



President's Column

Dave Witso

Editorial Comment

Bob Rea

Gung Hey Fat Choi – Happy Chinese New Year (January 29)
Happy Robbie Burns Day (January 25)

from CADvisory

Technological wonders abound. Hardware and software continues to evolve so rapidly that it seems that business owners and their employees are spending increasing time keeping up with these changes. Cad-based occupations are variously enmeshed in these changes; from continually dealing with hardware and software glitches – to keeping abreast of new software applications, and their latest revisions and patches – to maintaining currency with changing industry and engineering standards. It is no small irony that the faster and more frequently techno-changes occur, the fewer resources a company seems to be able to dedicate to fully implement them. Ultimately they do pay however, in decreased production, increased overtime, errors, waste and lost opportunities. This cost may be either greater or less than the investment and the goal is obviously for them to find the right cost versus benefit. We don't always envy them the often-complex financial decisions they face; we understand the strong tendency to diminish risk. Training employees via seminars and weekday courses is an immediate cost with no guaranteed benefit.

Employees have busy lives and understandably given the last 3 decade's economic turmoil, seem increasingly reluctant to sacrifice their private lives, and finances to assuming what are often viewed as the employer's challenges and responsibilities. Most CAD training seems to be as a result of various amounts of schooling but mainly from work experience and employee "cross-pollination" within and outside the firms. This places an additional hurdle in the path of many small enterprises whose 1 or 2 CAD operators are isolated from the greater world.

Many solutions have evolved including Internet-based training, web or use-net discussion groups or bulletin boards, and Web-casts. There are many good books and CD's. You can always "Call a friend" probably the world's greatest source computer training and support. Let us not forget the ubiquitous [F1] key. One solution, older AutoCAD, is a self-help system in the form of the user-group. The oldest Autocad user's group is the Vancouver Autocad User's Society, which is an incorporation of its predecessor, The Vancouver Autocad User Group.

VAUS have traditionally been able to offer an informal venue for the exchange of CAD related information amongst users of ACAD as well as other Autodesk applications. In addition, we have had representatives of Autodesk, including Lynn Allen, come talk with our group. Memberships have almost always included more than one CAD instructor from public and private educational institutions and businesses. A wealth of knowledge abounds in our membership, and is freely distributed. Some of our most informative meetings have been freely structured "Tips n' Tricks" nights featuring a full night of interactive discussion between the attendees.

It's not all free; VAUS members contribute a few dollars for coffee, donuts, web hosting and a few sundries. The investment is a few hours and about \$5 per month. The return is training, contacts, prizes including software, a fun time, coffee, donuts and time away from work and those nasty chores waiting for you at home.

January Meeting

Learn the truth about dynamic blocks from Dave Witso!

"Dynamic Dave" Witso, VAUS President, demonstrated the construction and use of Dynamic Blocks, a powerful new ACAD entity. That Dave's daily experience with Architectural Desktop help prepare him for this new ACAD feature, exemplifies the benefits ACAD users can derive from exposure to other computer applications.

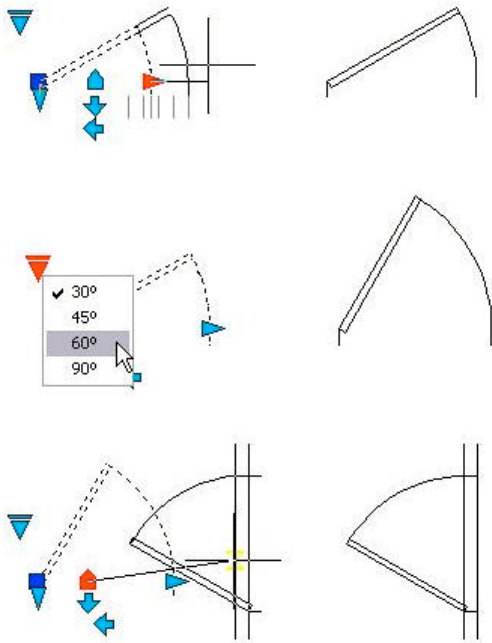
Dave used the BEDIT (Block Editor) command to define and edit a block containing standard ACAD objects to which parameters and actions were added to allow individual block insertions to each be independently manipulated within predefined limitations. This may prove to be a major development in ACAD functionality. Though there is definitely a much higher overhead involved in creating a Dynamic Block, the resulting "What if's" may inspire a whole bunch of cool CAD methods!

Definitely a HIGH "Cool Factor"

For more information, you can refer to the ACAD Website or Help File. Here is a reprint of part of the ACAD2006 help file describing Dynamic Blocks:

A dynamic block has flexibility and intelligence. A dynamic block reference can easily be changed in a drawing while you work. You can manipulate the geometry in a dynamic block reference through custom grips or custom properties. This allows you to adjust the block in-place as necessary rather than searching for another block to insert or redefining the existing one.

For example, if you insert a door block reference in a drawing, you might need to change the size of the door while you're editing the drawing. If the block is dynamic and defined to have an adjustable size, you can change the size of the door simply by dragging the custom grip or by specifying a different size in the Properties palette. You might also need to change the open angle of the door. The door block might also contain an alignment grip, which allows you to align the door block reference easily to other geometry in the drawing.



You use the Block Editor to create dynamic blocks. The Block Editor is a special authoring area where you add the elements that make a block dynamic. You can create a block from scratch, or you can add dynamic behavior to an existing block definition. You can also create geometry, just as you would in the drawing area.

You add parameters and actions to a block to make it dynamic. When you add these elements to the block, you add flexibility and intelligence to the block geometry.

Parameters define custom properties for the dynamic block by specifying positions, distances, and angles for geometry in the block.

Actions define how the geometry of a dynamic block reference will move or change when the block reference is manipulated in a drawing. When you add actions to the block, you must associate them with parameters and usually geometry.

When you add a parameter to a block definition, custom grips and properties are automatically added to the block. You use these custom grips and properties to manipulate the block reference in the drawing

“Dave: Drawings, Design, Consulting. Ltd, a Vancouver home design company has experience with ACAD and ADT. After many years serving on the executive committee, including as refreshment coordinator,

February Meeting

Back by popular demand - Tips and tricks extravaganza Dave Witso!

OK Caddies! Bring your best tricks, your most useful tips and your most relevant questions.

Everybody has some of the above in varying amounts; even the newest newbie (Bring them too! Ed.).

- What do you do with AutoCAD?

- How do you do it?
- How would you Like to do it better?

Learn some. ? Teach some. ? Get to know your fellow VAUS members.

Door Prizes

Paid-up members qualify for this month's door prizes. If your membership is due, remember to bring payment in full so you qualify! VAUS members in good standing are eligible to win great prizes from Autodesk and other sponsors. Bring a question about AutoCAD and enter it into the computer. Sometimes a winner is selected through a random draw and other times by having submitted the best question. Everybody wins when we all start answering the questions.

Tips and Tricks

**Mike Norman
& Caddgeek**

Data Execution Prevention

A little known feature of WindozeXP with Service Pack 2 installed is DEP. The following excerpt from Microsoft's Help File explains:

Understanding Data Execution Prevention Data Execution Prevention (DEP) helps prevent damage from viruses and other security threats that attack by running (executing) malicious code from memory locations that only Windows and other programs should use. This type of threat causes damage by taking over one or more memory locations in use by a program. Then it spreads and harms other programs, files, and even your e-mail contacts.

Unlike a firewall or antivirus program, DEP does not help prevent harmful programs from being installed on your computer. Instead, it monitors your programs to determine if they use system memory safely. To do this, DEP software works alone or with compatible microprocessors to mark some memory locations as "non-executable". If a program tries to run code—malicious or not—from a protected location, DEP closes the program and notifies you.

There is downside however, as a user we know discovered when his recently installed ACADLT stopped launching. After many hours and many conversations with many "Experts, this little "protective feature" was determined to be the culprit. Adjusting its settings to allow ACADLT to execute immediately resolved the problem.

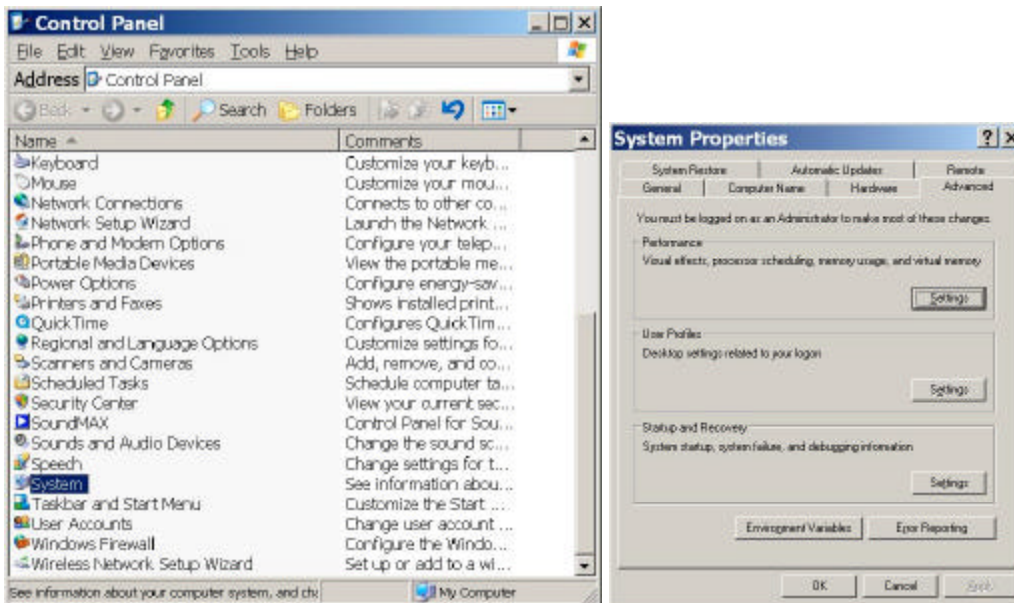
From our experience:

Default Windoze setting is "DEP set to off"... no programs prevented from running; which is why we suppose nobody knows about it. We had turned it on to prevent unauthorized installation (or rather, execution) of programs by persons known or unknown. It supposedly would stop malware from being executed on a machine with DEP set to "on".

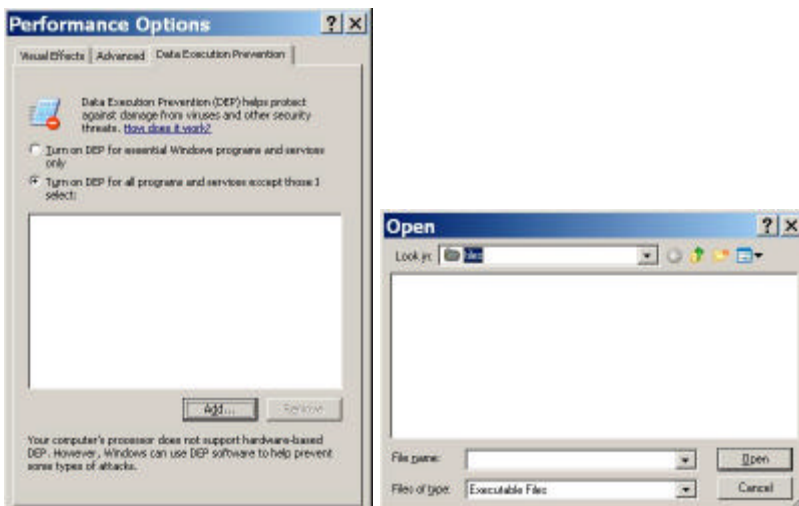
There are two possible settings: "Turn on DEP for essential Windows programs and services only", and "Turn on DEP for all programs and services except those I select." For the latter option one must browse for the programs one wants to include and add them to the list in order that they will behave as normal.

Once AcadLT was added to the list, it ran fine.

DEP is found on a tab in the following: Start/Control Panel/System/Advanced.



Once there, there are three “Settings” buttons. Press “Settings” button in the “Performance” box. This will open the Performance options dialog where the “Data Execution Prevention” tab can be found.



This is where the settings to control DEP can be set.

As well, back on the System Properties/Advanced page there is yet another handy “Error reporting” button where you can set error logging variables. It’s not very elaborate but you can at least, review a log of all errors encountered within Windows – many of which will go unnoticed by the user. Go to Control Panel/Administrative Tools/Event Viewer to see a list of Application, Security and System error logs.

Just for (defun) of it

by James Koll

Lisp

Here is a short LISP routine that allows you to copy some objects then then go on to further manipulate them by selecting them using the "previous" selection method. Normally this would select the original objects instead of the newly created ones created by the "Copy" command.

```

;-----
;;; cp2prev.lsp
;;; By James Koll
;;; If used in place of the "copy" command, the newly created entities will
;;; become the "previous" selection set rather than original entities.
;-----
(defun c:CC ()
  (setq oldsnap (getvar "OSMODE"))
  (setvar "ORTHOMODE" 0)
  (setq ssl(ssget))
  (command "COPY" ssl "" "@" "@")
  (setvar "OSMODE" oldsnap)
  (command "MOVE" ssl ""))
);defun
;-----

```

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Contributions and Submissions

Fodder for Mass Consumption

Contributions in the form of articles to this newsletter can be made by email to any member of the executive and will be greatly appreciated not only by the members who must toil to produce this e-rag, but also, especially, by those VAUS members who read it. It's your publication. Please help keep it alive and vibrant. At least one of you out there must be more interesting than we are

Away from the *bored* (outside of VAUS (Get a Life))

Caddgeek

Culture***Gung Haggis Fat Choy!***

...as they say in some circles. Welcome to the year of the dog. Did you enjoy your Haggis, Neeps and Tatties? It seems that more *British* Columbians have experienced Dim Sum or Egg Rolls than the treat that was described by Scotland's most famous poet, Robbie Burns, as "Great chieftain O' the puddin'-race." In fact, one might consider Haggis the most celebrated food in Scotland, or event the British Empire. It is not just that it has its own poetry, toasts and folklore; it is paraded into dining halls... "Piped-in" with great fanfare. Nevertheless how many of us have tasted it, or even know what it is? Haggis aficionados must be none-too-keen to share the secrets of this dish fearing it would become impossible to maintain the supply were its tasty secret widely revealed. The elusive wild haggis might be hunted to extinction! The curious among you find a recipe here:

http://mimi.essortment.com/burns_rknw.htm

Having many years ago thoroughly enjoyed a Burns Night Banquet, I would recommend the experience to all. Be prepared, the evening is not for the faint-of-heart! The nation that brings us haggis also brought us Marching bands of bagpipes and drums as well as Scotch Whiskey. It's all good.

And what about "Gung Haggis Fat Choy"? It's as it sounds: Toddish McWong's Robbie Burns Chinese New Year Dinner Check it out: www.gunghaggisfatchoy.com

As Todd Wong a.k.a. Toddish McWong puts it,

The origin of Gung Haggis Fat Choy started when I was asked to participate in the 1993 Robbie Burns Day celebration at Simon Fraser University. In 1998, I decided to host a dinner for 16 guests that blended Robbie Burns Day (January 25th) with Chinese lunar New Year (late January to early February).

The result has been a dinner event that has grown steadily to a 2005 dinner of 600 guests, a CBC television special, an annual poetry night at the Vancouver Public Library, a recreation event at Simon Fraser University.... and media stories around the world!

Only in Vancouver, you say. How weird! How wonderful! How weird.