

It's a Plug-in. It's an App. It's Autodesk® Exchange Apps!

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AC3535

What is the Plug-ins Ribbon tab and what it is used for? Learn how to download and install apps from the Autodesk Exchange. I've downloaded an app, now where did it go? Learn where apps are installed and how to manage them using the Exchange App Manager.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Access Autodesk Exchange Apps from inside AutoCAD® products and a browser
- Download and install plug-ins
- Use the Exchange App Manager app to manage apps (update, rate, and uninstall)
- Use "My Downloads" to track apps that have been downloaded

About the Speaker

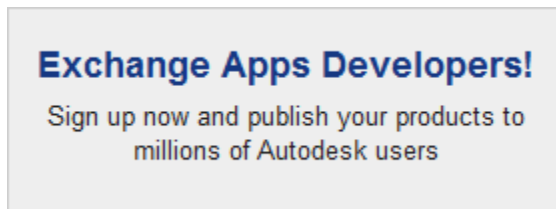
Karen Mason is a Principal User Experience Designer for Autodesk. Since 2006, she has worked on several AutoCAD features including Autodesk Exchange Apps, Hatch Contextual Ribbon, Transparency, Layer Properties per Viewport, Reset Settings, DGN Import/Export, and Export Layout to Model. Karen has been at Autodesk for 16 years, and previously tested 8 releases of AutoCAD. Prior to joining Autodesk, she used AutoCAD (since version 2.6) to design offices, medical facilities, banks and restaurants in several states. She has an Associate's degree in Graphic Design and a BFA in Interior Design from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. She was one of the first students to use CAD (Computer Aided Design) to complete her final thesis project.

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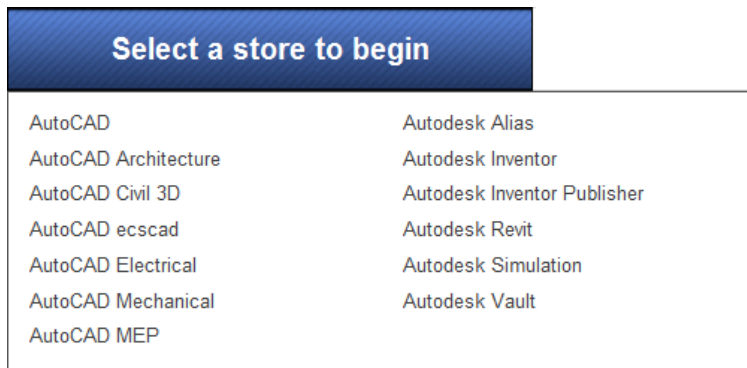
What is Autodesk Exchange Apps

Autodesk Exchange Apps is a store to get add-ons (or extensions) for your favorite Autodesk products! Some apps are created by Autodesk, but most are made by 3rd party developers and users like you. When apps are submitted for the store, Autodesk reviews them for malware and appropriate content. Anyone can submit apps on the store for free or for purchase. However, this class will not focus on publishing apps, but there is a link on the main page with more info about publishing apps.

<http://apps.exchange.autodesk.com>



Apps are available for AutoCAD, AutoCAD Vertical products, Inventor, Revit, Alias, etc. There are 13 different storefronts that service 40 Autodesk products.



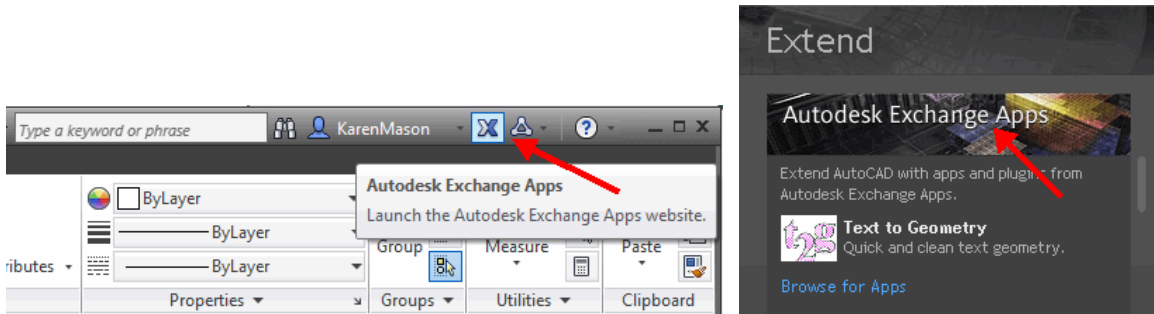
The Exchange Apps store was introduced in the AutoCAD 2012 product, but it was only available from inside AutoCAD. Now that the Exchange Apps store is available from any browser, it's definitely increased the awareness & discoverability, as well as a lot of new apps have been added!

Access Autodesk Exchange Apps from inside AutoCAD® products or a browser

There are several ways to open the Exchange Apps page:

- Click on the "X" button in the upper right corner of AutoCAD (easiest)
- Link on the AutoCAD Welcome Page
- Web search on "Exchange Apps".
- Type address in browser: <http://apps.exchange.autodesk.com>

It's a Plug-in. It's an App. It's Autodesk® Exchange Apps!



If you get to the Autodesk Exchange Apps page from inside a product (like AutoCAD), the store will automatically filter to the right store for your product and version. You can tell this by looking at the address in your browser.

<http://apps.exchange.autodesk.com/ACD/2013/en/Home/Index>

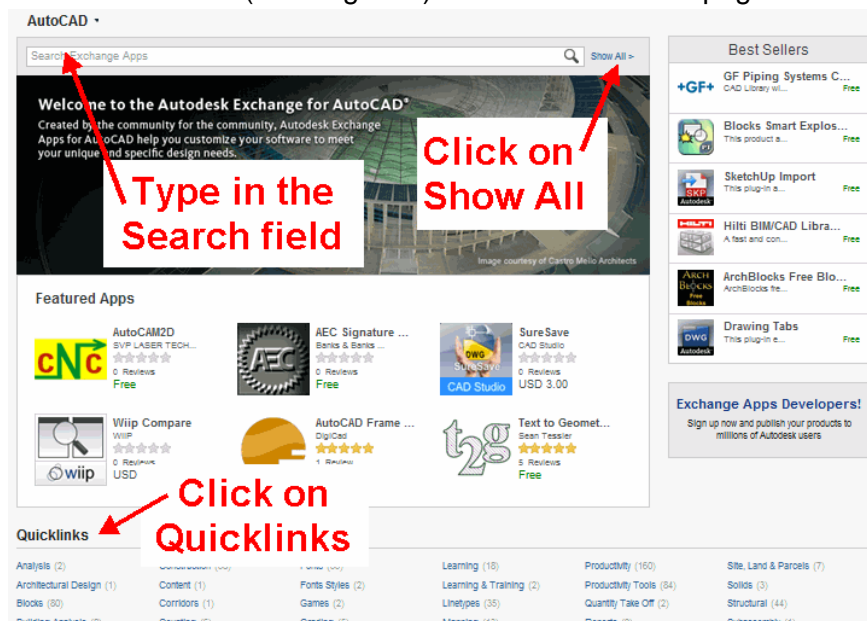
Download and install plug-ins

The terms apps, plug-ins, add-ons, extensions are used interchangeably. All these terms refer to an application that you download from Autodesk Exchange Apps. After installation, most apps are located on the Plug-ins tab of the Ribbon.

Find and download a plug-in

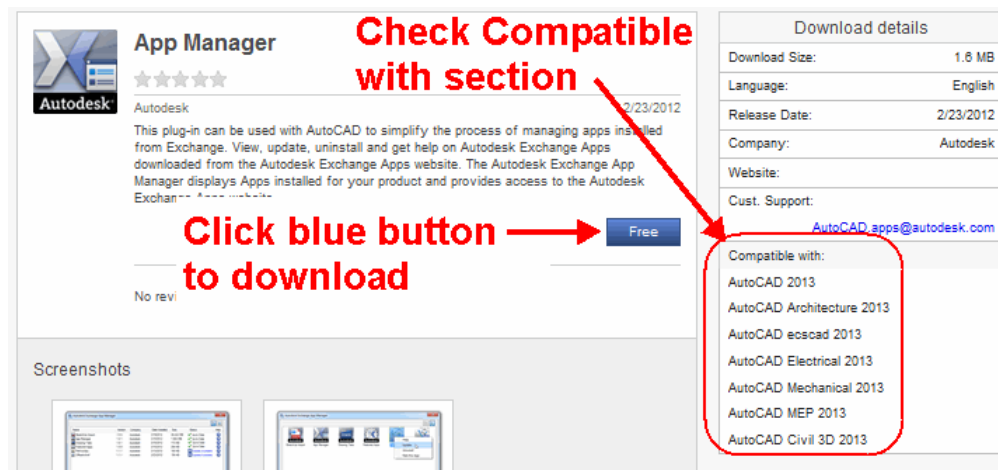
Once you're on the store, in addition to the Best Sellers and Featured Apps listed on the main page, you can search for other apps 3 different ways:

- Type in Search field
- Click 'Show All' Apps- then can filter on Categories/Publishers/Free & Featured apps
- Click different Quicklinks (or categories) at the bottom of the page



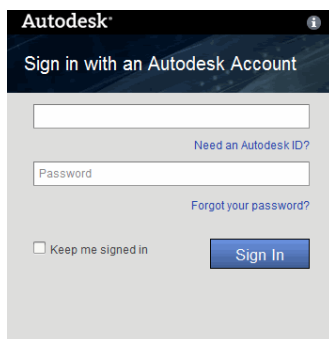
You can also do a Web search on a particular app name.

IMPORTANT: Before downloading an app always check the Compatibility section under Download Details. Make sure the app works with your product.



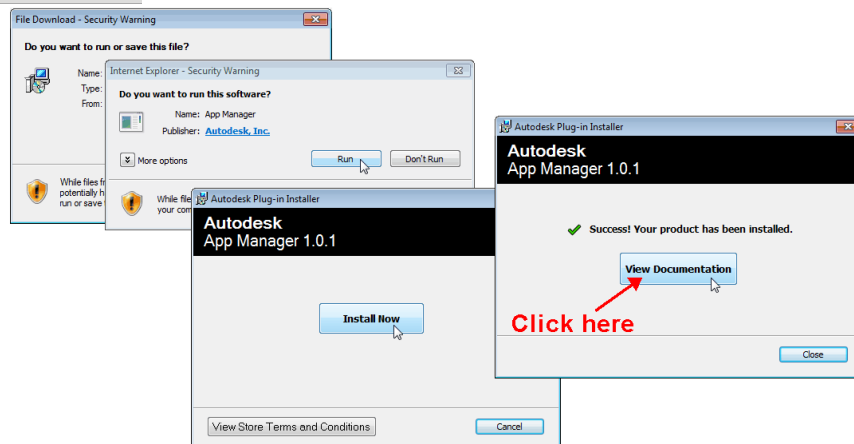
Installation

Click on blue button ("Free" or "Trial" or "USD \$") to start download.



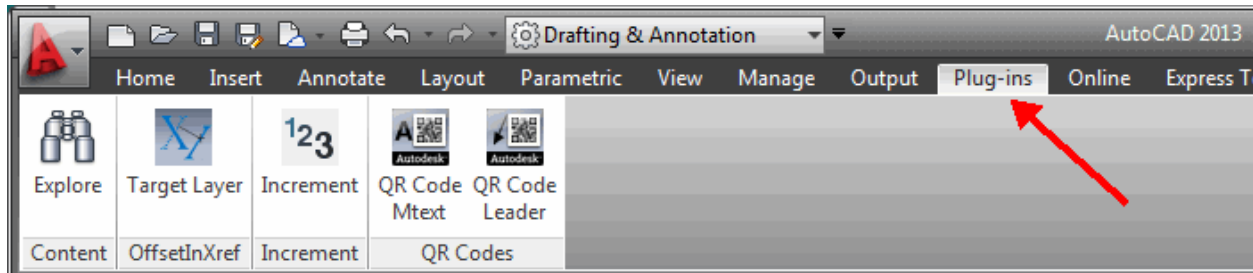
If you're not already signed in to Autodesk 360, the Sign In dialog is displayed. If you're already signed in, this dialog is not displayed (the login authentication is automatically sent when you access Exchange Apps from inside AutoCAD).

Depending on your browser, you will be prompted to either Save or Run the file. Most apps display the same installation wizard. At the end of the installation, click on the View Documentation button.



After Installation

Installing most AutoCAD apps from the Exchange Apps store creates a Ribbon panel in the Plug-ins tab.



Some apps also create a toolbar or pull-down menu. The Help documentation will explain how to access and list all commands associated with the app.

Help Documentation

Help is available for all apps and can be found by:

- Clicking View Documentation button at end of install
- Press F1 when the mouse hovers over the Ribbon button.
- Press F1 after entering app command in the command line
- Right-clicking on app in the Exchange App Manager app (separate download)
- Navigating to the Bundle folder and double clicking on HTM file
(%APPDATA%\Autodesk\ApplicationPlugins\<appname>.bundle\Contents\Resources\en-US)

TIP: Typing %APPDATA% in Windows Explorer gets you to the User's roaming folder on both Win7 & XP machines.

Win 7: C:\Users\<login>\AppData\Roaming\

XP: C:\Documents and Settings\<login>\Application Data\

This is also a useful way to get to the AutoCAD support folder for any OS:

%APPDATA%\Autodesk\AutoCAD 2013 - English\R19.0\enu\Support\

App Bundle Details

Installing most AutoCAD apps from the Exchange Apps store creates a bundle folder in the Roaming (non-product specific) Autodesk folder for current user:

%APPDATA%\Autodesk\ApplicationPlugins

Or in the Program Files folder for all users:

%ProgramFiles%\Autodesk\ApplicationPlugins

Note: AutoCAD apps typically install to Roaming folder for the current user.

For Content apps (block libraries, etc.), another folder is also created in:

Win7: %Public%\Public Documents\Autodesk\Downloaded Content\<appname>.content

XP: %ALLUSERSPROFILE%\Shared Documents\Autodesk\Downloaded Content\<appname>.content

Bundle folder

Contents of the bundle folder include:

- PackageContents.xml- determines applicable products, versions, help file, etc.
- ARX/DLL/other files necessary for the app (can be multiple files for different versions and 32-bit or 64-bit)
- CUI file- defines Ribbon panel & icons
- HTML Help file and supporting files

App Versioning & Migration

The apps do not need to be migrated from release to release. Instead, the apps themselves define which versions they are compatible with. Many of the ADN Plug-ins on the Exchange Apps store are compatible with AutoCAD 2012 & 2013. If you have both AutoCAD versions on your machine, you only need to install the app once (to the common ApplicationPlugins folder), and both AutoCAD 2012 & 2013 will load it.

PackageContents.xml file

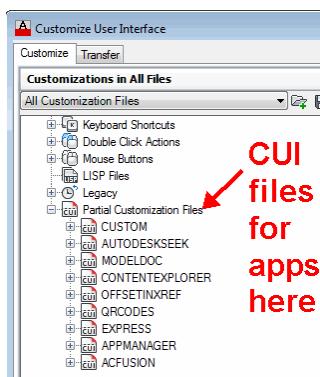
The PackageContents.xml file in the Bundle folder determines which products and versions the app can be installed on. Examples:

Platform value="AutoCAD*" (app installed on all verticals)

Platform value="AutoCAD|MEP" (app only installed on specific AutoCAD verticals)

SeriesMin value= R18.2 (AutoCAD 2012)

SeriesMax value= R19.0 (AutoCAD 2013)



Installed apps will add a partial CUI file that can be seen in the 'Customize User Interface' dialog (CUI command).

Related System Variables

The following Commands and System Variables were added in AutoCAD 2012.

APPAUTOLOADER command

Command: APPAUTOLOADER

Enter an autoloader action [List/Reload] <List>:

APPAUTOLOAD system variable (default value= 14; saved in User Profile)

0 – Off – Do not load apps at any time.

1 – Verbose – When loading apps AppAutoLoader will display all successes and errors.

2 – On AutoCAD Startup – OnLoad – Load apps at startup.

4 – On Drawing Load – OnLoad – Load apps when a new drawing is opened.

8 – On Appearance – OnLoad – Load apps when they appear in the plug-ins folder.

Options dialog

For each app installed, we add an entry or 2 (depending on version compatibility) to the Options Files tab- Support File Search path. These are removed during Uninstall.

%Appdata%\ApplicationPlugins\AppName.bundle\Contents\Windows\2013

%Appdata%\ApplicationPlugins\AppName.bundle\Contents\Resources

Un-Installation

There are 2 ways to uninstall an app:

- Windows Control Panel
- Exchange App Manager

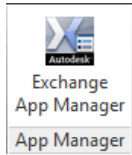
Note that a copy of the Apps CUIx/MNR files are added to the Support folder after installation (%APPDATA%\Autodesk\AutoCAD 2013- English\R19.0\enu\Support). A copy is created because you can customize these files.

Uninstall removes the bundle folder from ApplicationPlugins and Options dialog Support File Search Path, but does not remove the CUIX/MNR files from Support folder. The next time AutoCAD is launched (after an app has been uninstalled), the partial CUI file for the uninstalled app is unloaded (not removed).

Use the Exchange App Manager app to manage apps

The Exchange App Manager is not installed with AutoCAD, but you can download it from the store. *Note: The App Manager is included with Inventor, and also works with all apps (including Revit).*

The Exchange App Manager can be used to see all the apps that are installed on the machine or for specific products on the machine. You can view the Help Documentation, check for app updates, rate, and uninstall apps.



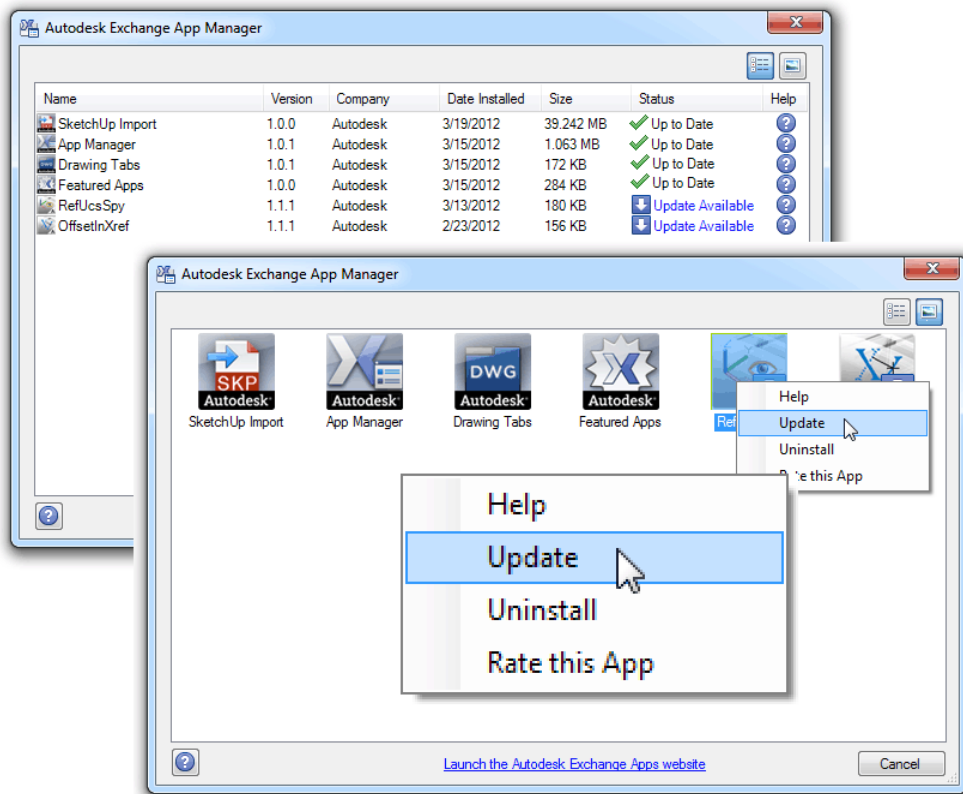
After installation, it can be run from the Plug-ins tab or by entering APPMANAGER at the command prompt.

Or double click on the AppManager.exe from the bundle folder.

%APPDATA%\Autodesk\ApplicationPlugins\Autodesk AppManager.bundle\Contents\Windows\2013

- When run from inside AutoCAD, it will only list AutoCAD apps.
- When run from outside AutoCAD, it will list all Apps installed on the machine.

Note: That's how to use it for other products like Revit.



When uninstalling apps from the App Manager, you will be prompted to shut down AutoCAD.

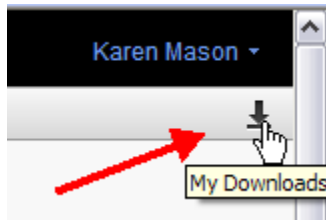
Note: You can also use the Windows Control Panel (Uninstall a Program) to uninstall apps.





You can also use the App Manager to view the Help Documentation. This is particularly useful for apps (such as Drawing Tabs) that don't add a Ribbon panel to the Plug-ins tab.

Use "My Downloads" to track apps that have been downloaded

The Exchange site includes a 'My Downloads' page that lists all App downloads for your account (for all machines).

"My Downloads" is accessible from the upper right corner of the Autodesk Exchange Apps page. Click on the arrow down icon underneath your ID.



My Downloads						
Name	Description	Company	Store	Purchase Date	Status	
 OrderByLayer ★★★★★	This tool can be used to reorder objects by layer. Simply select the layer you want to reposition in the list, then press the move... (more)	DotSoft LLC	AutoCAD	5/15/2012	✓ Up to Date	
 Quick Block ★★★★★	Quick Block is a dialog box user interface for creating C.M.U. Block coursing with a variety of C.M.U. Block types, joint selectio... (more)	SoftDraft, LLC	AutoCAD	5/15/2012	✓ Up to Date	
 ArchBlocks Fre... ★★★★★	ArchBlocks free AutoCAD blocks library. (more)	ArchBlocks, Inc	AutoCAD	5/15/2012	✓ Up to Date	
 Text to Geomet... ★★★★★	Quick and clean text geometry. (more)	Sean Tessier	AutoCAD	5/14/2012	✓ Up to Date	

It lists all apps that have been downloaded from your account.

The status column indicates whether an app has been updated.

Note that it doesn't just list the apps installed on the current machine. Use the Exchange App Manager to see all apps installed on the current machine.

- It doesn't indicate if the app was installed or uninstalled.
- There's no way to uninstall apps from here.
- If the app is later removed from the store, the "My Downloads" page doesn't list the app as having been downloaded.

Summary

Thanks for your interest in Autodesk Exchange Apps. Autodesk Exchange Apps is a great resource to extend the functionality for your favorite Autodesk products! New apps are added to the store frequently, so if you don't find what you're looking for, check back.

If you have any questions, please contact me at:

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Appendix

This class is not intended to be a resource for creating and publishing apps. There is a white paper with basic Q&A for publishing apps on the Autodesk Developer Network on autodesk.com.

www.autodesk.com/developapps

[Autodesk Exchange Apps- Publisher FAQ](#)