Productivity Tools

Smart Architect provides a number of productivity tools to dramatically improve day to day drafting procedures in both AutoCAD LT and full AutoCAD. This month we will look at a couple of the more useful ones and perhaps address some of the others in future help files.

Layering Tools
If you didn't get the Express tools for AutoCAD when they used to be free, or if you are using AutoCAD LT, then the layer tools in Smart Architect will certainly make life easy. There are even a few that weren't included in the Express tools.

Figure 1

There are 14 layer control functions that can be accessed via the tool bar, as shown in **Figure 1**, or by keyboard shortcuts where the **F2** key is preceded by one other key. The layer commands will function on nested layers, which makes them useful when turning off or freezing layers in xrefs or blocks.

The keyboard shortcuts are typically the first letter of the name of the command, followed by the **F2** key. For example to freeze the layer of a selected object, the shortcut is **F+F2** and to turn layers off is **O+F2**, etc. A list of all the shortcuts and aliases can be found in the beginning of the Level 1 training manual.

Multiple Offset command
The multiple offset command not only allows you to offset lines, circles and arcs, but text, blocks or any combination of these as well. The command can be used in any number of situations from setting out balusters for stairs or balconies, to layouts of car parking including numbering. In the following example we will use the command to draw up a 2D stair with 10 treads of 250mm each.

Step 1:
Draw 2 parallel vertical lines 1200mm apart with a line across the bottom for the first tread. See **Figure 2.**

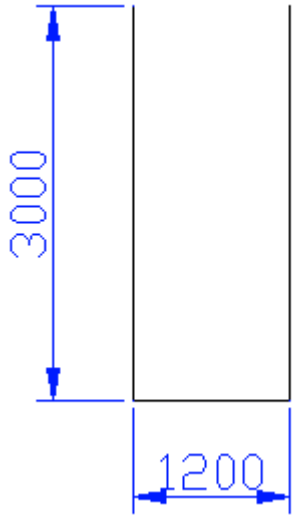

Figure 2

Step 2:
Invoke the **Multiple Offset** command (**MO**), select the horizontal line of the tread and press Enter. This will open the Smart Architect Multiple Offset dialog box. See **Figure 3**

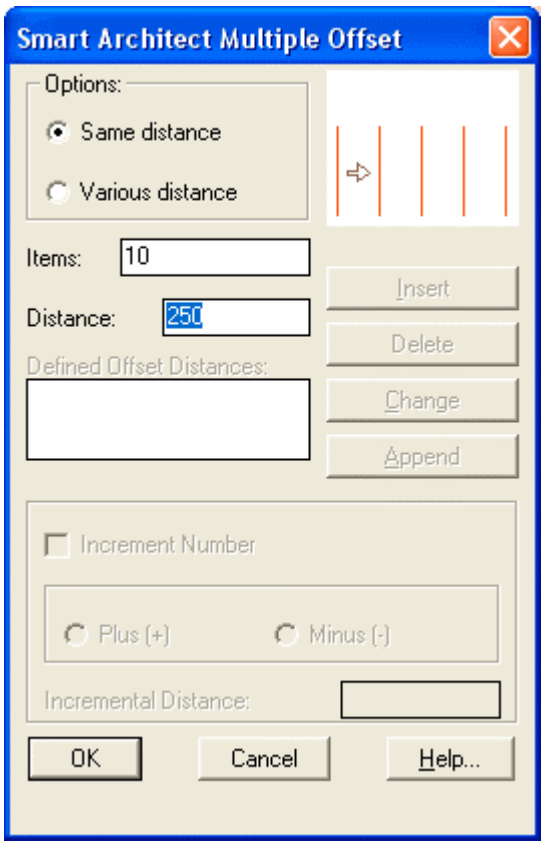

Figure 3

Step 3:
Select the **Same Distance** option, enter **10** for **Items** and **250** for **Distance**, then click on **OK** to continue the command.

Step 4:
Follow the command prompts and pick a base point near the tread line. With Ortho turned on, move your cursor up the screen and pick a second point then hit Enter to finish the command.

Step 5:
Use single or multi-line text and place a number in the fist tread. Now use the **Multiple Offset** command and this time select the text.

Figure 4

Step 6:
As with the tread, select the **Same Distance** option, enter **10** for **Items** and **250** for **Distance**, but this time notice the options in the lower half of the dialog box are available. **Increment Number** and **Plus** both need to be selected and enter **1** for the **Incremental Distance**. Click on **OK** and pick points similarly to **Step 4**.

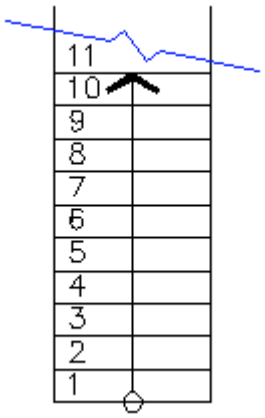

Figure 5

Note: I used the Smart Architect **Leader** command to draw the directional arrow and the **Section Break** command to insert a break line. Both commands have easy to use dialog boxes to change the configuration of the entities, eg the section break can be double or single. The **Section Break** and **Leader** commands are located under **Library menu > Symbols Parametric**.

For more information on any of the commands or procedures discussed here, please refer to the training manuals at www.dcrauto.com