

# Controlling file translations between MicroStation V8 2004 and AutoCAD: the basic settings.

MicroStation V8 2004 has certainly made dealing with AutoCAD files much less complex than it used to be. However, there are still some important things to understand in order to achieve the results you expect when translating files between the two applications. In this expanded tip, we will cover how to access and change the necessary settings to correctly translate DGNs to AutoCAD and DWGs to MicroStation and achieve the desired results.

Note: the graphics and descriptions in this article were done using MicroStation V8 2004 version 08.05.01.25. If you are using an earlier version, the look of the settings dialog boxes will be somewhat different, as will some of the available options.

MicroStation V8 2004 offers the ability to open and translate files on a “one-file-at-a-time” basis — using the “MicroStation Manager”, “File|Open” and “File|Save As” dialog boxes — or in batch — using the “Batch Converter...” accessed from the “Utility” pull-down menu. Since the basic translation control options are the same in both approaches, we will stick to “one-file-at-a-time” translation in this article.

In essence, there are two main groups of settings used to properly translate the CAD files. One group has to do with importing (or opening) an AutoCAD DWG file and the other group has to do with exporting or saving a V8 file to the AutoCAD format. In both cases, knowledge of these particular settings is imperative to properly handle the results of the file translation, due to the data format differences of the two programs.

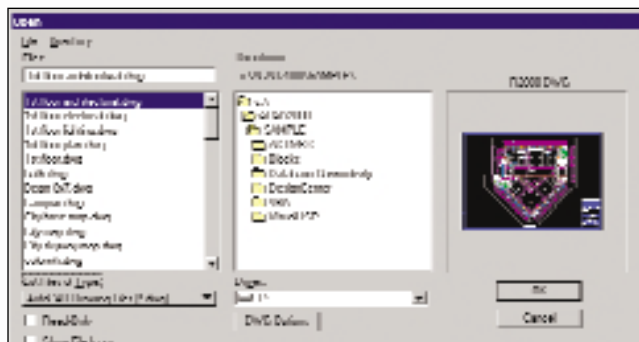
Before we dive in, here are some reasons why these settings are important. For starters, MicroStation supports eight views of any model, where each view can display different levels and other view attributes. In AutoCAD, you can only adjust the view to see different angles of a design; there are no multiple view windows.

Another example is the difference between cells in MicroStation and blocks in AutoCAD. Block definitions in AutoCAD are always unique and stored in the drawing itself, very much like shared cells in MicroStation, but most MicroStation files predominately use regular cells. With regular cells, the cell definitions are stored in an external source, and when the cell is placed in a design file, all the graphic elements are included in the placed cell itself. Because of this, two cells could end up with the same name, but include different graphics. This could cause a problem during the translation to AutoCAD unless the export settings are adjusted properly.

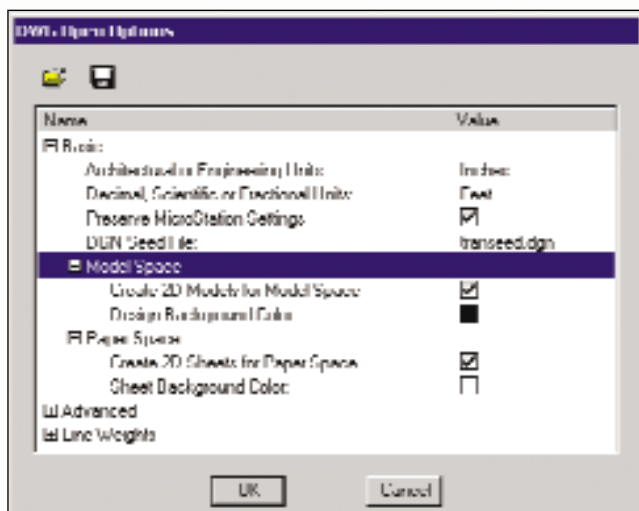
## Accessing the settings when opening a file

To access the settings to import AutoCAD files, go to “File|Open” and select the file or open the file through the MicroStation Manager. From either dialog box, click on the

<List Files of Type:> drop-down and select “AutoCAD Drawing Files [\*.\*dwg]”. This makes the <DWG Options> button selectable. Click on the button to open the “DWG Open Options” dialog box.



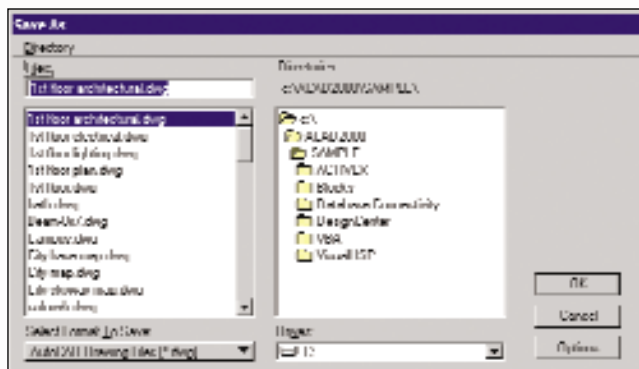
Select the DWG file to open.



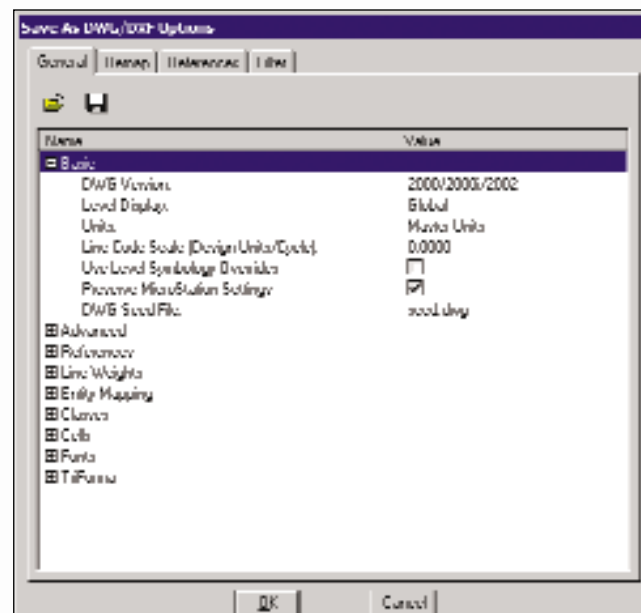
Set open options for the DWG file you selected.

## Accessing the settings when saving a file

To access the export settings to convert a DGN to a DWG from the “Save As” dialog box, click on the <List Files of Type:> drop-down and select “AutoCAD Drawing Files [\*.\*dwg]”. Then, click on the <Options> button, which gives you access to the “Save As DWG/DXF Options” dialog box.



To save your DGN file as a DWG file, select the “AutoCAD Drawing Files [\*.\*dwg]” option.



To modify export settings, change any of the available DWG export options.

## Categories and changes

The first category in both settings groups is labeled “Basic”. You can differentiate a category (group of settings) from a setting by the little box that has a plus (+) or minus (-) sign in it to the left of each category. Clicking on the plus or minus sign expands or contracts the category to show or hide all the settings and sub-settings, just like in Windows Explorer. A setting will show its value in the column to the right. The “Basic” category handles things like: determining the working units to use when importing an AutoCAD file, whether to save the AutoCAD model to a 2D or 3D file, which seed file to use and more. To change a value for a setting, highlight the setting and then click on the value of that setting. Depending on the type of setting, one of the following may appear: a list of predefined choices, a file selection dialog box, a check box or a field that allows the user to type in a value.

Understanding what each setting does and how it will impact the translation process takes a good understanding of both MicroStation and AutoCAD. Make sure you spend some time playing around with these settings to see how making changes will impact your translations. Enjoy!

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