

As formerly seen on Suite101.com.
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[Accurender 3.1](http://www.accurender.com/download.cgi?ar3update) is now shipping. It's free if you own 3.0 and \$195 if you own 2.0

Also from McNeel is Rhino 1.1, which is now shipping as well. We have one guy in our office that helps me with the 3D models and swears by this product, especially when dealing with making things like furniture.

In other news, I got tired in 2000 of trying to figure out which layers are which in the pull down layer button in the toolbar. I found online a program that not only expands the layer pull down so that you can read all the layer names, but it also lets you see more than the couple of layers that 2000 does. It also locks the toolbars in place, lets you resize various dialog boxes, etc. I love having open and save dialog boxes where I can actually see all the files in a folder at one time. The program is called QuickPik and can be found at [Manusoft](http://www.manusoft.com/). It runs now in A2k, and to change the settings it places a small blue Q in the info bar at the bottom left corner of your ACAD screen where it can't interfere with anything else, and therefore not mess with your LISP or menus - very nice touch. Also, and probably the coolest of all uses of this tool is the right mouse button fix. For some reason someone at ACAD HQ got it into their head that allowing us to simply right click to repeat a command was too easy. Now you have to right click, move the mouse to the context menu to the top item and then left click to repeat the command. There's a time waster for you. With QuickPik you can tell the mouse to watch how long you click for. A short quick right click is now repeat last command, and a slightly longer click pulls up the silly context menu. It's very easy to get used to, especially if you're an old r14 user. If you're not on A2k yet, check out the [Freebies](http://www.manusoft.com/freebies.htm) on this site and look about halfway down for Big Layer. This will let r14 have the same large layer pull down menu from the toolbar that QuickPik does in A2k. I've been using this for sometime now in r14 and find that it is truly a wonderful addition that I can't live without. Other items that I have found useful that are also freebies are the FixBlock and FullPath. The only thing I've tried and haven't liked is their updated Stretch command. For my use it's a bit buggy, although I agree with them that the current Stretch command setup in ACAD is annoying at times. I should also mention that they not only have a version of QuickPik for A2k, and r14 but amazingly enough they have it also for LT97 and LT98!

Here are a couple of good links for people:

[CSI](http://www.csinet.org/)

[Walls & Ceilings](http://www.wconline.com/)

[Architects' First Source for Products](http://www.afsonl.com/)

[Construction Market Data](http://www.afsonl.com/)

[Construction Professional's Website](http://www.structnet.com/home.html)

As a last minute reminder, if you own ACAD r11, you have till the end of the month to take care of your upgrade right or lose it. R12 have until the end of the year.

If you haven't heard, every year there are the [Darwin Awards](http://www.skyhawk.org/darwin.htm). These go out to people who are so stupid that they kill themselves, thereby removing them from the gene pool. As a show of thanks from those of us who have half a brain, we award them the Darwin Award. Now, I ask you, if Autodesk continues on their present course they should get the Darwin Award this year for stupidity that leads to their demise? Let's take a quick look at what they've all done, or in many cases haven't done.

First there was the AutoCAD Architectural Desktop and Land Development Desktop - losers. Poorly done, poorly thought out and poorly implemented. In fact so poor, we bought two copies and they are still in the box. Most people I know doing civil demanded a refund. Autodesk is so desperate for sales they have switched a long standing rule and are letting people take home a fully working copy on the condition that they return it if they don't like it, otherwise pay for it. This is a far cry from their previous stance of not even letting people have a stunted demo copy.

Next, there is Architectural Desktop 2... Let's see, take ADT r1 - bugs and all and simply sugar coat it in A2k's interface. Ok, sure they have increased a few commands, the base problems are all still there.

Then you got the NO SALE rule. Brilliance, sure brilliance on their parts. Tick off your clients by telling them that the \$2500 dollars they paid you for software really didn't let them "purchase" anything and then tell them that they can't sell what they didn't buy.

Now in their latest move they feel that all those people out there who have purchased or will purchase a seat of any version of AutoCAD or any other product that has a VIP subscription will no longer be able to purchase the VIP, unless they purchase a 5 seat minimum. Now, to purchase a 5 seat minimum they need to purchase 5 copies of AutoCAD. Now, one person using 2 computers if they are really slow, after all, we have two hands, and I suppose from the pointy haired bosses way of thinking that we have two feet, so therefore we should be able to operate 4 computers - trackballs can be useful here, but what to do with that 5th copy of AutoCAD? Remember, we can't sell it trade it, or even give it away. I guess they want the private practitioner to be forced into pirating the express tools, or the bonus tools, or whatever they call them this week. After all, they had good reasons to go into large firms and see if they were pirating and fine them, now they have the perfect excuse for the small office. If you want to have the full version of AutoCAD with the latest patches, the complete current set of commands, you'll have to steal them, which are illegal - the perfect catch 22.

Now, they send out AutoCAD 2000 without a jewel case - just slap it into a cardboard container and scratch away. The first shipping of A2k all came back to them scratched from the packaging. The second shipping they hide the 2nd CD that contains the tutorials. Then they ship with Architectural Desktop r2 with r1's tutorial CD's. I guess even they realized that they hadn't done enough to deliver an upgraded tutorial.

So next up, the first VIP CD for AutoCAD 2000 didn't contain the full set of commands that the express tools for r14 did. The next VIP CD wouldn't install correctly in ACAD if you had profiles. This last VIP CD contains per the jacket sleeve only 2 new commands. Now, while they have fixed the install on this latest CD, a fixed install is not worth 2 new commands.

Add into this mixture the complete revamp of A2k's plotting system. No offense but I don't have the time to putz around switching our office standards and then re-training all of our employees.

Ok, so I've started working on 2000 over the past month, saving the files out as r14 and plotting in r14. I've found that on some machines A2k is incredibly slow. In fact it's painfully slow. It's so slow that it was faster working in r12 on a Mac, and probably more productive at times. Just about every command that has a button has been made more difficult. In most commands you clicked on something then pressed return and you were out of the dialog box and back to working, not anymore. Now you have to mouse over to the ok button and click on it. When you save a file it now asks if you want to replace the file with a Yes, No and Cancel button. Amazingly they decided that by clicking the No or the Cancel it will take you back to the exact same dialog box. So I ask you, why did they give us a new button here? I'll tell you - it's to give us an extra keystroke. Everywhere you turn in 2000 you find these same sorts of wonderful new features that have no rhyme or reason. There are no reasons as to why they made commands more difficult to use or more time consuming to accomplish, but for some reason they have. It's like Autodesk has decided to try to make a product as expensive as possible tick off as many clients as possible, dismiss the fact that the people using there products are doing so because of speed, speed and flexibility.

Personally I can hardly wait for the Visio - Microsoft merger to bring out a new line of products. Perhaps between their plummeting revenues, total negative feedback from users and a new source of competition they will be forced back on track.

On a good note, the Overkill command that is included on the VIP CD does actually work. It's supposed to delete all lines that are on top of each other. We took a 3D model, and extracted from it flattened elevations. The result was a 15 meg file. Next we ran Overkill on it and 3 hours later we had a 3 meg file. Now, while it was slow, it did delete

200,000 duplicate lines making a much more useful drawing. We used a PII 300 with 256 megs of RAM for this test. The only problem we saw was how slow it was, but in the future we'd let the program run overnight and do it's thing.