current editor window	X	X
Find and replace in current AutoLISP Project (PRJ) file	X	X
Toggle comment	X	X
Color-code syntax	X	X

# Which Editor to Choose?

[Visual LISP IDE to Visual Studio Code Feature Access Comparison](#) in the online help for a transitioning resource

Edit Tools		
Feature	Visual LISP IDE	Visual Studio Code
Parentheses Matching	Edit > Parentheses Matching > Match Forward Edit > Parentheses Matching > Match Backward	Go > Go to Bracket Click next to an open or closing parenthesis
Select Matching Parentheses	Edit > Parentheses Matching > Select Forward Edit > Parentheses Matching > Select Backward	Click to the right of an open parenthesis or left of a closing parenthesis, and press Shift+Alt+RightArrow 2 (or 3) times
Comment Block	Edit > Extra Commands > Comment Block	Edit > Toggle Line Comment Edit > Toggle Block Comment
Uncomment Block	Edit > Extra Commands > Uncomment Block	Edit > Toggle Line Comment Edit > Toggle Block Comment
Format Code in Selection	Tools > Format Code in Selection	Right-click > Format Selection
Format Code in Editor	Tools > Format Code in Editor	Right-click > Format Document
Format Settings	Tools > Environment Options > Visual LISP Format Options	File > Preferences > Settings > Extensions > AutoCAD AutoLISP Configuration



# Deploy AutoLISP Files





# Deploy AutoLISP Files

Independent of the editor you choose, except file format

AutoLISP (LSP) files saved in

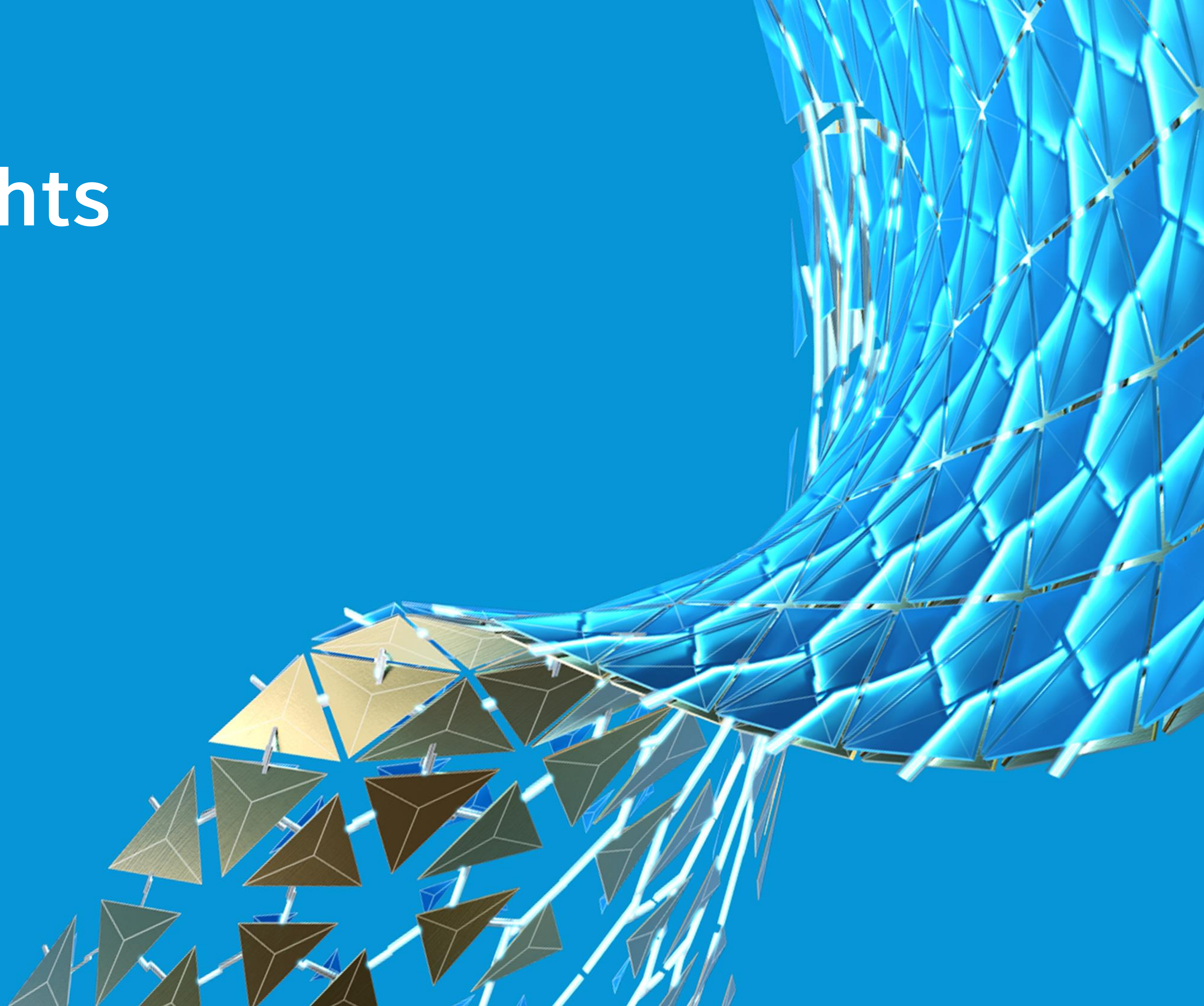
- Unicode file format can only be loaded in AutoCAD 2021
- ASCII file format can be loaded in AutoCAD 2021 and earlier

FAS or VLX files compiled with AutoCAD 2021

- LISPSYS = 0 or 2 can be loaded in AutoCAD 2021 and earlier
- LISPSYS = 1 can only be loaded in AutoCAD 2021



# Final Thoughts





# Final Thoughts

Customization and programming can:

- Enhance productivity
- Improve or introduce new workflows

Customizing has many similarities to Wonderland in *Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures*.

Both

- Are virtually endless
- Hold many mysteries just waiting to be discovered

# Final Thoughts

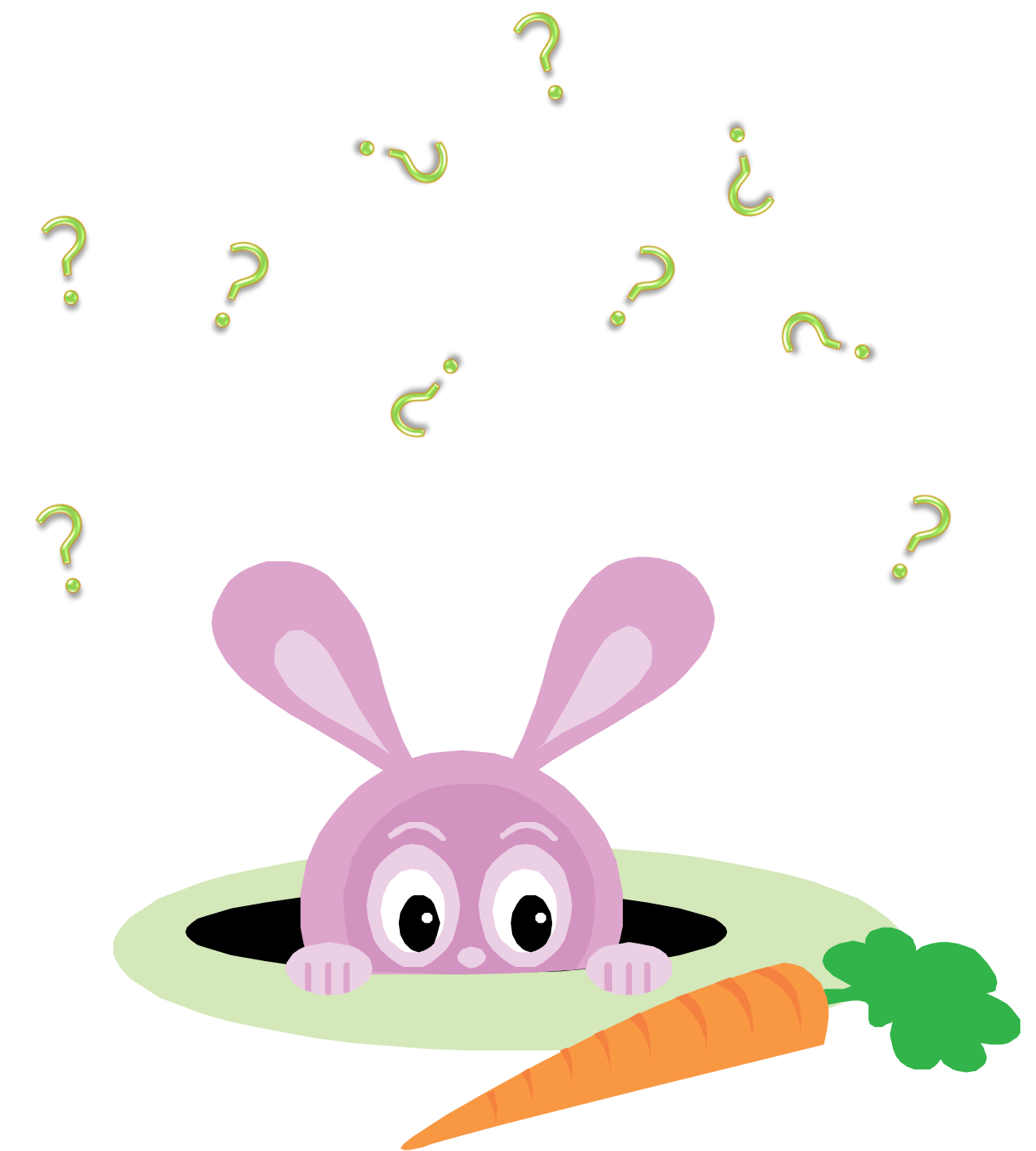
Questions? Questions? Questions?

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me via

email: [lee.ambrosius@autodesk.com](mailto:lee.ambrosius@autodesk.com)

twitter: [@leeambrosius](https://twitter.com/leeambrosius)

Thanks for watching this session!





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