



“Wow, UK Localisation for AutoCAD Architecture 2008”.

(The software formerly known as ..... ADT)

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Paul Oakley (Oakley CAD Services Ltd)

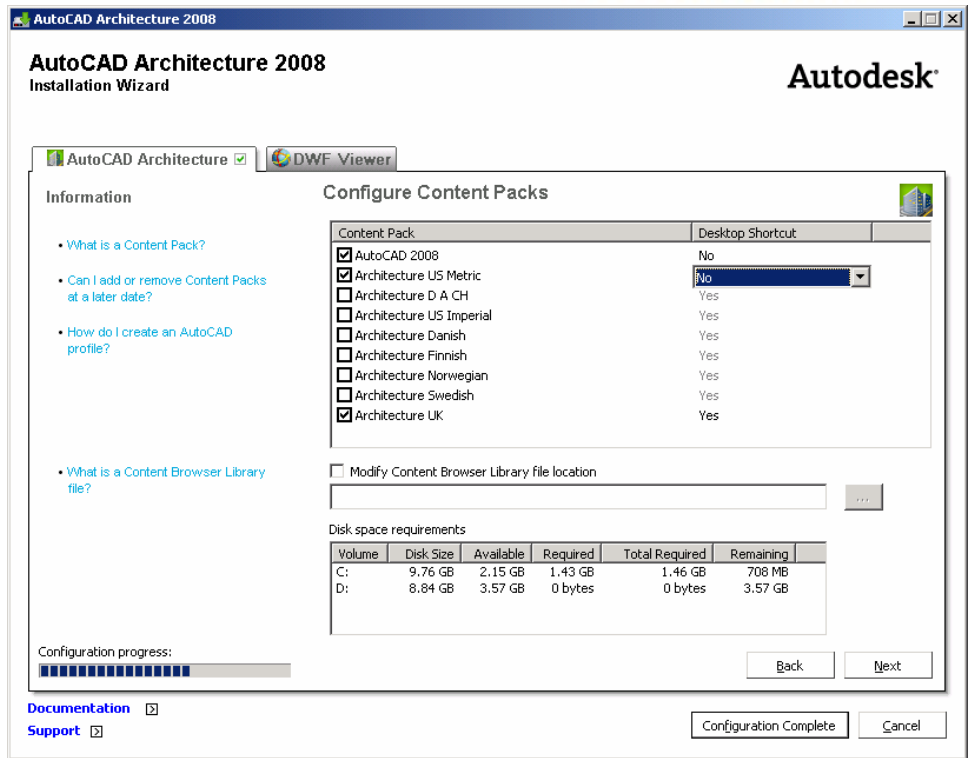
*Paul Oakley is Director of Oakley-CAD Services Ltd and has 20 years' extensive experience within the AEC industry, working as both architect and CAD manager for major Architectural practices such as Broadway Malyan and PRP Architects before starting his own CAD management consultancy. As a consultant he has provided services to clients ranging from Autodesk to individual Architectural practices. Paul runs CAD management, bespoke AutoCAD and ADT training courses and has also presented at major conferences, plus featuring in industry press. Paul has been involved within the development of ADT with Autodesk for several years and chairs the technical forum for the ADT Community group. He has also been involved in various industry led Building Information Modelling initiatives, such as Teamwork and more recently Avanti.*

The beginning of April sees my favourite time of year. Winter is starting to disappear into spring, British Summer time means those lighter evenings, trout fishing once again starts to beckon on rivers and reservoirs, plus we get to play with Autodesk's new product releases.

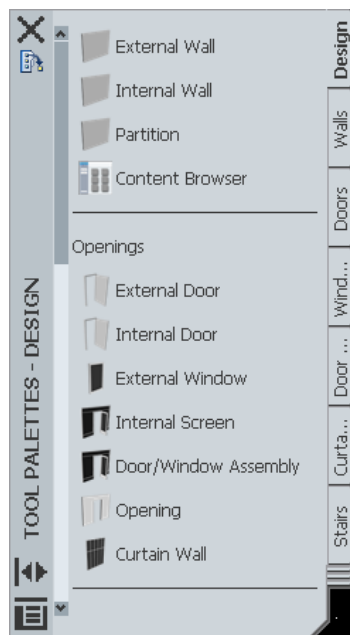
I expectantly install the new version hoping that Autodesk have finally included the “complete Building Wizard” or “mind controlled BIM” always to be disappointed, but there is usually something to go “wow” at or “that's cool” to feed my expectation. Since Autodesk introduced subscription and switched to annual releases the “Wow factor” seems to have slowly disappeared out of each new release. Gone are the days when the latest feature meant that we could now design something we could not before. This is an obvious sign that the products are maturing and each release now seems to be mainly a case of “better, quicker and easier”.

With the launch of the 2008 product range Autodesk have rebranded their product names. The Desktop ranges of products have all been brought under the AutoCAD banner to differentiate from products such as Revit and Inventor. AutoCAD Architecture 2008 is the new name for the software “formerly known as” Architectural Desktop or ADT.

Localisation is one aspect of the software that has been missing and this will be the “Wow” factor in for many users in AutoCAD Architecture 2008. Finally the “out of the box” product will install a UK shortcut, UK profile, UK CUI, UK worksheets and UK palettes, looking at the UK styles drawings. However, as with “Express Tools” the “custom” installation type must be chosen, then the content packs need to be configured and hidden down the bottom, the “Architecture UK” option must be selected. It is also possible to unselect the “US Imperial” content from installing. However, as the scheduling etc uses the “US Metric” content this must be installed. I would also suggest turning off the “US Desktop Shortcut” by changing the “yes” option to “no”.



For the single users or smaller practice this means that AutoCAD Architecture 2008 can be installed and they can just start using it. The AutoCAD Draw and Modify menus have been included as default. No American wall styles with CMUs and GWB's or Concrete Masonry Units and Gypsum Wall Board for the uninitiated. Workspaces have been configured to match the UK palette groups and UK specific palettes for walls, doors, windows and other styles are available as default.

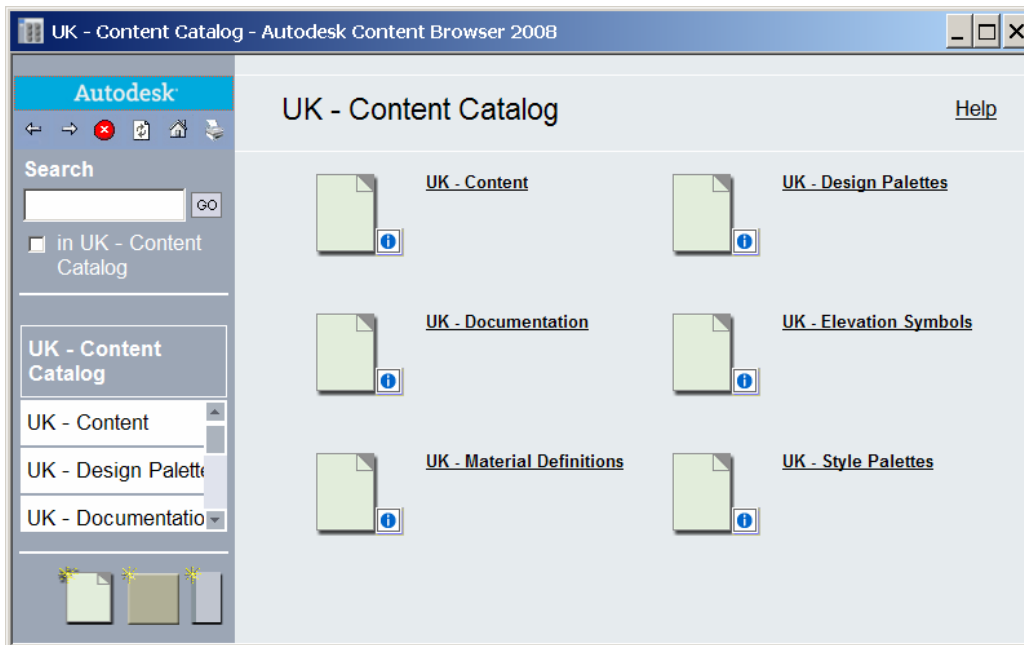




Draw a cavity wall and insert a door. A cavity closer appears in the wall. The ability to have external walls, internal walls and partitions, where these are automatically drawn on different layers takes us back to the glory days of AutoCAD AEC. The sizes of doors and windows etc also relate to UK manufacturers and UK brick sizes plus the keynotes actually use the NBS references.

My biggest gripe with the older versions of ADT was that the UK localisation was minimal and although it did exist you had to dig down into the depths of the Style folders, where many users were unaware of its existence. Also the content could not be plotted correctly due to issues with the pen weights and the colours used. With ADT 2007 Autodesk spent a lot of effort in updating the UK content and also bringing the standards in line with the CPIC Production Information guide. The styles were also modified to allow plotting with either STB or CTB and ensuring that these could at least produce a readable print. This is illustrated by the creation of Layouts within the UK style drawings providing samples of the content created plus linkwork, sub component etc to support how it was created. However, the majority of this content remained hidden as the catalogs with Palettes etc was only made available to subscription Users.

The new UK Content Catalog, as well as including the default palettes and additional styles, also includes some additional 2D elevation symbols that were previously only available with the content creation tools for subscription customers. These have now been converted to Dynamic blocks and a flip attached to aid the use of these. Autodesk UK has assured me that the content creation tools will again be made available for those users under subscription for the 2008 product.



Having personally customised many versions of ADT for practices from six to several hundred users the complexity of this was never a specific issue for me. For each release I would update all the styles drawings, create my customised menus or CUIs, updated the catalog and palettes plus implement any new features as required. It was the hours going



through display configurations resolving changes and then the display reps in hundreds of styles that was the least pleasurable of these tasks.

The advantage of a UK specific install is that I don't have to spend days doing this. A few tweaks in the CUI, the inclusion of my additional style drawings and I am ready to role the software out. My Clients can have an installation that works the way that they expect it to work within days or even hours and can then just get on with using the software.

So what's the "wow factor" in AutoCAD Architecture for me. It's the fact that I can spend April taking advantage of those lighter evenings and hopefully getting out pursuing those beckoning trout.

**Paul Oakley is Director of Oakley CAD Services Ltd and Vice Chair for the Board of Directors for the UK Chapter of AUGI.**