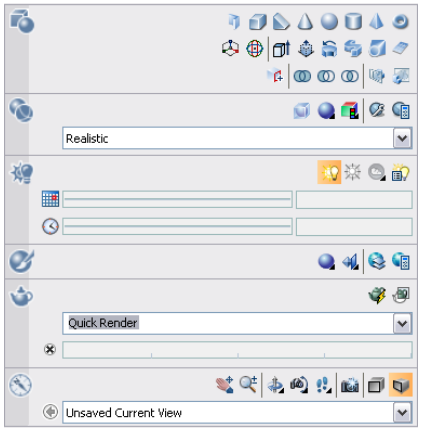
Contents

Operating a Dashboard

Operating a Dashboard in AutoCAD



The dashboard is a special palette that displays buttons and controls that are associated with a task-based workspace.

This tutorial outlines the procedures involved in doing the following:

- Operating a dashboard to maximize the area available for work.
- Using a single interface for speed and convenience.

In this chapter

Audience: AutoCAD users new to the AutoCAD 2008 dashboard

Prerequisites: None

Time to complete: 20 minutes

Usage Scenario

John Cad and Partners have entered into an agreement with Nashua High School to design the layout of the school campus in New Hampshire.

Problem: John Cad and Partners have to present the school layout in 3D complete with lighting and rendering. They will customize the dashboard to provide a single interface element for operations that are relevant to the current workspace.

Solution: John Cad and Partners can use the following functionalities in AutoCAD to solve their problem.

a Organize the dashboard.

b Create a panel to customize the dashboard.

Tutorial Files

All the necessary files for this tutorial can be found in http://www.autodesk.com/autocad-tutorials.

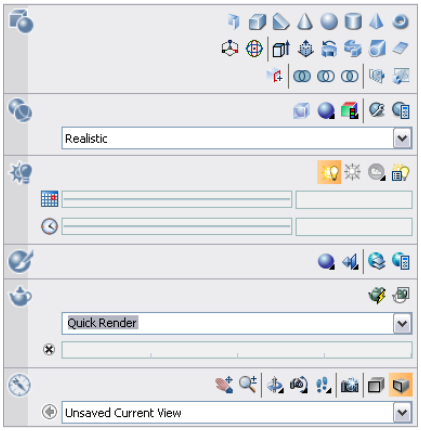
Recommended: Before starting the tutorial:

1. Download the *operating_dashboard.zip* file from http://www.autodesk.com/autocad-tutorials.
2. Unzip *operating_dashboard.zip* file to C:\My Documents\Tutorials.

In This Tutorial

Lesson 1: Organizing the Dashboard

Organizing a dashboard



In this lesson, you will help John Cad and Partners organize the dashboard to display the tools needed to create the layout of the school.

File Name: *conference_room.dwg*

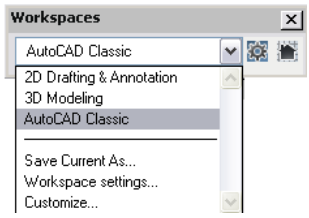
Commands used: *DASHBOARD*

Concept: Organizing the dashboard allows you to display only the buttons and controls that are relevant to the current workspace. Thus, the dashboard eliminates the need to display a lot of toolbars and reduces the clutter in the application window.

Display the dashboard

1. Click Start menu (Windows) ➤ Programs ➤ Autodesk ➤ AutoCAD 2008 ➤ AutoCAD 2008 .
2. On the Workspaces toolbar, select AutoCAD Classic.

   Alternatively, click Tools menu ➤ Workspaces ➤ AutoCAD Classic.



NOTE This step is important as AutoCAD clears and re-initializes the toolbars, and palettes values.

The relevant toolbars and panels — applicable to AutoCAD Classic — appear.

3 Click the Close icon to close the Palettes window.

4 Click File ➤ Open.

5 Navigate to C:\My Documents\Tutorials, and click *conference_room.dwg*. Click ➤ Open.

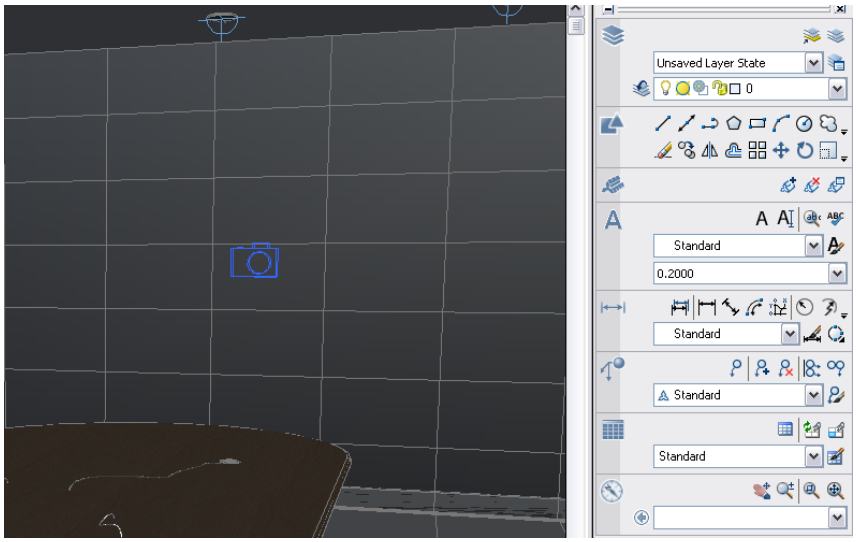
The conference_room.dwg drawing appears.

You will open the dashboard to customize the Control Panels.

6 Click Tools ➤ Palettes ➤ Dashboard.

Alternatively, enter *DASHBOARD* at the command prompt.

The Dashboard panel appears. It is anchored to the right side of the AutoCAD window by default.



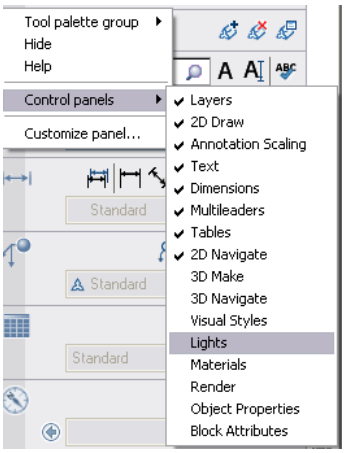
Display or hide a control panel

Selecting only the control panels that you will use will minimize the clutter and give you only the tools that you need to work with.

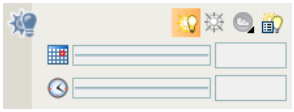
You will help John Cad and Partner by displaying the Lights and hiding the Text control panels.

1 Right-click anywhere inside the Dashboard. Click Control panels menu ➤ Lights to select the Lights panel.

NOTE If a panel is already selected (contains a tick mark), clicking the panel name again will clear the panel.

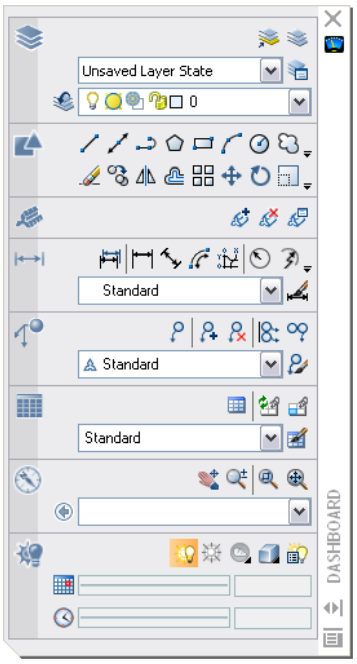


The Lights panel appears.



2 Right-click anywhere inside the Dashboard. Click Control panels menu ➤ Text to clear the panel.

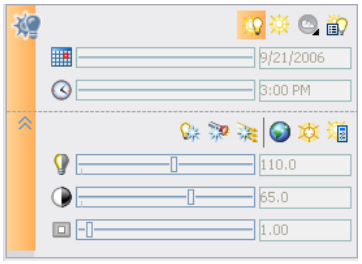
The dashboard should now display the additional Lights and hide the Text control panels.



Display a slide-out panel

You will now help John Cad and Partners view additional tools and controls contained in the Lights control panel.

1 Click the Lights icon on the left side of the dashboard to view additional tools and controls available.



NOTE An open slide-out panel closes automatically when you click another control panel icon. Only one slide-out panel is displayed at a time.

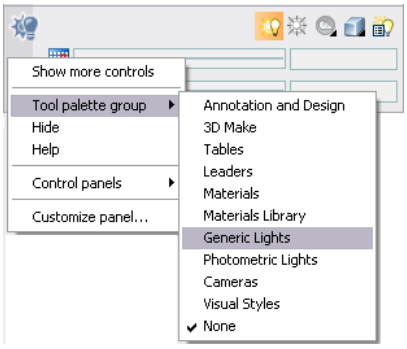
Associate a tool palette group with a control panel

John Cad and Partners need to associate the tool palette group with the Lights control panel.

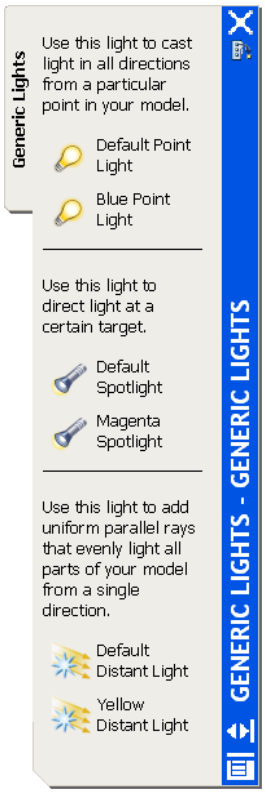
When a tool palette is associated with a control panel, clicking the control palette icon will cause the associated tool palette to display.

Now you will associate the Generic Lights tool palette group with the Lights control panel.

1. Right-click the Lights control panel on the dashboard. Click Tool palette group menu ➤ Generic Lights.



2. Click the Lights icon  to view the Generic Lights palette (the associated tool palette for Lights).



Congratulations! You have helped John Cad and Partners organize the dashboard to maximize the work area.

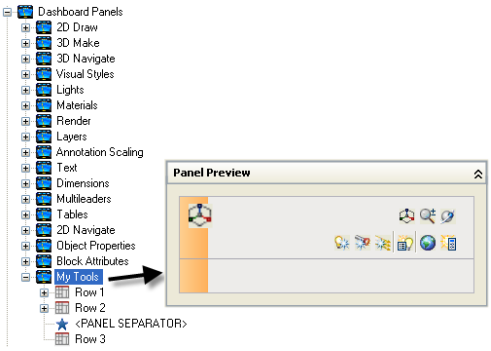
Summary: In this lesson, you learned to manage the display of the dashboard on your workspace by doing the following:

- Display the dashboard (page 4)
- Display or hide a control panel (page 6)
- Display a slide-out panel (page 8)
- Associate a tool palette group with a control panel (page 9)

Next Lesson: Lesson 2: Creating a Dashboard Panel (page 11)

Lesson 2: Creating a Dashboard Panel

Create a dashboard panel



In this lesson, you will help John Cad and Partners display commonly used commands on the dashboard.

File Name: *conference_room.dwg*

Commands used: *DASHBOARD*, *CUI*

Concept: Dashboard customization helps you to organize frequently used commands on panels that are similar to toolbars.

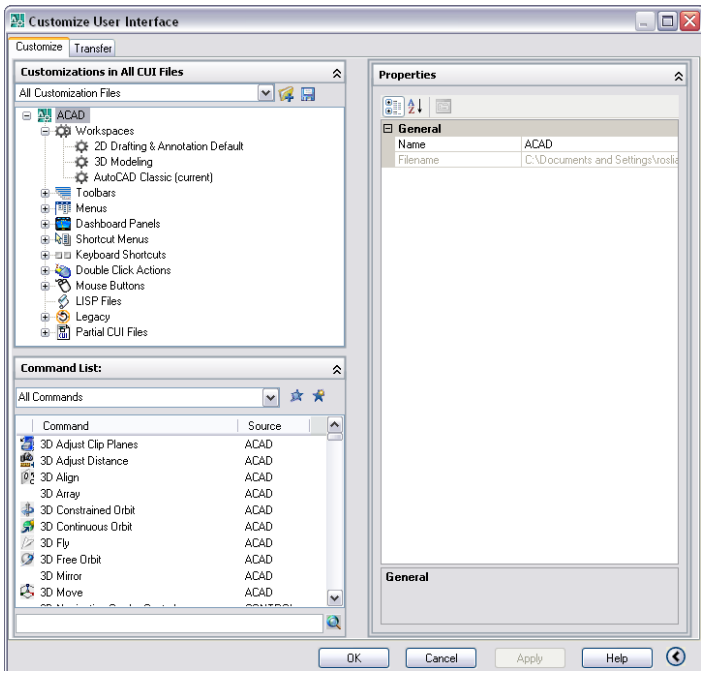
Panels allow you to quickly access commands, and help you to reduce the number of user interface elements.

Create a dashboard panel

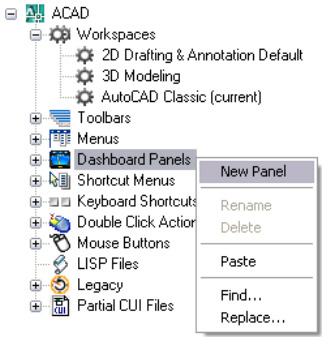
1. Ensure that you have conference_room.dwg drawing open.
2. Click Tools menu ➤ Customize ➤ Interface.

   Alternatively, enter *CUI* at the command prompt.

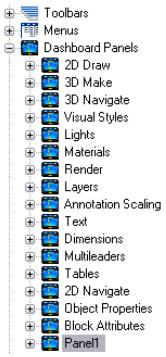
   The Customize User Interface dialog box appears.



3 In the Customize tab, right-click Dashboard Panels. Click New Panel.

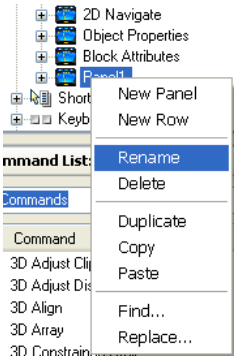


4 You should see Panel1 (default name) displayed at the end of the current panel list.



5 Enter *My Tools* as the new panel name, and press Enter.

Alternatively, right-click Panel1. Click Rename, and enter *My Tools.*



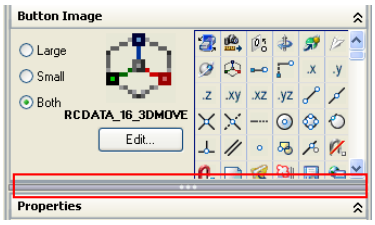
6 Click My Tools to select it.

7 Ensure that the Properties pane is visible.

If the Properties pane is not visible, do either of the following:

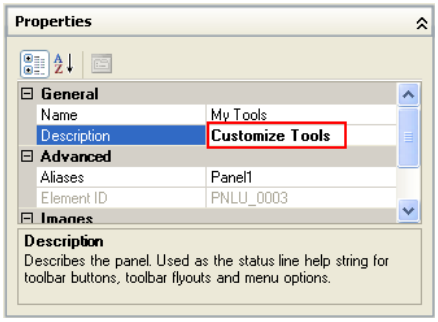
- Click the arrow keys to make it visible.

- Click and drag the dividing bar below the Button Image pane to expand the Properties pane.

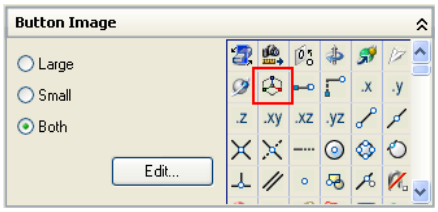


8 In the Properties pane, double-click the Description box, and enter *Customize Tools* as the value.

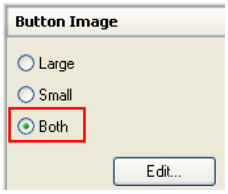
You will now associate a button image with the new My Tools palette.



9 In the Button Image pane, click to select the following button from the image list:



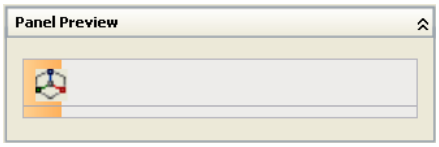
10 Ensure Both is selected in the Button Image pane.



11 Click Apply.

The new icon and the My Tools panel have been added to the dashboard in the background.

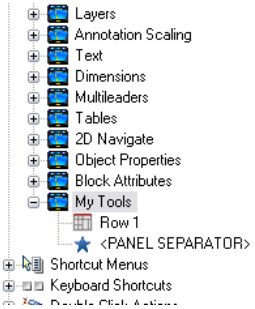
The Panel preview pane should display the icon.



Add a command to a dashboard panel in the Customizations pane

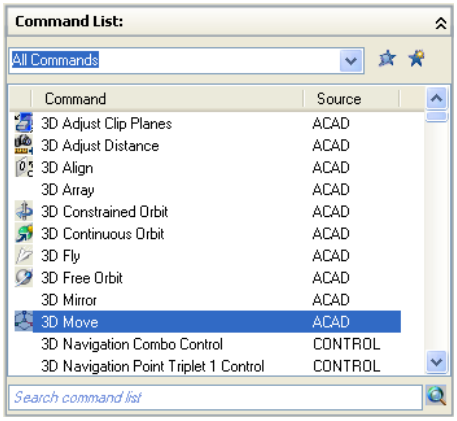
You will assist John Cad and Partners to add commands that are frequently used to the My Tools panel.

1. Ensure that you are in the Customize User Interface dialog box with My Tools selected.



2. Click the plus sign (+) next to My Tools to expand it.

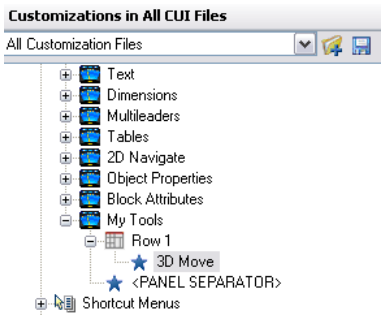
3. In the Command List pane, ensure that All Commands is selected in the Categories drop-down list box.



The Command List pane now displays all the available commands.

4 Drag the 3D Move command from the Command List pane to Row 1 in My Tools.

NOTE You can control where you place the command by releasing the mouse button when the black vertical splitter bar is displayed in the location you want.



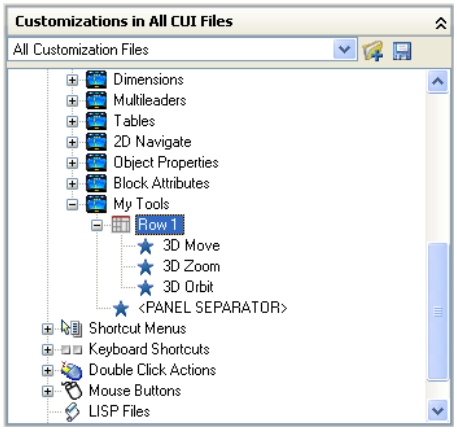
The added command is displayed under Row 1.

5 Scroll down to 3D Orbit in the Command list.

6 Press the Ctrl key; and select 3D Orbit and 3D Zoom.

NOTE Pressing the CTRL key while selecting the commands allows more than 1 item to be added simultaneously.

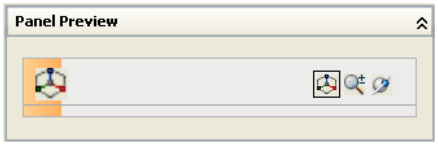
7 Drag the two commands to Row 1 in My Tools.



8 Click Apply.

9 Click Row 1.

The Panel Preview pane should display the newly added commands.



Add a row to a dashboard panel based on a toolbar

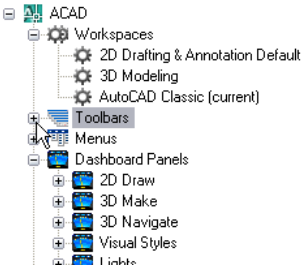
You will help John Cad and Partners control the placement of the tools that are displayed on the dashboard.

Rows can be created by dragging toolbars above or below the panel separator.

1 Ensure that you are in the Customize User Interface dialog box with My Tools selected.

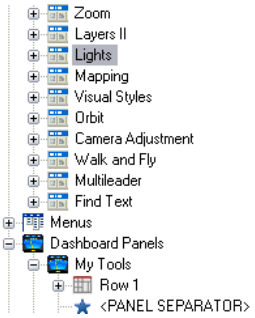
2 Scroll up to Toolbars.

3 Click the plus sign (+) next to Toolbars to expand it.

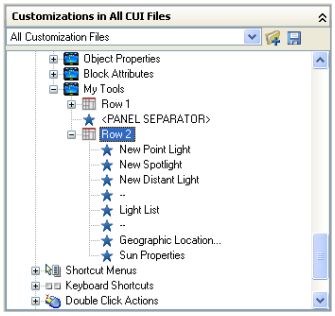


Scroll down to the Lights toolbar.

4 Click and drag the Lights toolbar node to My Tools after the panel separator.

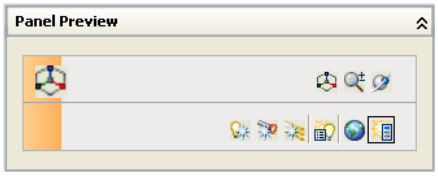


You will now see a row created (Row 2) containing the elements of the Lights toolbar.



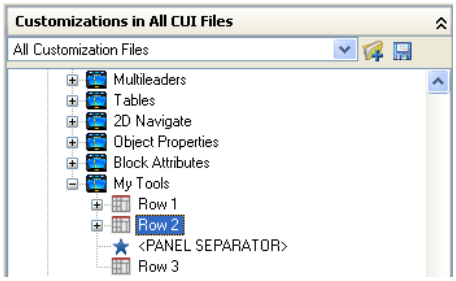
5 Click Apply.

You should see the icons for the selected toolbar included in My Tools.



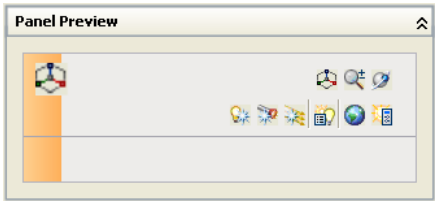
Reposition a row on a dashboard panel

1. Ensure that you are in the Customize User Interface dialog box with My Tools selected.
2. Click and drag Row 2 above the <PANEL SEPARATOR> to reposition. Use the splitter bar as a visual indicator.



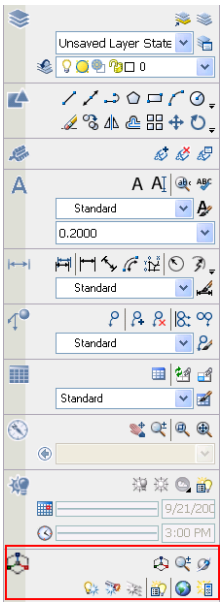
3. Click Apply.

   The Panel Preview pane should display the updates.



4. Click OK.

Congratulations! You have helped John Cad and Partners create a dashboard panel customized to their needs.



Summary: In this lesson, you learned to customize the dashboard to organize the commands frequently used with easy access by doing the following:

- Create a dashboard panel (page 11)
- Add a command to a dashboard panel in the Customizations pane (page 15)
- Add a row to a dashboard panel based on a toolbar (page 17)
- Reposition a row on a dashboard panel (page 19)

To learn more about dashboard and customizing the user interface, refer to AutoCAD help for more information.

See also:

- The Dashboard
- Customize the User Interface

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