

The DWG Conversion Process

To convert an AutoCAD drawing file into a printable file with accurate shading, linetypes, pen weights, and fonts, there are several steps that need to be followed:

- 1) The drawing file must be opened and examined to insure that the following supplemental files have been included:
 - A. All XREF files are found
 - B. If XREF's are found, but unloaded, we must verify with the customer that the file must remain unloaded. Otherwise, information may not appear on the print
 - C. IMAGE files (bitmaps) are found.
 - D. Verify WIPEOUTS load properly (Note: Wipeouts do not work on AutoCAD LT)
 - E. Attached documents such as Excel spreadsheets and Word files are found
 - F. Title Blocks are not on DEFPOINTS or other non-plotting layer
 - G. TTF (True Type Fonts) are found
 - H. SHX (AutoCAD Fonts) are found
 - I. Color Table (CTB or STB files) are found
 - J. Pen Settings (PC3)
- 2) Once the above steps have been completed, we must then attempt to determine which layout files actually need to be plotted. We perform the following:
 - A. A drawing usually contains multiple Layout views, so we must open each layout to determine if it contains a plottable sheet. Each company has a different way of setting up plottable sheets. In almost every case, they do not come pre-configured and must be configured by our staff.
 - B. Once adjusted, any plottable sheets are then converted into .PLT files by selecting the option to 'Plot To File'.
- 3) When all of the .PLT files have been created we render these into TIF images and perform a final QC step. This insures proper margins and centering of images for edge binding or staple.
- 4) We then queue all files out at one time, as a single job, that can be tracked and managed by our production staff.
- 5) A print operator will receive the job and check order details to load proper paper size, color, or use appropriate machinery before the job is actually printed.

A common argument we hear is "why don't you guys just plot these directly from AutoCAD to the plotter?"

Answer: Our production plotters are running jobs on a full time basis so that we can manage print jobs as a single unit. We can't send a single sheet into production at random intervals since plans could potentially get mixed up, printed on the wrong media, wrong size, or become intermingled with someone else's job altogether. Furthermore, we may potentially choose to queue a job to another Brownie's location to meet a deadline or if/when equipment at another one of our locations is determined to be more suitable for that job.