

Introduction

Using BtoCAD is part of an integrated documentation set that includes this manual and a comprehensive collection of help resources to give you the information you need to create drawings in BtoCAD®.

This manual is organized into chapters that parallel how you work in BtoCAD, according to the tasks you might perform. Please refer the content for information that you need.

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About BtoCAD and Other CAD Software

BtoCAD is designed for anyone who wants a fast and efficient CAD program with all the power and versatility of standard programs at an affordable price. Using today's advanced technology, BtoCAD integrates the Microsoft® Windows® interface with a powerful CAD engine.

BtoCAD provides unparalleled compatibility with AutoCAD, using most of the same file formats including those for drawings (.dwg files), commands, linetypes, hatch patterns, and text styles. You can also use AutoCAD menu files and run Autodesk® AutoLISP® programs. If you have written your own ADS (Autodesk® AutoCAD Development System®) programs, simply recompile them to link with the BtoCAD libraries. Many third-party ADS programs already support BtoCAD. If you have a program that is not already supported, ask your software vendor to provide an BtoCAD-compatible version of the program.

BtoCAD is more compatible with the AutoCAD program than any other CAD product, delivers additional tools with advanced CAD features, and has a seamless Microsoft® Windows integration. This powerful program provides a superb combination of features for CAD users like architects, engineers, and designers.

BtoCAD incorporates standard features found in other CAD programs, along with features and capabilities you won't find anywhere else. Its multiple-document interface (MDI) lets you open and work with several drawings at the same time. You can easily copy drawing entities between drawings. In addition, the powerful BtoCAD Explorer lets you manage information and settings and quickly copy layers, linetypes, and other information between drawings.

Using AutoCAD legacy drawings

BtoCAD fully supports AutoCAD legacy drawings. BtoCAD reads and writes DWG files in their native format without any loss of data, from AutoCAD 2005 back to Version 11, including AutoCAD LT®. Because BtoCAD uses DWG as its native file format, no translation is required.

BtoCAD provides you with the appropriate tools for your experience level—whether you are a beginner, intermediate, or advanced CAD user. If you are just starting out with CAD, you may want to use the beginner

level, which provides toolbars containing the basic tools such as lines, arcs, and circles. As you become more experienced, you can move to the intermediate level and then to the advanced level, which gives you access to more than 300 commands through toolbars, menus, and keyboard entries. You can change the experience level in the Options dialog box on the Tools menu.

BtoCAD supports three-dimensional wireframes and surfaces. Three-dimensional drawings can be displayed in wireframe, hidden-line view, and surface shading. Some versions of BtoCAD also support creating and editing 3D solids; all versions display 3D solids, along with limited editing features.

Some versions of BtoCAD support displaying and working with raster images in your drawings. However, BtoCAD does not display images located inside of blocks and externally referenced drawings (xrefs). When a drawing containing proxy entities is loaded into BtoCAD, a message displays indicating that some entities will not display, however, the entities reappear when you open the drawing later in AutoCAD.

It's easy to customize BtoCAD. You can modify menus and toolbars, create custom menus, dialog boxes, command aliases, and scripts, and add custom programs written in any of several programming languages, including LISP (the program's Autodesk® AutoLISP-compatible language) and SDS™ (Solutions Development System™, the program's Autodesk® ADS-compatible language). There is also Microsoft® Visual Basic for Applications (VBA).

You can run existing Autodesk® AutoLISP applications in BtoCAD with little or no modification. BtoCAD uses the Appload command so you can easily load LISP programs. BtoCAD reads files that contain dialog control language (DCL) statements as well, which makes BtoCAD compatible with dialog boxes created for AutoCAD.

Using AutoCAD commands with BtoCAD

Because BtoCAD supports hundreds of AutoCAD commands, you use the commands you already know. For example, to draw a circle, use the Circle command. To copy a circle, use the Copy command.

When you press Enter or the spacebar, you activate the command—just like in AutoCAD. BtoCAD accepts the special characters used by AutoCAD, such as point filters (for example, .xy), relative coordinates (the @

symbol), and the apostrophe (the ' prefix) for transparent commands. BtoCAD function keys are also similar to those used in AutoCAD.

Because you do not need to learn a new set of commands, you are immediately productive with BtoCAD.

Comparing BtoCAD and CAD to manual drafting

BtoCAD greatly reduces the time and effort it takes to create and revise drawings. Not only can you produce accurate drawings faster, you can also reuse the information in your drawings. These are the primary reasons for making the transition to CAD from traditional, manual drafting on paper.

As with any tool, however, to use it effectively, you need to be familiar with some of the special features, functions, and concepts of CAD. If you are familiar with manual drafting, you'll find some conceptual similarities in CAD as well as some differences. Below are some typical features of drafting in BtoCAD:

- I Drawing to scale
- I Using tools
- I Organizing information
- I Drawing accurately
- I Drawing efficiently
- I Reusing CAD drawings and entities
- I Making changes
- I Working with other data and programs