

ToolPac Updates Help Increase Productivity

ToolPac by DotSoft is a program that no plumbing engineer using AutoCAD should be without. The included routines are real time savers; thus, the program most likely will pay for itself in the first month. If AutoCAD does not have a command to do something, ToolPac probably provides the function, especially for performing multiple processes.

Several updates have been made to ToolPac since I reviewed it (*PS&D* March/April 2003), and following are highlights of some of the updates.

Open a Backup File. You easily can open a drawing backup file by selecting a BAK or SV\$ file. The file is renamed a DWG file automatically.

Layers. You can rename multiple layers in multiple drawings, as well as set options such as color and linetype (see Figure 1). This is a real time saver.

Block Redefine. You can redefine multiple blocks from source files in multiple drawings (see Figure 2).

Rename. You can rename blocks, dimstyles, layers, linetypes, User Coordinate Systems (UCS), and views in multiple drawings (see Figure 3).

Recover. ToolPac allows you to recover the model space contents of many drawings that AutoCAD cannot recover.

Convert. You can batch convert drawings from multiple formats including DXF to DWG.

Figure 1 Layer Rename Screen

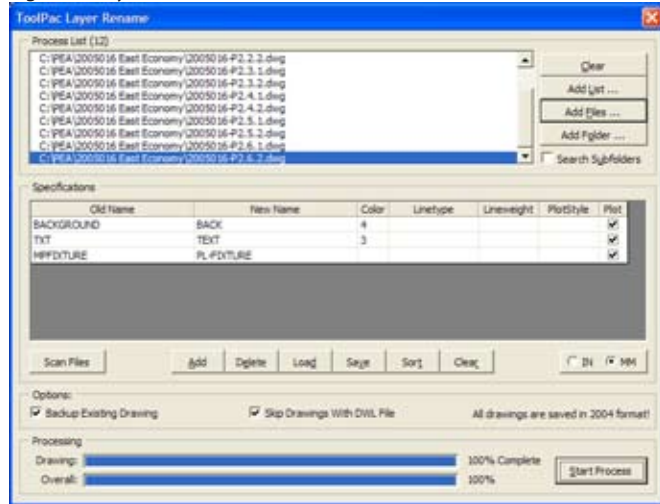


Figure 2 Redefine Blocks Screen

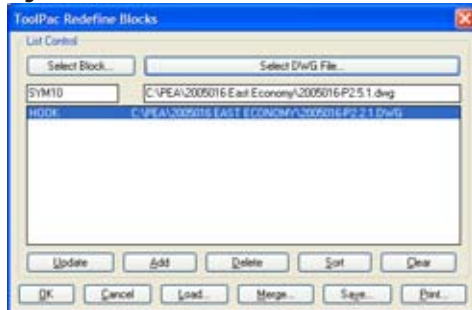


Figure 3 Rename Screen

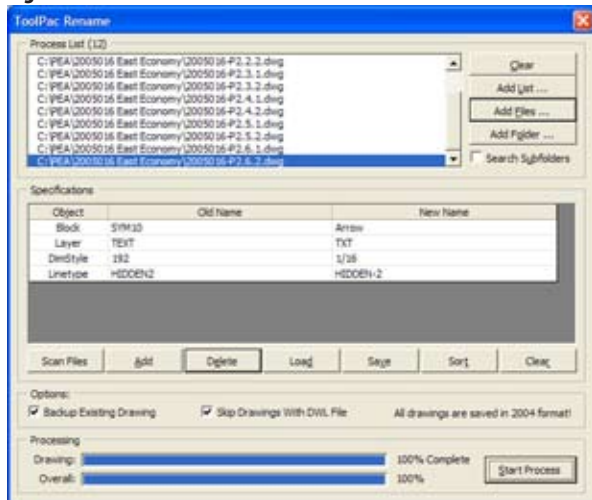


Figure 4 Layer Report Screen

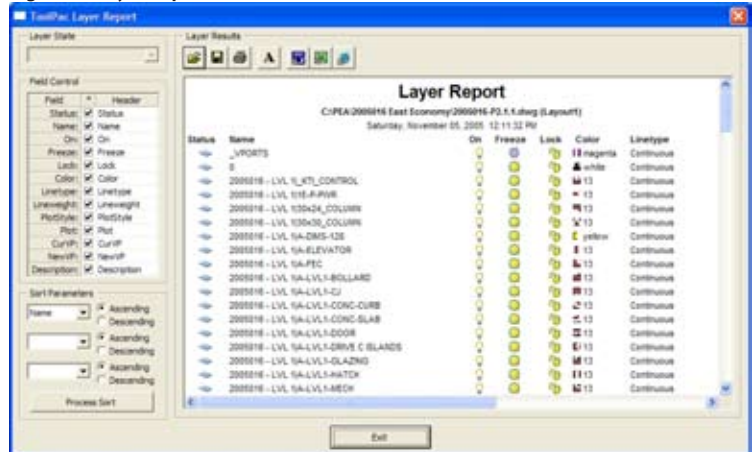
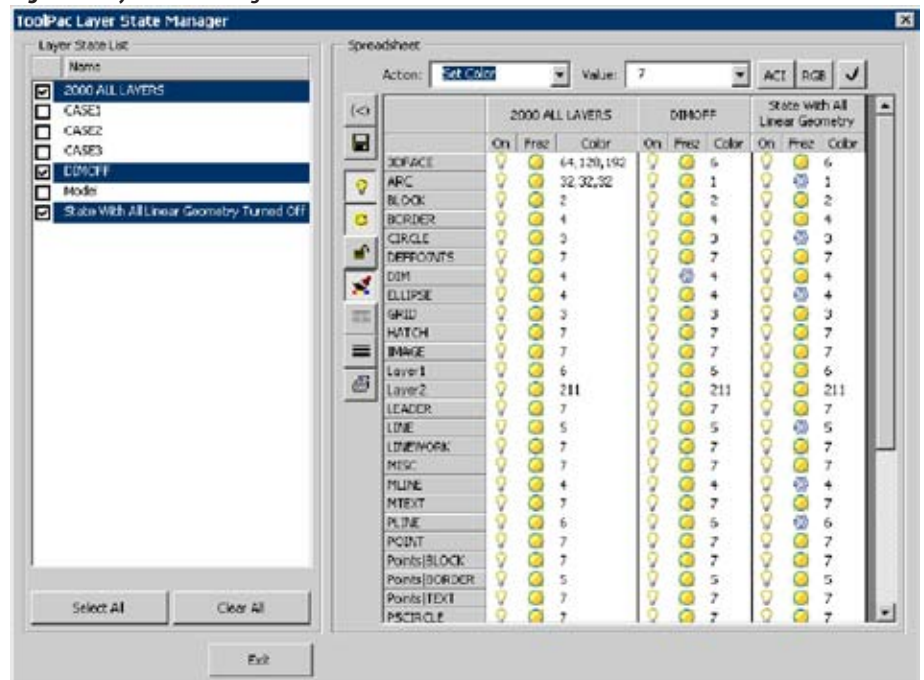


Figure 5 Layer State Manager Screen



Layer Report. You can send detailed, high-quality layer reports to Windows printers directly from AutoCAD, with no external applications or files needed (see Figure 4). ToolPac supports selectable layer states, true color, status icon, and current/new in viewport when launched from paper space. You also can sort by up to three column keys, hide columns, save and print files, and export files to Word, Excel, and HTML.

Layer State Manager. This upgrade adds a major improvement in spreadsheet options. It allows mass changes to multiple layers in multiple layer states. For example, you can set the color of multiple layers across a selection of states in only a couple clicks. It offers complete control over column visibility (see Figure 5).

Clean Up Intersections. You can clean up crossing, elbow, and tee intersections with a single pick. The program automatically detects intersection type and offers the option to automatically join effected geometry (see Figure 6).

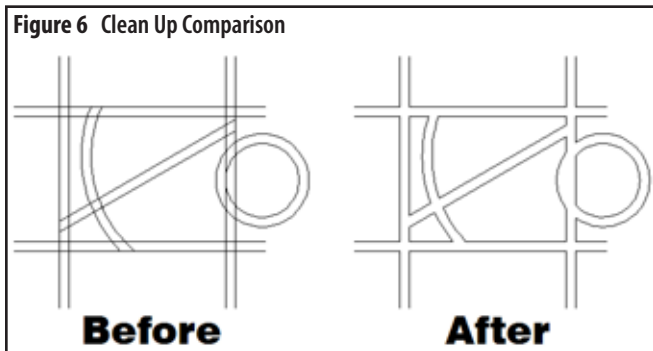


Table Tools. These are completely rewritten for AutoCAD 2005 table objects. You can download them for free from DotSoft's Web site (www.dotsoft.com).

AutoCELL. This is a system to link and push properties of objects into spreadsheets. This routine makes use of the absolute process of named cells in Excel instead of the relative cell naming approach of A1, C3, etc., which ensures that the target locations for the data will be the same when you rearrange your spreadsheet (add or subtract columns and rows). I have used this routine to size piping in an Excel spreadsheet and transfer the data to the drawing automatically.

Purge. More rigorous than AutoCAD, ToolPac aggressively purges multiple selected drawings (see Figure 7). Certain aspects of AutoCAD, such as anonymous groups and layer filters/states, can cause a drawing to grow to many times its normal size. I use

Figure 7 Drawing Purge Screen

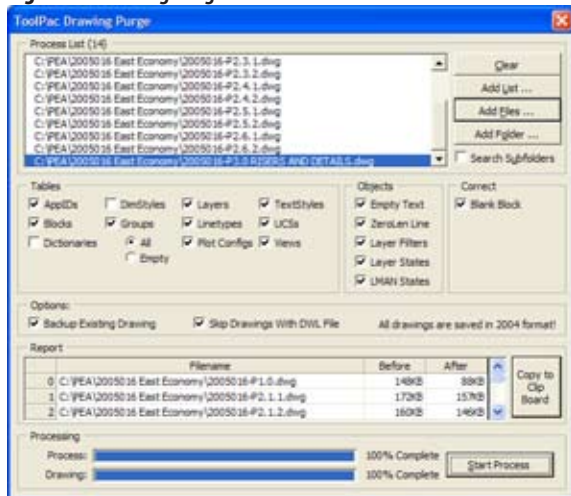


Figure 8 Block Data Extract Screen

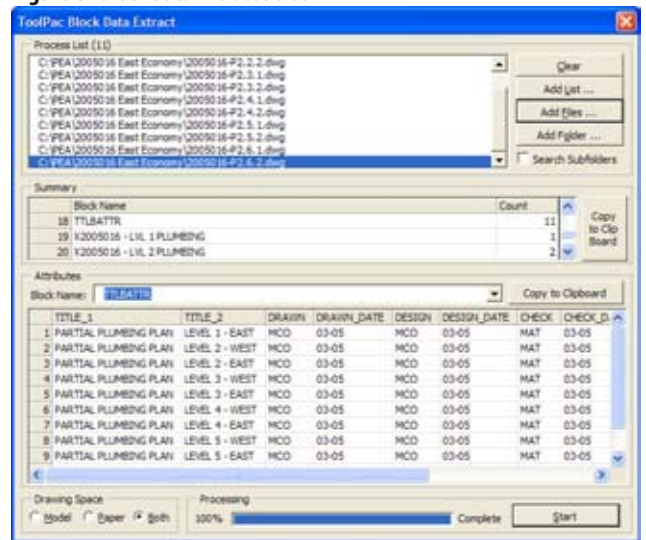


Figure 9 Symbol Table Extract Screen

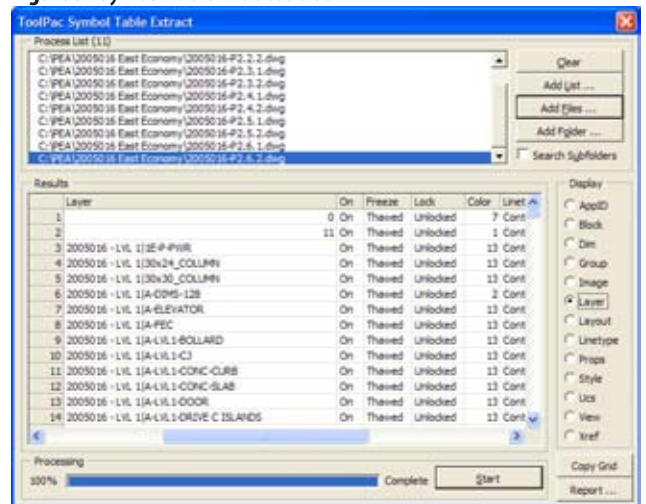
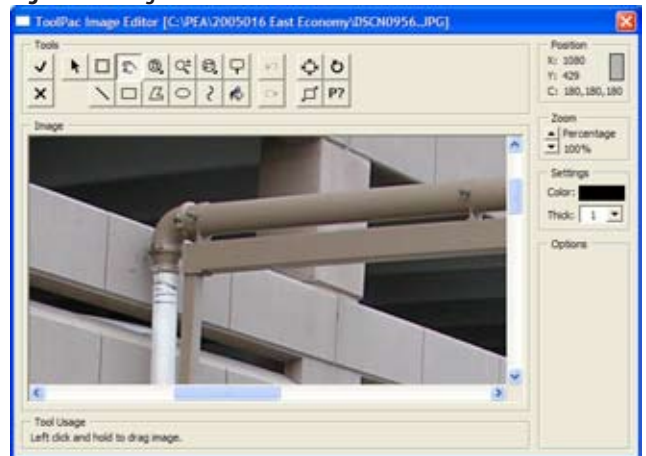


Figure 10 Image Editor Screen



this command for making our backgrounds on architect's drawings that I receive. Sometimes the drawing is reduced by more than 50 percent. This routine also corrects problems that can affect normal drawing, such as blank block errors.

Block Data Extract. The program extracts block counts and attributes from multiple selected drawings. A single click copies the results into the Windows clipboard, ready to paste into spreadsheets or databases (see Figure 8).

Figure 11 Batch Image Process Screen

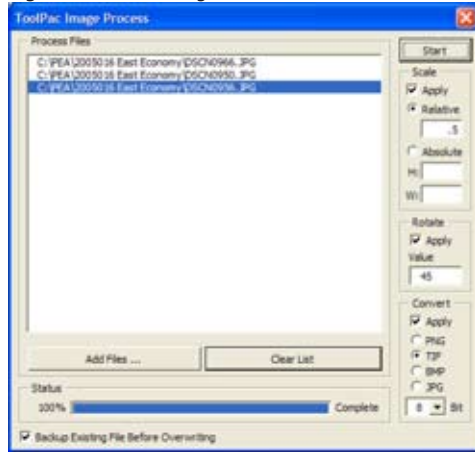


Figure 12 Layer Librarian Screen

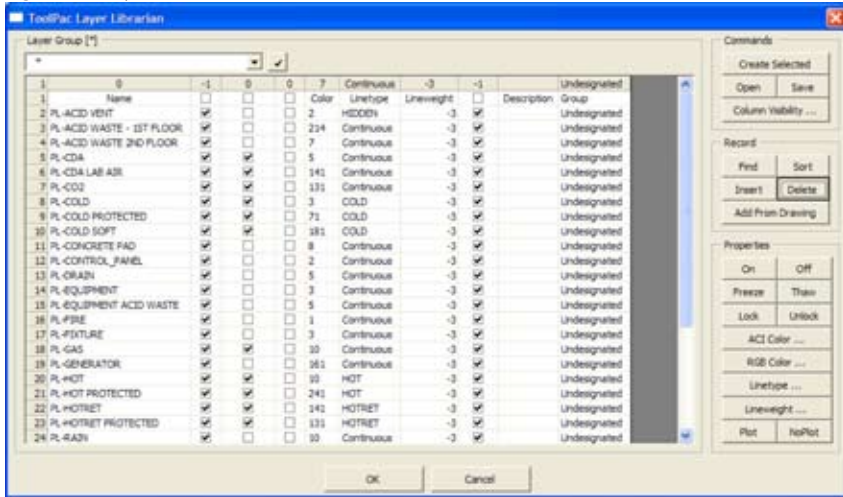


Figure 13 Used Color Report Screen

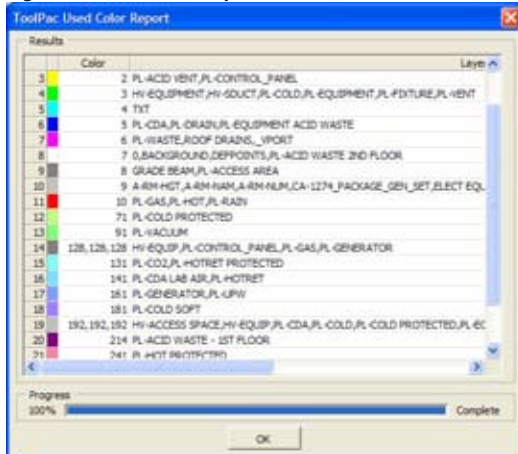
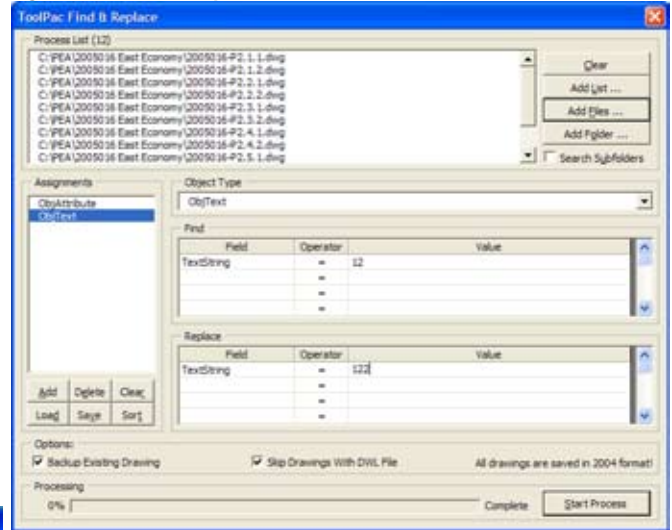


Table Extract. The program extracts symbol table information (layer, blocks, etc.) from multiple selected drawings with report and clipboard options (see Figure 9).

Image Editor. The program provides a built-in, multifunction image editor for AutoCAD (see Figure 10). No other raster software is needed. It offers quick access by allowing you to simply pick the image in the drawing; there's no need to find the file. It supports JPG, BMP, PNG, PSD, TIF, PCX, and TGA files and allows you to draw lines, rectangles, polylines, and ellipses on rasters and rotate or resize images.

Figure 14 Find and Replace Screen



Batch Process. The program provides options to scale, rotate, and convert formats on multiple image files (see Figure 11). For example, converting from most formats to PNG can save file space with no loss of image quality.

Layer Librarian. This update automates the process of creating multiple layers per standards (see Figure 12). CAD managers easily can prevent changes on group users. It includes an American Institute of Architects layer standards file.

Colors Used. This routine displays a list of colors used in the drawing and which layers contain them (see Figure 13).

Find and Replace. This routine allows you to find and replace across multiple selected drawings by specifying multiple parameters to be considered found and multiple values to replace. A simple dialog makes it easy to set up.

For example, in Figure 14 the assignment tells the program to find all circles having a radius between 0.69 and 0.71 and then change their radius, color, layer, and linetype.

My favorite portion of ToolPac remains Symbol Manager, which I use to manage and insert blocks into drawings. These are only a few of the enhancements contained in the latest version. Much more is included in ToolPac that will boost your productivity. **PSD**



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