

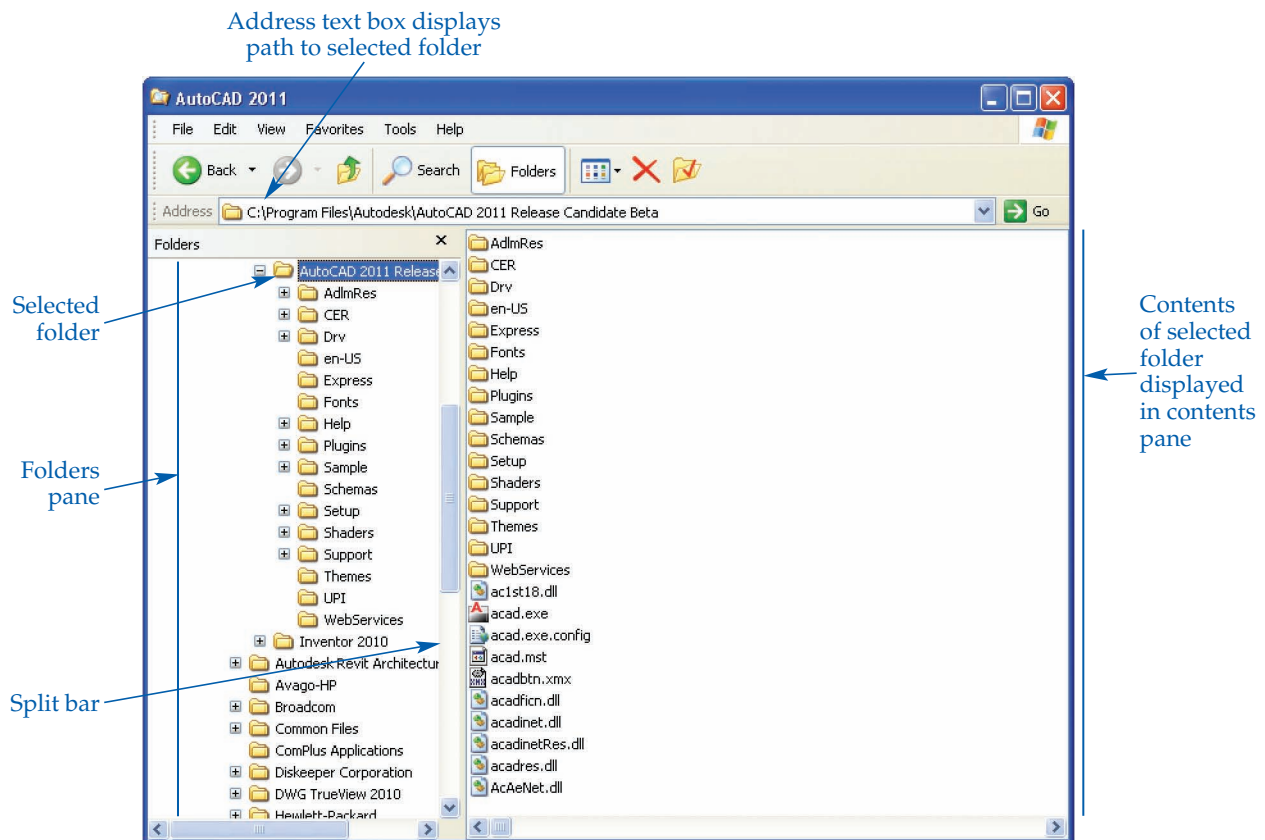
Windows Explorer

Windows Explorer, shown in **Figure 2A-1**, allows you to display and manage folders and files. To activate Windows Explorer, right-click on the Windows Start button and select **Explore** from the shortcut menu. This supplement focuses on Windows Explorer provided with Windows XP. The material applies to other Windows operating systems, but will function and look slightly different.

The Windows Explorer Interface

The Windows Explorer interface includes a title bar, pull-down menu bar, standard toolbar, Address text box, Links bar, folders pane, contents pane, and

Figure 2A-1. The folders pane of Windows Explorer displays the folder tree. The contents pane displays the files and subfolders within the item selected in the folders pane.




status bar. The Links bar is not active by default. Activate Windows Explorer tools using the pull-down menu, toolbar, shortcut menus, or keyboard keys. **Figure 2A-2** provides quick identification of the default items on the toolbar. Toggle the toolbar display on and off by selecting an option from the Toolbars cascading menu of the View pull-down menu. A check mark next to a toolbar name indicates that it is active. You can add tools to the toolbar by selecting **Customize...** from the Toolbars cascading menu in the View pull-down menu.

Windows Explorer displays the contents of each drive in a tree, or graphic representation of folders and files. See **Figure 2A-1**. A vertical split bar divides Windows Explorer in half. The folders pane is the left half of the window and the contents pane is the right half. You can drag the split bar to the left or right to display more or less of the contents in each side of the window. Icons help to identify items as drives, folders, or files.

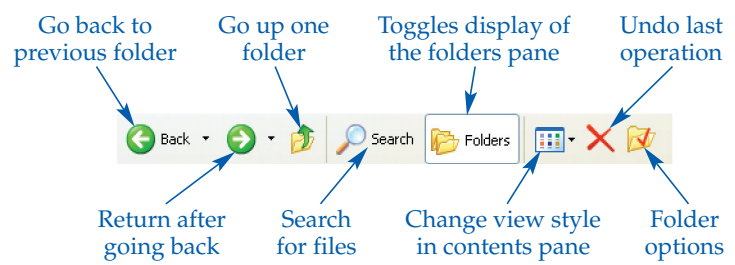
A small box containing a + or - symbol may precede device and folder icons in the folders pane. The + indicates that the folder contains additional folders, or subfolders. Pick the + symbol to expand the tree to display the next level of folders. Pick the - symbol to collapse, or hide, the display of subfolders. To display the contents of a folders pane item in the contents pane, pick the icon once. You must double-click folders in the contents pane to open them. An open folder automatically closes when you select and open a new folder.

PROFESSIONAL TIP



When you expand the folder tree to several levels, you can quickly back up to the previous level or branch by picking the Back button or pressing the [Backspace] key.

Figure 2A-2. Many file management options are available in the Windows Explorer toolbar.



You can adjust the display of items in the content pane by selecting an option from the View pull-down menu or Views flyout, or by right-clicking on any open area of the contents pane. The **Thumbnails** option displays icons for files and folders in large format. If a folder contains graphics files, thumbnail images of those files appear on the folder icon. The **Tiles** option displays each folder or file icon in a large format with the file name and selected information below it. Pick **Icons** to display each folder and file icon in medium-size format with the folder or file name beneath it. Select **List** to represent files and folders with small icons with file names to the right. Files that do not fit in the first column appear in additional columns to the right. Use the horizontal scroll bar to display them. The **Details** method displays folders and files as a single column of small icons, with the file name, size, type, and the date and time the file was last modified listed to the right of each icon.



NOTE

You can move, resize, close, and minimize Windows Explorer as you do other Windows applications.



PROFESSIONAL TIP

Windows makes extensive use of shortcut menus. Practice right-clicking inside windows and dialog boxes or when selecting folders and files. You will find that this method can speed up many operations.

Selecting and Arranging Contents

When performing functions such as copying, moving, renaming, and deleting, it is first necessary to select one or more files. Pick to select a single file. To select a group of files listed together, pick a point that does not highlight a file, and then hold and drag the cursor to highlight the files to select. Release the pick button to complete the selection. To select a series of consecutive files

within a list, pick the first file to select, hold [Shift], and then pick the last file to select. All files between the two selected files become highlighted. To select more than one nonconsecutive file within a list, pick the first file, hold down [Ctrl], and pick the other files. Use the arrow keys to locate and highlight a single file. This selection method also supports [Ctrl] and [Shift] combinations.

Selecting Multiple Groups of Folders and Files

Apply the following steps to select two or more *groups* of consecutive files:

1. Pick the first item in the first group then hold [Shift] and pick the last item in the group.
2. Press [Ctrl] and select the first item in the second group.
3. Press [Ctrl]+[Shift] and pick the last item in the group to select the second group.
4. Press [Ctrl] and select the first item in the third group.
5. Press [Ctrl]+[Shift] and pick the last item in the group to select the third group.
6. Continue in this manner until you have selected all groups.

Use the following technique if the files or folders you need to select outnumber those that will remain unselected:

1. Pick **Select All** from the **Edit** pull-down menu or press [Ctrl]+[A] to select all folders and files in the current drive or folder.
2. Deselect the items you do not want to be part of the selected group by holding down [Ctrl] and picking the item(s) to remove.

The following is a good method to use if only a few files or folders are to remain unselected:

1. Select only the files that are not to be acted on.
2. Pick **Invert Selection** from the **Edit** pull-down menu to deselect the items you picked and select all remaining items.



PROFESSIONAL TIP

The status bar at the bottom of Windows Explorer displays the number of objects selected and the total number of bytes in the selected items. Check the status bar when selecting files to copy to storage media. You can quickly see if the total file size exceeds the storage capacity of the media.

Arranging Folder and File Icons

Once you select the display that suits your needs, you can quickly arrange the icons using one of four methods available from the **Arrange Icons by** menu of the **View** pull-down menu. The **Name** method displays folders and files alphabetically, with folders listed first. The **Size** option lists folders first, and then displays files from smallest number of bytes to largest. The **Type** method organizes files by file type. Folders appear first, and then files appear alphabetically according to the three-letter file extension. The **Modified** option organizes files by the date they were last modified.

When displaying icons in the thumbnail, tiles, or icon format, you can choose to move contents manually, or you can use the default **Auto Arrange** option to arrange icons in rows and columns automatically. To toggle **Auto Arrange** on and off, select **Auto Arrange** from the **Arrange Icons by** cascading menu of the **View** pull-down menu. A check mark means the option is active. When **Auto Arrange** is off, you can freely pick and drag icons to new locations.

If your arrangement gets too confusing, you can align icons into the nearest rows and columns by picking **Align to Grid** in the **Arrange Icons by** cascading menu. This option does not produce the compact arrangement **Auto Arrange** provides; it moves icons to the nearest row and column. Gaps may remain in the arrangement.

The **Show in Groups** option in the **Arrange Icons by** cascading menu arranges the icons in groups, labeled according to the criteria used to sort the files. For example, if you select the **Size** viewing option, the group labels might be **Tiny**, **Small**, **Medium**, and **Large**. If you select the **Modified** viewing option, the groups labels might be **Today**, **Yesterday**, **Earlier this year**, **Two years ago**, and **A long time ago**.

NOTE



When the **Details** option is active, you can automatically reverse the list order by picking any one of the column headings in the contents pane. For example, pick **Size** to display files first from largest to smallest, followed by the folders. Pick **Size** again to return to the default display of folders first, and then files from smallest to largest. Test this feature by picking each column heading.

Launching Applications with Windows Explorer

Many of the files that appear in Windows Explorer are associated with application programs. Double-click on the file icon or name to load the file and simultaneously start the application with which it is associated. For example, double-click on a drawing file to load AutoCAD, if it is not already running, and open the drawing.

File Management with Windows Explorer

Windows Explorer is an effective means of managing folders and files. For example, you can rename, copy, delete, and move files from within Explorer.

Moving Folders and Files

One option to move folders and files is to highlight the folders or files to move and press [Ctrl]+[X] to move the selection to the Windows Clipboard. Then navigate to the folder in which you want to place the items and press [Ctrl]+[V] to paste them into the folder. If you use this method, the file and folder icons are shadowed in the original folder, but do not disappear until you complete the paste operation. If you cancel before you paste, the items remain in the original location.

The second method is to open two instances of Windows Explorer. In one window, navigate to the current location of the files and folders to be moved. In the other window, navigate to the folder in which you want to place the files and

folders. Highlight the files and folders to be moved in the first window. Then drag the files and folders to the other window.

Copying Folders and Files

One option to copy folders and files is to highlight the folders or files and press [Ctrl]+[C] to copy the selection to the Windows Clipboard. Then navigate to the folder in which you want to place the copies and press [Ctrl]+[V] to paste them into the folder.

The second method is to open two instances of Windows Explorer. In one window, navigate to the current location of the files and folders to be copied. In the other window, navigate to the folder in which you want to place the copies. Highlight the files and folders to be copied in the first window. Then hold down [Ctrl] and drag the files and folders to the other window.



NOTE

Be sure to hold down [Ctrl] while you drag selections. If you do not, the items will move from the first location to the second, without creating a copy.

Renaming Folders and Files

To rename a folder or file in Windows Explorer, slowly double-click the folder name to activate it for editing. Type the new name and press [Enter] or pick anywhere on screen to accept the new name.



PROFESSIONAL TIP

Be sure to include the three-letter file extension when you rename files in Windows XP. A Windows alert informs you the file may be unusable if you change or omit the extension.

Deleting and Restoring Folders and Files

In Windows, the Recycle Bin stores the items you delete from the hard drive. Select the folders and files to delete, press [Delete], and pick **Yes** in the confirmation dialog box to send them to the Recycle Bin.

If you delete the file from a network or removable drive, the dialog box will ask if you are sure you want to delete the file. Items deleted from network and removable drives are deleted permanently and *are not* sent to the Recycle Bin. Pick **Yes** to delete the file permanently. You can also delete files and folders by selecting the items and picking the **Delete** button at the top of the Explorer window. Pick **Yes** in the confirmation dialog box to send the file to the Recycle Bin.

The Recycle Bin is a storage area for deleted files. If for any reason you need to retrieve a deleted file, open the Recycle Bin, right-click on the file, and pick **Restore**. The file moves to its former location in the folder structure.

Occasionally, you should review the contents of the Recycle Bin and empty it to reclaim space on your hard drive. Open the Recycle Bin and select **Empty Recycle Bin** from the **File** pull-down menu. Pick **Yes** in the confirmation dialog box to delete the files permanently from the hard drive. Be sure that you no longer need the files before deleting them in this manner, because once they are removed from the Recycle Bin, they are much harder to restore.

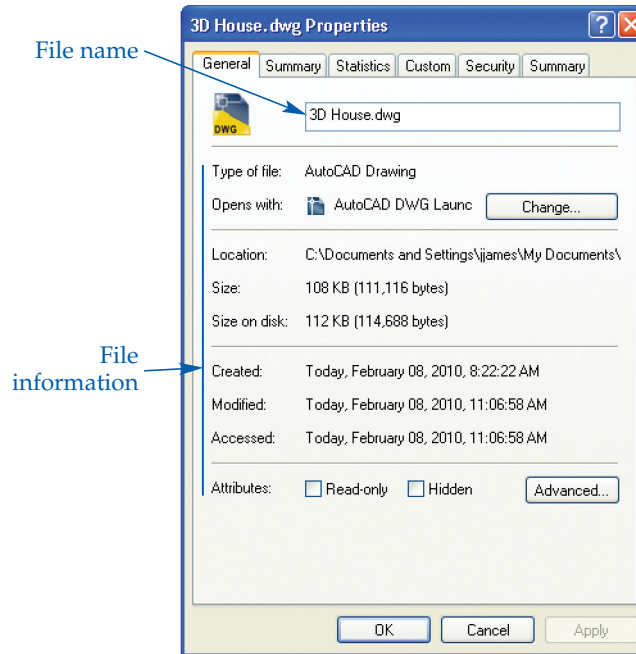
Managing File Properties

To display detailed information about any folder or file, select the file and pick **Properties** from the **File** pull-down menu. Alternatively, you can right-click on the file name and select **Properties**. See [Figure 2A-3](#).

Creating a New Folder

Use as many folders as necessary to organize project and system files. To create a new folder, pick the drive or folder icon where you want the new folder to appear. Then pick **Folder** from the **New** cascading menu in the **File** pull-down menu, or right-click in the contents pane and pick **New** and **Folder**. A **New Folder** icon and label appear in the contents pane. Type a new name and press [Enter]. The folder is now ready to use.

Figure 2A-3. The **Properties** dialog box displays details about the file.



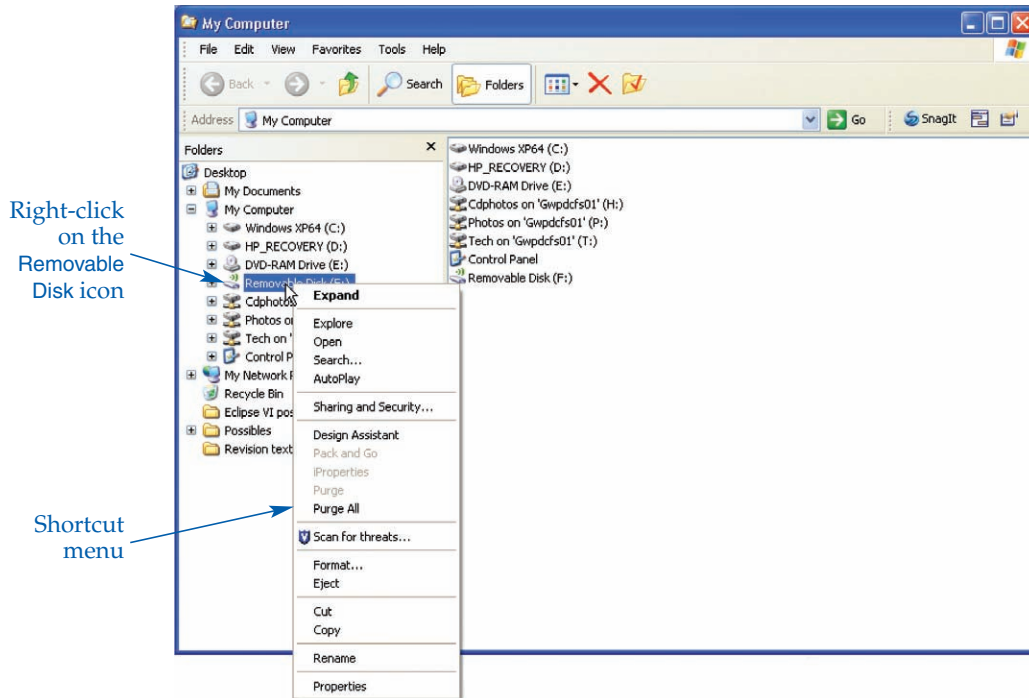
PROFESSIONAL TIP

Avoid saving files in the AutoCAD program folders. Always check with your instructor or supervisor before creating new folders or performing any disk management function.

Maintaining Removable Disks

You can perform a variety of operations on a removable drive, such as a *flash drive* using Windows Explorer. Each function is located in the shortcut menu that appears when you right-click on the Removable Disk icon. See **Figure 2A-4**.

Figure 2A-4. This shortcut menu appears when you right-click on a removable disk drive icon.



Formatting a Removable Disk

Formatting prepares the disk so you can copy information to it. If the removable disk you intend to format has been used, Windows Explorer detects this and informs you before it removes any existing data from the removable disk. Follow these steps to format a removable disk:

1. Insert the removable disk into a USB port.
2. Right-click on the flash drive name or icon and select **Format...** to display the **Format** dialog box. See [Figure 2A-5](#).
3. Select the capacity of the drive to format from the drop-down list in the **Capacity:** list box.
4. If you want to provide a label for the drive, enter the name in the Volume label text box.
5. Pick the **Start** button to begin formatting the flash drive.
6. When formatting is complete, pick the **OK** button.

Figure 2A-5. The **Format** dialog box.



Additional Disk Management Functions

The shortcut menu displayed when you right-click on the removable disk icon provides several other functions for managing the contents of removable disks. Select **Expand** to expand one branch of the folder tree for the selected drive. Pick **Explore** to display the contents of the flash drive in the contents pane. Choose **Open** to open a separate window displaying all folders and files on the flash drive. Select **Search** to open a new Windows Explorer window with the Windows Desktop Search or Search Companion active. Pick **Sharing and Security** to configure sharing for the selected drive. Select **Properties** to open the Properties dialog box.

Drag-and-Drop Operations with Windows Explorer

The drag-and-drop functionality in Windows makes many common Windows Explorer operations faster and easier, including copying, moving, and deleting files and folders. In addition, Windows Explorer allows you to drag and drop file icons into the AutoCAD drawing area to open drawings, insert drawing files as blocks, insert text files as multiline text, and import PostScript

and raster files. You can also use drag-and-drop operations to load menu, line-type, shape, script, and slide files, as well as AutoLISP and ARX applications. **Figure 2A-6** lists drag-and-drop operations possible with AutoCAD and the chapters in the text where you can find additional tool information.

Dragging and Dropping a Text File

To drag and drop text created in a text editor outside of AutoCAD into a drawing, first start AutoCAD and Windows Explorer and arrange the display windows so both are visible. Then, in Windows Explorer, open the folder containing the text file to insert. Finally, select the text file icon, drag it into the AutoCAD drawing area, and release the mouse button. The text inserts as a multiline text object in the current text style and on the current layer.



PROFESSIONAL TIP

If you use the right mouse button when dragging a text file into AutoCAD, a shortcut menu offers additional options. The **Insert Here** option produces the same result as a regular drag-and-drop operation. Optionally, you can attach a hyperlink to an existing drawing object or cancel the operation. *AutoCAD and Its Applications—Advanced* explains using hyperlinks in AutoCAD.

Figure 2A-6. Drag-and-drop operations possible with AutoCAD.

Operation	File Extension	Related Tool	Related Chapter
Load a linetypes file	LIN	LINETYPE	Chapter 5
Insert a text file	TXT	MTEXT	Chapters 9 and 10
Load a shape font	SHP	COMPILE	Chapters 9 and 10
Insert a drawing file	DWG	INSERT	Chapter 24
Open a drawing file	DWG	OPEN	Chapter 2
Print a drawing	DWG	PLOT	Chapters 5 and 29

Using Drag-and-Drop to Print a Drawing

You can plot a drawing by dragging the drawing file icon directly to the appropriate printer icon. The drawing file icon you select opens in the drawing editor using the **FILEOPEN** tool. This tool allows you to open a file without using a dialog box. The **Plot** dialog box also appears, allowing you to modify the printing parameters as required and print the drawing. An alternative method of plotting a drawing file from Windows Explorer is to launch AutoCAD, and then launch Windows Explorer. Right-click on the drawing to print and select **Print**.

Dragging and Dropping Drawing Files into AutoCAD

To open one or more drawing files in AutoCAD using a drag-and-drop procedure, first start both AutoCAD and Windows Explorer and arrange the display so both windows are visible. Then select any number of drawing files in Windows Explorer and drag the selected file icons to the title bar of the AutoCAD program window. You must remember to drag it to the *title bar* of the AutoCAD program window. Each drawing opens in a separate drawing window.

You can also use a drag-and-drop operation to insert a drawing into the current drawing session. This method is similar to the **INSERT** tool described in Chapter 25. The drawing you drag and drop becomes a block. Therefore, you may need to explode it after insertion, if you want to edit the objects it contains. To insert a drawing, drag it into the drawing area of the drawing into which you want to insert it. You can only insert drawings one at a time.

Use the right mouse button when dragging files into the drawing area to display a shortcut menu of options. The **Insert Here** option inserts the drawing the same way as a regular drag-and-drop operation. The **Open** option opens the drawing in a new drawing window. The **Create Xref** option attaches an external reference to the selected drawing, using the drop point as the insertion location and default scale and rotation. The **Create Hyperlink Here** option creates a hyperlink to the drawing attached to a selected object. The **Cancel** option stops the drag-and-drop operation.