

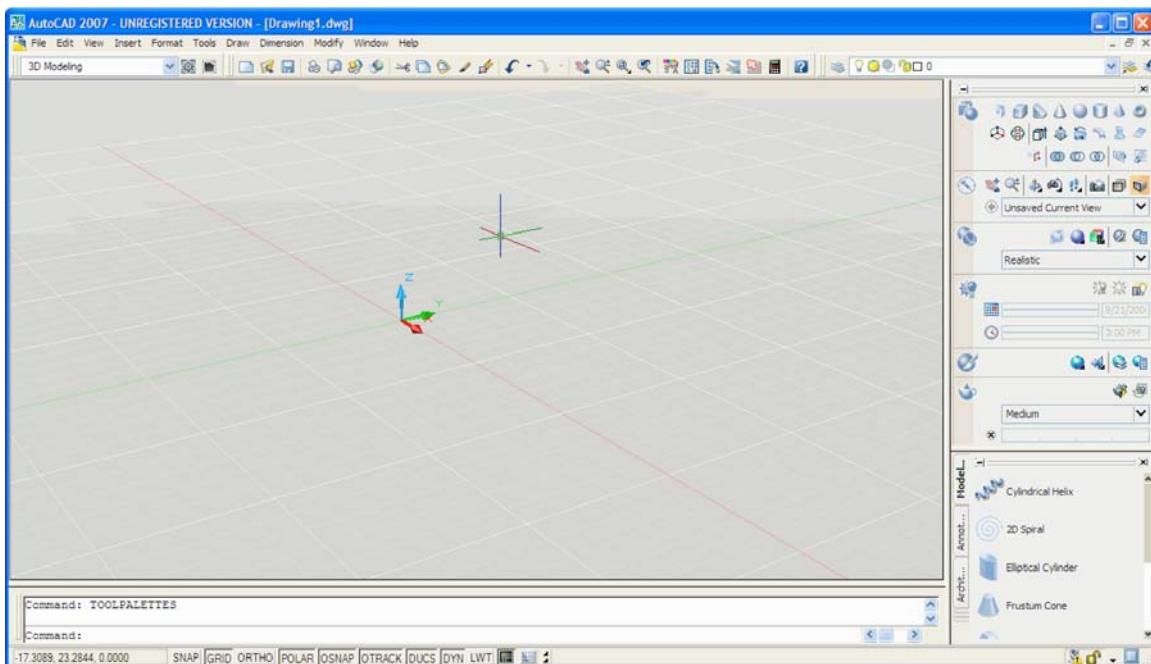
Workspaces

By Jay D. Helsel

In AutoCAD 2007, Autodesk introduces workspaces. Though they may seem complex at first, workspaces are simply an extension of the profiles introduced several versions ago. A *profile* is a saved group of customized settings that allows several users to share the software without changing other users' favorite settings. A *workspace* is similar—it is also a group of customized settings—but instead of being user-specific, it is task-specific. The purpose of workspaces is to provide task-oriented drawing environments for various types of drafting tasks.

The 3D Modeling Workspace

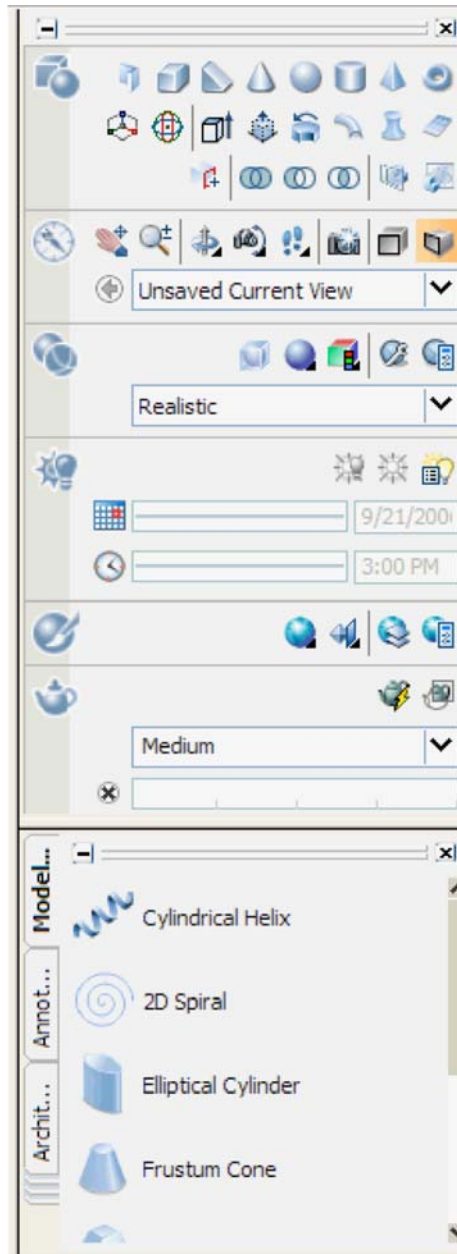
Two workspaces come standard with AutoCAD 2007: the 3D Modeling workspace, which is the default workspace, and the AutoCAD Classic workspace. The 3D Modeling workspace displays only the menus and tools that are relevant to 3D modeling. The 2D tools and commands are hidden in this workspace because they are not used in 3D modeling.



Notice that both the crosshairs and the drawing area have a different appearance in AutoCAD 2007. The crosshairs is a 3D cursor, showing the current positions of the X, Y, and Z axes. This cursor is much more useful for 3D work. The drawing area appears by default in an isometric view, with the origin (point 0,0,0) near the center of the drawing area. The traditional dotted grid is replaced by a true grid that has major and minor grid lines.

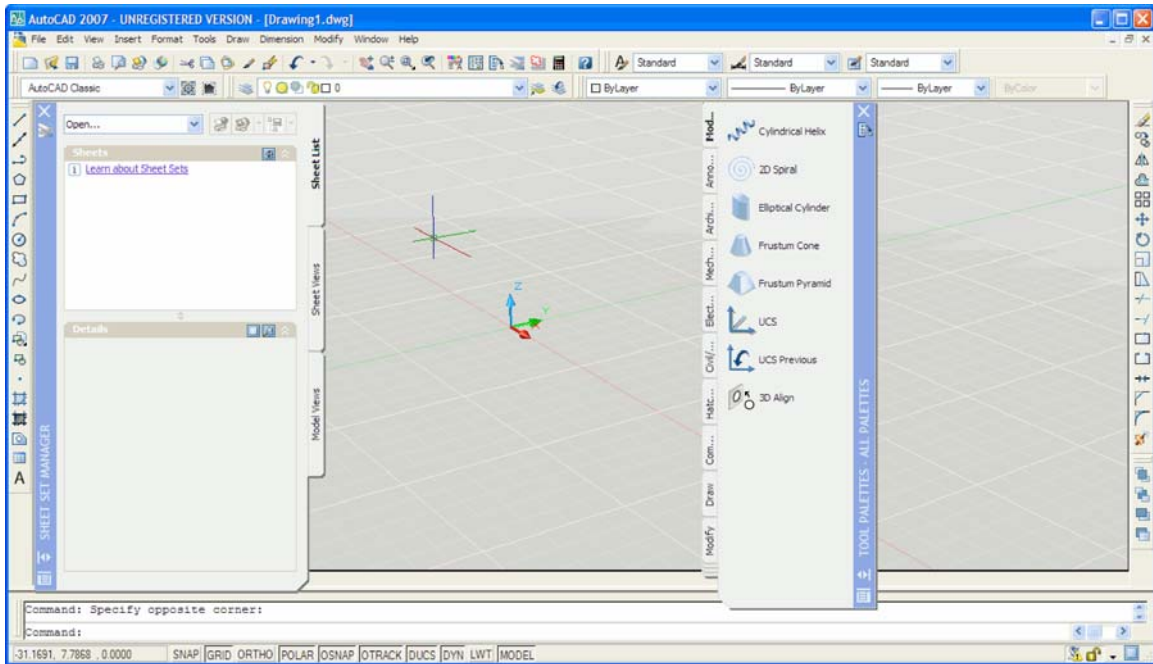
Notice also the panel on the right side of the drawing area. This is a new feature called the Dashboard. It is a special palette that contains buttons, drop-down menus, and controls for working in the current workspace. The Dashboard combines many commands into a smaller space to make access easier without sacrificing the drawing space that would be needed to display all of the individual toolbars.

The bottom portion of the Dashboard contains tabbed palettes similar to those on the Tool Palette (which appears instead of the Dashboard in the AutoCAD Classic workspace). These tabbed palettes greatly extend the usability of the Dashboard and even provide some 2D capability. To see a full list of the tabs available, right-click on any of the visible tabs.



The AutoCAD Classic Workspace

The AutoCAD Classic workspace displays only the menus and tools appropriate for 2D drafting. You may recognize the Draw and Modify toolbars, as well as the Tool Palettes and Sheet Set Manager window.

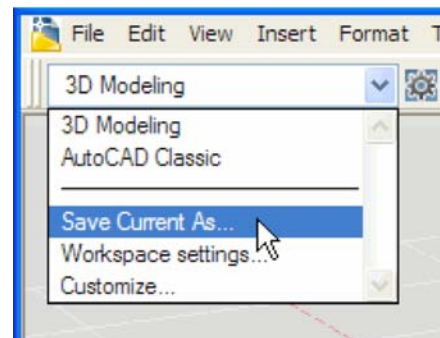


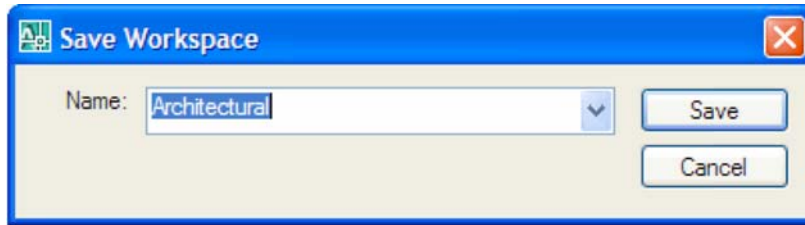
The 3D crosshairs and drawing area remain in the AutoCAD Classic workspace. This can be useful if you are drawing 2D objects to be extruded into 3D models. If you prefer the traditional top view for 2D drawing, you can select it from the View menu.

Custom Workspaces

Suppose you work mostly with architectural drawings, both 2D and 3D. Neither of the workspaces supplied with AutoCAD 2007 may be optimal for your work. AutoCAD therefore allows you to create your own custom workspaces—as many as you want to create—and set them up with the toolbars, menus, and palette items that are most useful to you in your work. Creating a new workspace is easy, and you can create it from either of the existing workspaces. Follow the steps below to create a new workspace for architectural drawings.

1. Open the toolbars and other accessories you want to include in your workspace and position them in a way that is useful to you.
2. In the Workspaces toolbar (at the upper left corner of the drawing area), pick the down arrow next to the name of the current workspace and select Save Current As....
3. In the Save Workspace dialog box, give the new workspace a descriptive name that will help you remember its purpose and pick Save.



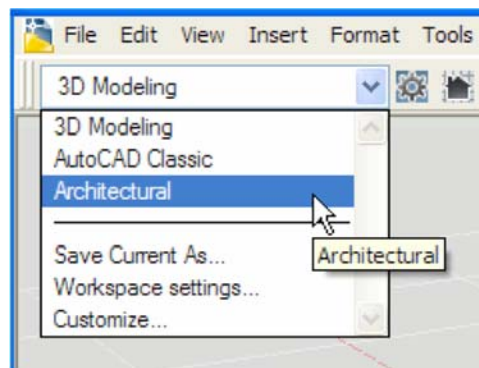


This creates the workspaces. Now, whenever you want to work on architectural drawings, you can simply switch to the Architectural workspace.

4. In the Workspaces toolbar, pick the down arrow next to the current workspace.

Notice that the new Architectural workspace you created is now included in the list of available workspaces.

5. Pick the Architectural workspace to make it the current workspace.



Since workspaces are not user-specific, anyone who uses this computer can now select the Architectural workspace to work on Architectural drawings. When used appropriately, workspaces can significantly reduce the setup time and improve productivity for everyone who uses AutoCAD.