

The Best Practices Course - Week #5 - General Notes (Part 2)

Hi. This is Eric Bobrow with a continuation, part two of the lesson on how to use Microsoft Word and PDF to generate general notes and specifications for your ArchiCAD project, more quickly and elegantly.

Here we have the first two columns that I was working on in this layout. And, of course, the page with all of them placed. But what happens if you have a sheet that's larger? Right now this sheet is 24 by 36, a D size sheet in the US standard.

I'm going to switch this from the notes sheet here that's 24 by 36, to one of the larger sheets that we use here in the US, which would be a 36 by 48. Now you can see that the sheet is quite a bit bigger. And the columns of text are not as large as they might be for this purpose.

In order to make this larger, with the system that we've established so far, we'd have to make the drawing taller. As you recall, in Microsoft Word, there's a limitation of 22 inches square for the paper size. So that means that we really can't make it any bigger in Word.

But I'll show you a little trick here. And then we'll develop it into a whole methodology that will make it quite easy to work with Word, even for larger sheets.

I'll move this one out of the way a little bit. Then I'll take this first column, go up to the corner and press down. And we get the standard editing palette.

Now we don't want to use this control which is the one for changing the cropping rectangle. You see that although it makes the drawing frame bigger, the drawing itself is still the same size. If I take this in the other direction, you'll see what I mean, because it really is just cropping that drawing. I'm going to go ahead and undo those last two changes.

What we want to do is use the command or the editing option that is for stretching, which is this icon right here. And when we do that it will make it bigger. Let me just sort of sketch that in approximately where I might want it. And you can see that it has made the column taller. I'll just move the other one nearby so we can look at them side by side and zoom in on it.

So we have two issues here. One is that the width of the column may be not correct. In other words, we may make it tall enough but the width may or may not be the right size.

And the other is, of course, that the text is much bigger than it was previously. So if you have the text a certain size in Word and you enlarge this here, then it may be larger than it's intended.

So how do you work with that? How do you solve that problem?

You simply compensate in Word ahead of time. You make the text in Word a smaller font size than you would like it to be on paper. And then after it's enlarged in ArchiCAD you are able to get the intended size.

So, for example, this text was set at 14 points in Microsoft Word. We can see that, I'll go back to Word now. Here's our one column and I'll just select some text. You can see that it says it is 14 points.

So what I'm going to do is make the text smaller. I'll select "all text" and I'll change the size and, oh. Let's say that we're going to make it 50 percent bigger. So I'll take this down to 9.5.

We'll see the text is now a different size. I'll just undo, so we can see. Here's the text as it was. And here I'll redo.

Now, we have some other, some parts of the formatting that might need to be reworked separately because I just tried to select all the text at once. But the general idea here is you would make the text smaller than it might be appropriate. And then enlarge it up to the size.

So I've made it about two-thirds its intended size here. And I'm going to go and look at the page setup. And the page set up here I had for specification sheets, was about six and a fraction by 21 and a fraction inches.

Well if I wanted to fit in a 36 inch high sheet, than maybe I want it to be 34 inches. So this could be, actually it's fairly close in terms of the 50 percent. I could leave that there. But perhaps I want to change the width of the column because it's going to be getting quite a bit wider.

So let me go ahead and change the custom size or create a new custom size. And we'll just call this "spec sheet large paper." I'll go ahead and we'll make this, say instead of six, we'll make this five inches wide by, we'll go up to the maximum, 22 inches high.

So it's going to be narrower there. And I'll say OK.

You can see that the sheets have gotten a little bit narrower. So, at this point, I'll go ahead and save my work, print it to PDF and overwrite the specifications document and replace it.

Now I'll go back to ArchiCAD and if I select this and tell it to update, you see it's actually changed quite a bit. Now the size of the text here on the left is similar to the original. I haven't updated this other one, so we can have it as a comparison.

If I select this, we'll see, in its settings, that it's been enlarged a certain amount. So if I go to the properties, we'll see that it's been enlarged 147 percent.

So that's what I did manually. I simply stretched it. But if I wanted this to be a very particular size or consistent between one drawing and the next, I can type this in or use

the eye-dropper to retain the setting from one to another. So now I've got it 150 percent and I say OK.

You see that it got slightly bigger here. So whatever that scale is that you determine that will work for the columns on the larger sheet. You can work with that percentage enlargement and compensate in Microsoft Word for that, so that you end up with a column that's the right size.

So that's going to actually resolve that particular issue for larger paper, whether it's 150 percent or perhaps as much as 200 percent or more. If you just do the inverse of that for the text size, and of course calculate carefully the precise column width and height that you need, based on the mathematics, then you should be able to get those columns just like we had it on the smaller sheet.

You may be thinking, and it's interesting today when I was working on this video tip, I had a brainstorm. Why not actually put an image of the larger sheet and reduce size. In other words, why work with each page being a column, why not work with a page, being just the reduced sized version of the architectural sheet.

So even though for years I have taught people how to use a column at a time as a page, I am now going to start teaching the simpler method. So let me go and explain that to you in case you haven't figured it out already.

I'll go back to Word. I am going to go and let's say define a new page set up. And I will create a new custom size and I'll add this here and call it, in this case, E Size at 50 percent.

And E size in the US is 36 x 48. So I'll say it's 18 wide... I'm sorry, it's 24 wide x 18 high. Now of course it really won't allow me to do 24. It will stop it at 22. But that's probably OK because of the space on the sides for the title block on one side, and the binding on the other.

So I can leave it at 24, and it will cut it to 22, or I can be more specific and just say, oh, all right, 22 is all that it's going to allow me here.

Of course I will need to work on the margins to make them work but just say OK. And choose that. Now of course if I say show me the whole page, we've got now a very crazy looking document because it really should now be divided into the columns.

So again let me return back to the format, of the columns here, and say that for the whole document I would like five columns. And say OK.

Now we have something that if we were to do it at 200 percent would work.

Of course I do need to make the text smaller. So let me just select all of the text. So I've selected all the text here. And it was 14, so let me make that font size seven points. And it will be smaller still. Then we go ahead and save my work. And print it and create a PDF and overwrite this.

Now, I go back to ArchiCAD. I will move this off to the side because page one of this document is going to actually be the entire sheet. I'll select this and just update this one. It's going to be now, multiple columns. It is not showing the whole thing, so I do need to go and tell it that I don't want to manually resize the frame. I'd like to fit frame to drawing.

This is going to be not quite big enough, because as you may recall, I set it at 150 percent and really, what this should be is 200 because that was my intention. So I hit 200 here, and bang, it's now filling the page. You can see how closely the text matches in the 200 percent of seven points text compared to 100 percent of 14 point, the original text here.

So we do have a little bit of adjustment. It of course is a little bit too big for this page. So I will need to just set the margins in Word to match what I need while we work on the architectural sheet. But very, very quickly I've got an entire page image for a very large sheet.

Of course I could take this same approach for the smaller sheet, the 24 by 36 or any size sheet. Either have it at full size in Word if it's below the 22 inches square, or at some reduced proportion that has the width of it or the long side, under that 22 inches or less.

So this is now the optimum best practice as far as I can see for creating your general notes using Microsoft Word for all of the automatic numbering and formatting options and automatic column flow. And bringing it in as PDF into ArchiCAD.

This has been Eric Bobrow with another ArchiCAD video training. Next segment of this series will focus on how to work with the general notes and specifications in your template so that you can set up some boiler-plate notes in the template, and when you start a new project you've already got them placed.

Of course, it will need to be updated for the project. But how will you actually make that work when you want to have similar versions of the notes, but not the same, for each new project. What are the best ways to do that? So that'll be in the next segment.

Thanks for watching. I hope you can catch the next segment soon.

Transcription by CastingWords