60 AutoCAD Tips in 60 Minutes

Lynn Allen – Autodesk Evangelist

AC3511 If you want to learn a plethora of power user tips, then be sure to join Cadalyst columnist and Autodesk technical evangelist Lynn Allen as she takes you through a whirlwind of productivity techniques that are certain to improve your everyday drawing life. At a tip a minute, you are sure to discover some top secret AutoCAD software features that will remove tedium and boost your ability to meet project deadlines

Learning Objectives

At the end of this class, you will be able to:

Learning Objective 1:
Use fewer steps to accomplish maximum productivity

Learning Objective 2:
Apply valuable AutoCAD shortcuts that save time

Learning Objective 3:
Customize the AutoCAD UI for maximum efficiency

Learning Objective 4:
Share secrets that AutoCAD gurus know

About the Speaker

Lynn Allen, Cadalyst columnist and Autodesk Technical Evangelist, speaks to more than 30,000 users worldwide each year. For the past twenty years she has written a monthly column in Cadalyst magazine called "Circles and Lines" and is the voice behind the popular Cadalyst videos –"Tips and Tricks with Lynn Allen." Lynn started using Autodesk® software over 20 years ago, and taught at the corporate and collegiate level for 13 years before joining Autodesk. A sought-after public speaker with a unique comedic style, Lynn is always one of the highest rated speakers and host of Autodesk University. The author of three AutoCAD books, her latest is entitled AutoCAD Professional Tips and Techniques.

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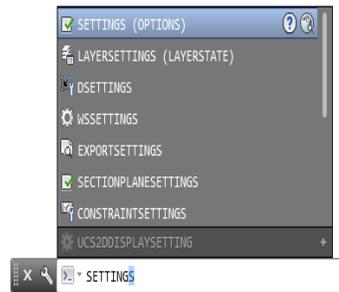Twitter: @lynn_allen

User Interface Tips – Command Line (AutoCAD 2014)

1) **AutoCorrect:** Bad speller? Not to worry! AutoCAD 2014 is much better at figuring out misspellings and helping you find the command and/or system variables you want.
   Command: LNEI   will return   Command: LINE

2) **AutoComplete–mid-string searches:** Now AutoCAD will search for one or more characters throughout the entire string. Example:
   Command: set   will return   Command:Setvar**,** Setbylayer, Sheetset

   SETTINGS (OPTIONS)
   LAYERSETTINGS (LAYERSTATE)
   DSETTINGS
   WSSETTINGS
   EXPORTSETTINGS
   SECTIONPLANESETTINGS
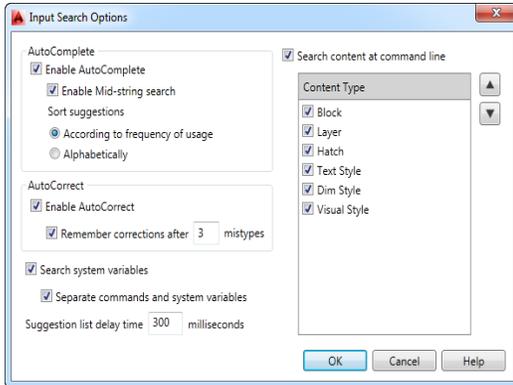   CONSTRAINTSETTINGS
   UCS2DDISPLAYSETTING
   X SETTINGS

3) **Adaptive suggestions:** The more you use AutoCAD, the more customized the command list will become so you can select your most frequently used commands faster.

4) **Synonym suggestions:** Now AutoCAD will search for popular command name synonyms such as SYMBOL for INSERT and ZIP for ETRANSMIT
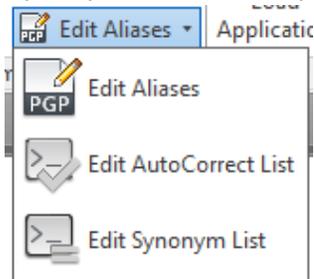
   SYMBOL (INSERT)
   VIEWSYMBOLSKETCH
   X SYMBOL

5) **Internet search:** AutoCAD 2014 makes it easy to do an internet search on any command or system variable from the Command line.

6) **Content search:** Now you can search for content such as layer and block names straight from the command line.

   DOR (DIMORDINATE)
   Block: Door
   Block: Door - Bifold
   Block: Door - French
   Layer: Doors
   X door

7) **Input settings:** You have complete control over all the various input settings that affect the command line. Simply select the wrench or right click on the command line.
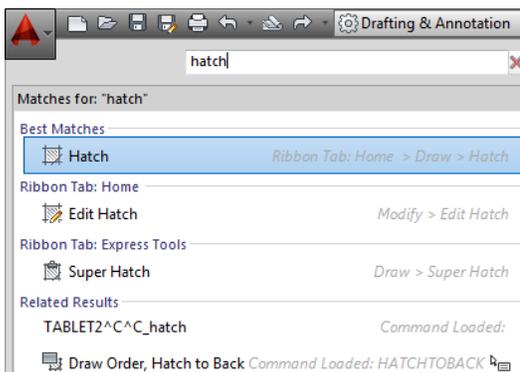

8) **Edit AutoCorrect and Synonym List:** You can customize the AutoCorrect and Synonym lists to meet your specific needs.
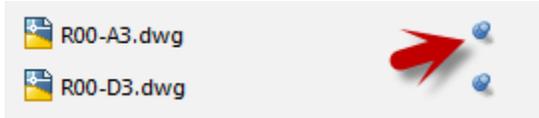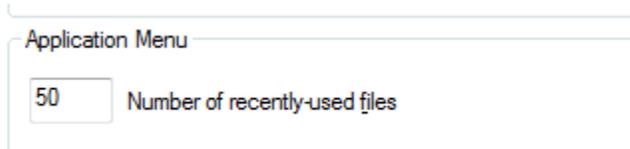

User Interface Tips (Non-AutoCAD 2014)

9) **Arrow keys to recall previous commands or**
Use the up and down arrow keys to recall previous commands in no time!

10) **Search for commands in the Application Menu Browser:** Can't find a command in the ribbon? Use the browser in the Application Menu to find it.
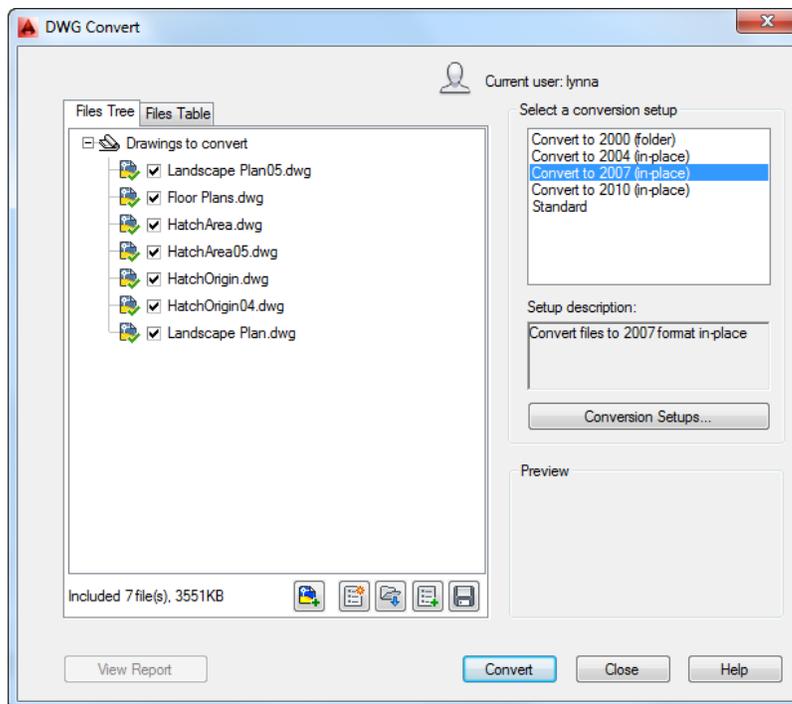
11) Pin frequently used drawings: Use the thumb tacks in the Application Menu to pin a drawing for easy access (so it never falls off the list!)

12) Set Application Menu to 50 Previously Viewed Drawings: Use Options=>Open and Save tab to set the number of previously viewed drawings to 50 for easy access.

13) DWGCONVERT is hiding in the Application Menu=>SAVEAS: Use DWGCONVERT to batch convert drawings from one release to another with a variety of different settings.
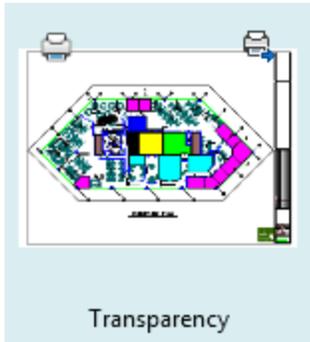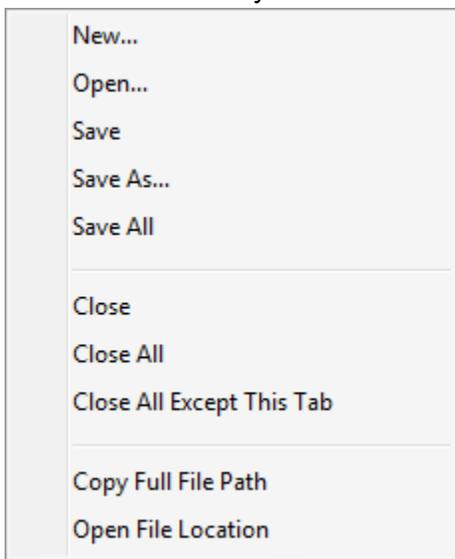

File Tabs – AutoCAD 2014

14) Open drawings are displayed as File tabs: Displayed across the top of the drawing editor (below the ribbon)

15) A lock on the tab indicates "Read-only" * indicates the file has not yet been modified.

16) Move the File tabs to the preferred order: it's easy to drag and drop the File tabs to the order you prefer.

17) Plot/publish without going to the dwg/viewport: Simply hover over a viewport using the File tabs and you'll see the Plot and Publish icons.

Transparency

18) Right click menu to create, open, save and close files: Right click on any drawing in the Files Tabs and you'll find a robust shortcut menu

New...
Open...
Save
Save As...
Save All

Close
Close All
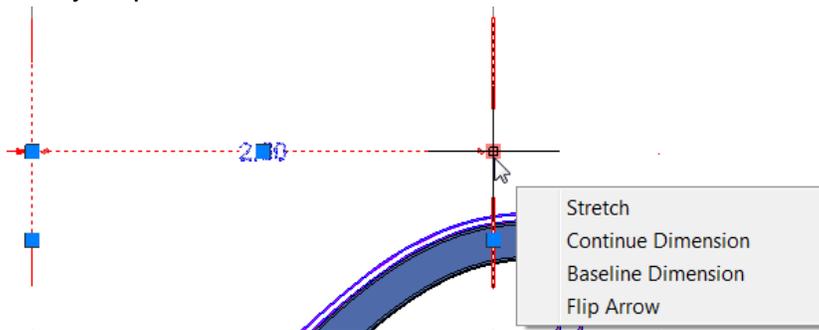Close All Except This Tab

Copy Full File Path
Open File Location

19) Copy full file path/Open File location: You'll find it's easy to copy the full file path of the drawing (should you want to send the drawing link to someone) or select Open File Location to go to the directory where the file resides

20) + to create new drawings: Select the + at the end of the file tabs to create a new drawing using the QNEW command

Multifunction Grips:

21) **Avoid using PEDIT with polylines:** Use the extra grips on plines to add, and remove vertices as well as convert segments to arcs (and vice versa).

22) **Lengthen lines a specific distance/total distance:** Very helpful for modifying a line or arc by a specific amount.

23) **Quickly add in Baseline/Continued Dimensions:** use the multi-function grips to quickly add in baseline/continued dimensions by just hovering over the endpoint grip.
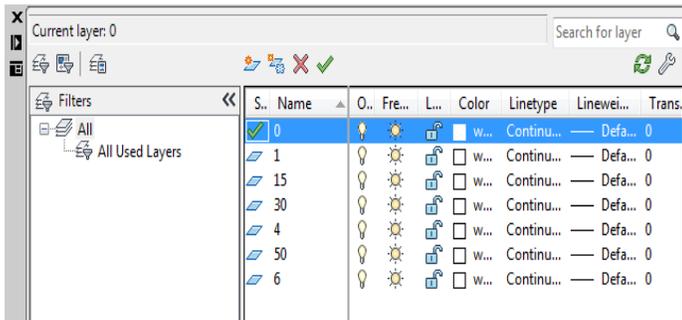
```
Stretch
Continue Dimension
Baseline Dimension
Flip Arrow
```

24) **Speedy MLEADER modifications and Dimension text modifications:** Easily add additional mleaders or make common dimension text modifications.
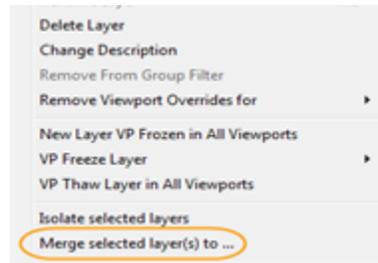
```
Stretch
Move with Dim Line
Move Text Only
Move with Leader
Above Dim Line
Center Vertically
Reset Text Position
```

New Layer Tips – AutoCAD 2014

25) **Layer names now sorted based on their natural order:**
1, 3, 5, 9, 30, 40 vs 1, 3, 30, 40, 5, 9

26) Layer Merge (LAYMRG) now within the Layer Manager: This handy tool is now available within the Layer Manager.
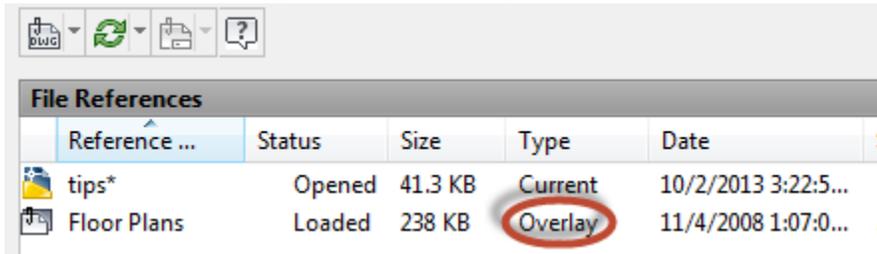

Drawing and Annotation Tips

27) Reverse directions of an arc by holding down the Ctrl key

28) Fillet an open polyline to itself : now available in AutoCAD 2014!

29) DIMCONTINUEMODE: This new dimension variable ensures your baseline and continued dimensions always reflect the dimension style of the base dimension (set to 1)

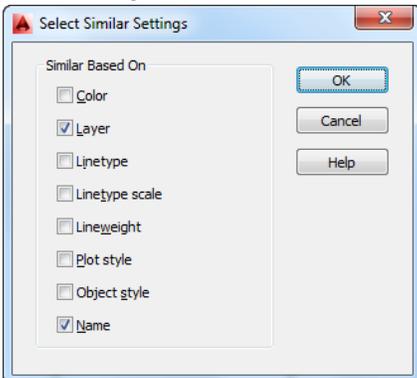**30) Double Click to toggle attach/overlay of Xrefs in the XREF Manager:**
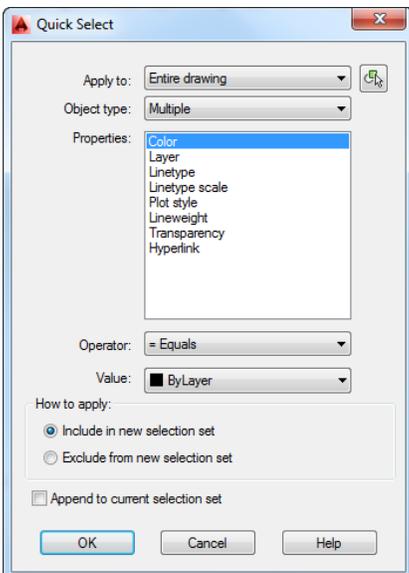
Selection Set Tips

31) **Groups:** Groups are a great means of temporarily binding AutoCAD objects together.
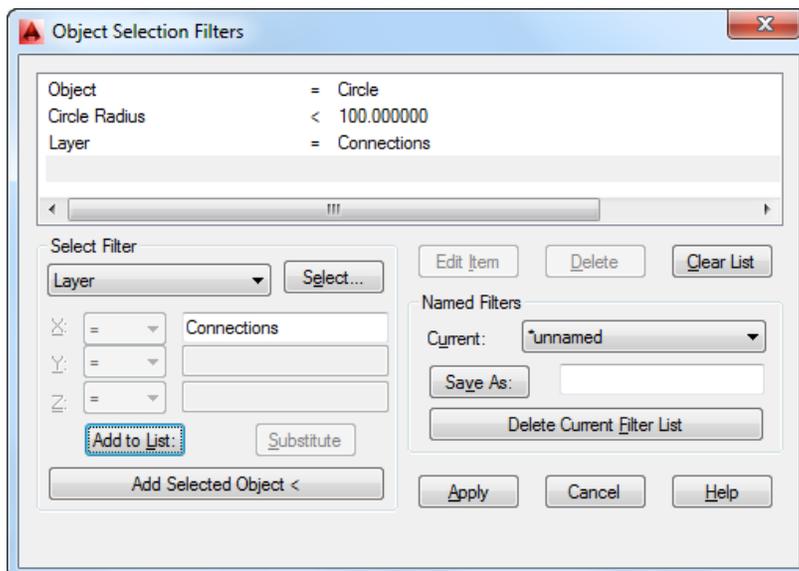

32) **Select Similar:** Use this handy tool to grab objects similar to the selected object. Use the Settings option to customize it.

33) **Quick Select:** Easily found in Properties, use this tool to add more precision to your selection set
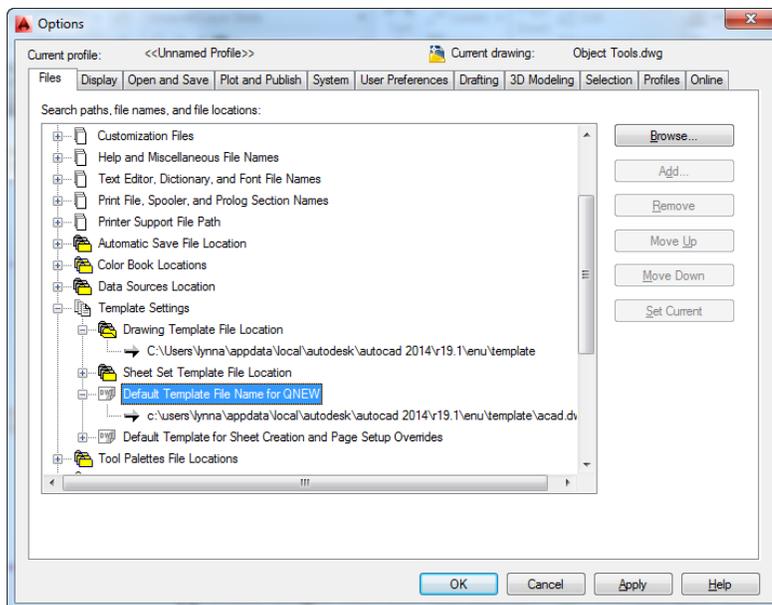
34) FILTER Command: This valuable command is the ultimate in defining a selection set.
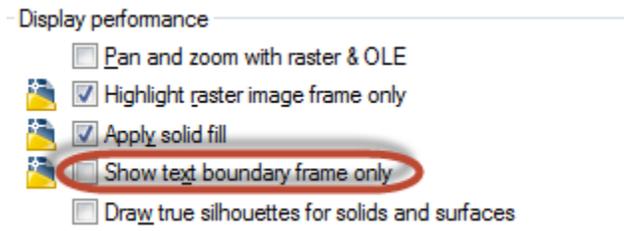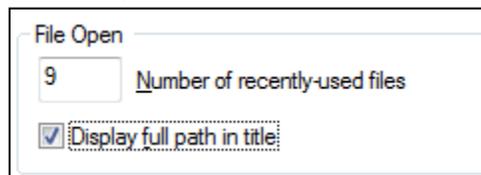
OPTIONS Tips

35) Default Template File for QNEW: Set a default template file so you don't have to select a template file every time you begin a new drawing. If you want a template file other than the default – just use the NEW command.
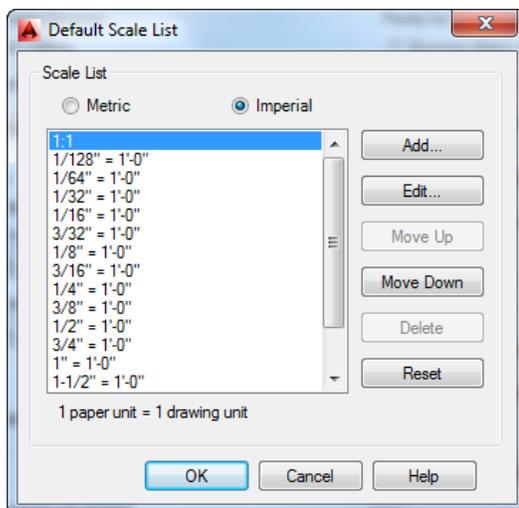
36) Convert Text to Rectangles with QTEXT: On the Display tab of Options – convert text to rectangles temporarily to speed up drawings with an overload of text.
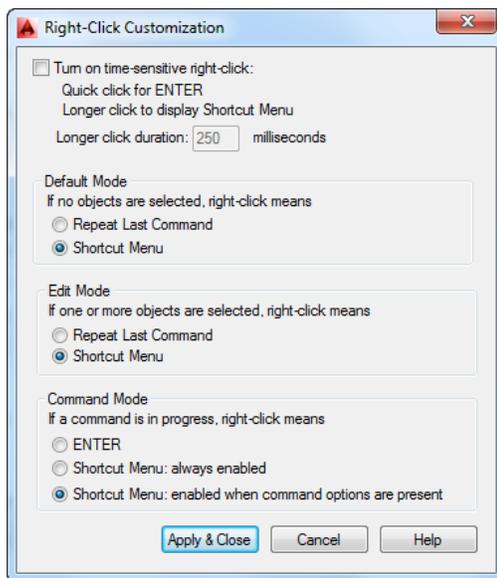

37) Display Full File Path in title: Display the full path for the open drawing in the drawing editor.(Open and Save tab)

38) Default Scale List: On the User Preferences tab, you can manage the Default Scale List for all drawings (SCALELISTEDIT). Definitely get rid of any scale factors you don't use – keep this list fit and trim!

39) Right Click Customization: If you want to be a true AutoCAD Speedster – then you should try turning on the time-sensitive right-click. This allows you to do a fast right-click on the mouse for an Enter and a longer one to display the shortcut menu.

Autodesk Exchange

40) **Find your favorite application at the Autodesk Exchange:** hundreds of apps – many of them free! Just select the ..

41) **Sketch-up App for importing SKP files:** This Autodesk app makes fast work of bringing SKP files into AutoCAD.
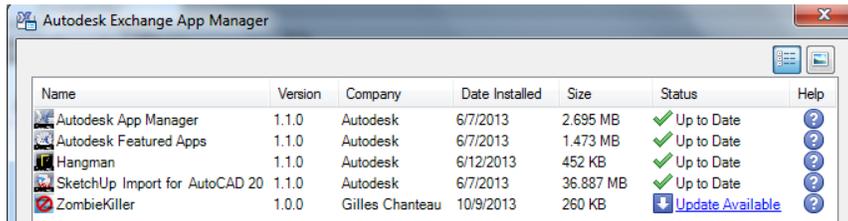

42) **Search based on AutoCAD Release:** Simply key in the AutoCAD release you are using to find relevant applications or select from the left-hand sidebar menu.

43) **Featured Apps:** Check out the Featured Apps tab in AutoCAD from time to time to ensure you aren't missing out on a great productivity tool.

44) **Autodesk Exchange App Manager for uninstall/update:** Use the Exchange App manager to manage your installed apps.

Keys, Keys and more Keys

45) **Control+R to cycle through all of your viewports:** How do you get inside of a viewport that is housed within another viewport? Use Control+R to cycle through to the desired viewport.

46) **Hold down right mouse button to clear grips:** Speedy way to clear all your grips!

47) **Shift for more than one hot grip:** Need more than one hot grip? Shift will do the trick (great for stretching out rectangles)

48) **Control to remember distances and angle in gripmode:** Use to quickly do an ad-hoc array.

49) **Shift to temporarily toggle Ortho:** Just need Ortho on for one step? Use the shift key to temporarily toggle it on (or off).

50) **Shift+Ctrl+A to turn Groups on and off:** Speedy means of controlling groups.

51) **Ctrl + arrow keys to Nudge:** Use this combination of keys to move one or more object 3 pixels at a time in any direction.

Table Tips!

52) **AutoFill AutoCAD Tables:** Drag the blue grip to duplicate values or for sequential numbers.

53) **Hard Enter (linefeed) with Alt+Enter**

54) **Tables wrap automatically over multiple columns:** use the grips at the bottom of a table to wrap across multiple columns. Use Properties to control headers, spacing, etc.

Ways to Torture Your Coworkers!

55) **Ctrl+9 – Turn off command line:** enough said!

56) **Zoomfactor controls speed of mouse wheel (3 -100):** use to slow your coworkers mouse wayyyyyyyy down.

57) **Zoomwheel to reverse Zoom:** Set to 1 to reverse zoom direction on their mouse

58) **Set Pickbox to 0 or 50:** 0 will make the pickbox disappear…while 50 will make it HUGE.

59) **Turn FILEDIA to 0:** No more dialog boxes when a file is needed – only command line.

60) **MTJIGSTRING:** Use to control the sample text string for MTEXT (up to 10 letters).

61) **ModeMacro:** Use to add text to the status bar (lower left corner).

62) **UNDEFINE:** Undefine your coworker's valuable commands.

63) **Alert:** The ultimate abuse…add this clever LISP dialog into a menu item for a big surprise. (alert "Deleting all of your drawing files")