

7-1-The_Best_Practices_Course--Week_7--Part_1--Interactive_Legends_Part_1

Hello, this is Eric Bobrow. And in this lesson, we're going to take a look at a variation of the favorites that I call "Interactive Legends of Visual Favorites". Here I have a set of favorites that's going been augmented little bit. I've added in a bunch of objects of different types, furniture and fixtures and landscaping, etcetera. Now, one of the issues with the favorites list is that it is a list and it does get longer and longer. So this can get somewhat unwieldy as you add more and more favorites. [0:42]

It does get a little bit easier, for example, when I double click on any favorite, I'm going to be in a tool. For example, the wall tool. And I'll only see the walls. However, this list still can be a little bit hard to deal with, because it's all text based and it's not very visual. It's hard to tell what these elements are without thinking through the names very carefully. [1:06]

Now I'm going to start creating set of a visual representations of the same elements by double clicking on a favorite here, and drawing a piece of wall. And then I'll go to a rather different wall type and draw another piece. And if I zoom in a little bit, you can see them very clearly different. I'll go in to add an interior wall, and another interior wall, and another one. It's a little thicker. [1:51]

If I want these all to be neat, I can easily go and select them, and use the "Adjust" command here. When I click on the "Adjust" command, it will allow me to click two points to determine a line, and they will all extend or shorten. I'll adjust them on the other side, perhaps make them a little bit shorter. Now we have nice little pieces of wall. Now these walls, we can of course select something and look at what its settings are when it's selected. You can see that it pops up and it tells you what type of wall it is. [2:25]

But a shortcut could be to put some text next to it. And so, for example, this is a concrete masonry wall, so I'll just use the abbreviation "CMU". And zoom in a little bit more, next to this wall, I'll use a different type of approach. I'll say it's "Exterior Wall Type 1". So we can name these by code numbers 1, 2, 3, etcetera. Or we can name them with some description. For example, this is a 2x4, and so on. [3:05]

Now these can be augmented by, in addition to walls, we can add other elements. For example, I can go to the Object tool and select objects. And of course, I can go in and double click on a favorite and drop in that type of element here. I'll pick a chair. Now if I'm compiling this set of favorites, and the layer is not turned on, then really what I want to do is unlock and turn on that layer, so that it shows up properly, because I want to have the Favorites Palette with perhaps elements of many different types. [3:49]

Now in addition to using the favorites themselves here, I can go ahead and compile this set of visual favorites by simply dragging copies of elements. So for example, I could take this plant, drag it over, press and release the Option key if I'm on the Mac or the CTRL key on Windows. And then it makes a copy. And I can take any element here and use that key to make a copy. And so basically, from an existing project, it becomes pretty easy to grab elements that you would like to reuse for your favorites. [4:30]

Okay, so now we have a batch of favorites here, and of course I could go on and on and make a very extended list. And that's one of the advantages of the visual favorites, is that you can have a really

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extreme, “the sky's the limit”, in terms of what you can include. As I have shown you in an earlier lesson, how with MasterTemplate, the list can be extremely extensive. [5:01]

But let's start something simple here. I'm going to select these elements, and copy them. And then I will place them into another file as a starting point. So one way the you can do this is simply by copying and pasting. Of course, this means that you have to have the two files open at the same time, or sequentially, and do the copy in the first file, and then go to the other file and paste. [5:28]

So here I will go ahead and paste and these elements, and having pasted them in, I can then of course just use the eyedropper to say that I'd like to draw a wall like this. And let me just slide over and draw beginnings of a building, and going use the eyedropper to pick up element types that I want to place into the project. So, the visual favorites work in a way very much like standard favorites, except that they can be arrayed in groups. They can have labels right next to them, and they certainly are much easier, in some ways, to select from, because we can simply see what we're going to get rather than having to look at a list of names that are just described in text. [6:24]

Now, let's go back to the original plan and look at another way that this can be done. Because instead of copying and pasting these elements directly, I might want to say this in an external file that will make it a little bit easier for me to access in another project without having to have this file open. So, I will go to the File menu, and say “Save As”. Now you recall that the last thing I did in this file was to copy. And one of the options that we have had historically for ArchiCAD is that we can save a Module file from the clipboard. [7:08]

So when I do that, it says whatever is on the clipboard, I'm going to save as a Module. I'll go ahead and locate where I want to put this. And we'll call this, "Legend Test 2." And it will have the ending “.mod”. If I uncheck this, you can see that it will end with “.mod”. So this is a special type of file that I'm creating. And I'll go ahead and switch back to this project here. [7:44]

And let's just get rid of these elements. Now let's assume that this is another day, and we're starting a new project, and I'd like to get that kit of parts. I'd can go to the File menu, and one option is to merge this in. So when I go File, File Special, Merge, there's an option for “What Do I Want To Merge?” And it says, do you want to look at all files, or files of a certain type? [8:13]

In this case, I'll just carefully select the “Legend Test 2” that I just saved, and I will open it. And it will act just like copying and pasting was before, it will just bring this in right into the project. But this could be tomorrow or next year, that .mod file is available at any time as a delayed copy and paste essentially. [8:40]

Now, one of the issues with having the kit of parts off to the side is that if I were to print right now, of course, it would print these elements. And if I were to place the view of the plan onto a sheet, and just allowed it to show everything that was visible, then these elements would be seen on the sheet. And if I go to 3D, we're going to see that all of this kit of parts sits next to the actual design. [9:09]

Now there are ways to work around this. A very simple thing for the 3D is to go with the marquee tool and say that I'd like to show just what's in the marquee in 3D. So that's one way to work around it.

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And of course when you're placing drawings on sheets, you can crop them. And when you're doing elevations or sections that otherwise might see this, you can perhaps put a depth limit, and say only look as far as a certain place. But still, in all, this becomes a little bit of extra management, and is not as far as we can go. We can certainly take this further to make it a little easier. [9:48]

So let me go ahead and undo the paste, which is the Merge command. And let's bring this in in a different manner. I'll hide the marquee as well. So I go to the File menu, and I'll go to External Content. And say that I'd like to place a hot linked Module. So this is a different approach, it allows me to bring in something like that batch of components that I'm using as my visual favorites, but have control of them in a different fashion. [10:22]

So, there is a concept of a Master Layer, which is a layer that is just one of the layers on our list. It's just any layer that we have in the project that can be used as a master. I'll use the one that I've setup for this purpose, which has the name "Master Module". But, other than the name, it's actually identical to any other layer in terms of its function. [10:44]

Now when I say "Choose Hotlink", I will have the opportunity now to say what file would I like to bring in. And so I'll say I'd like to create a new Hotlink from a file. In this case, I need to be explicit and say, do I want to get a solo project or a Module file? The reason you might want to use a solo project, sometimes if you want to bring a PLN for this purpose, but I'm going to go ahead with the Module file, which will allow me to select that same legend test that I'd been working with. [11:11]

When I select it, it will show up in the list here as an option, and when I say OK, it will return back to the first dialog box. So this has gone three levels deep. And I now have the opportunity to place this module wherever I like. And it will again, place itself like I was pasting it. It will take a minute just to process the container file, and so it does have a little bit more overhead. But within a few seconds, we'll see this show up on the screen. [11:44]

So you can see that it shows up and it looks much the same. And I can use it in the same way. I use the eyedropper. I can go ahead and say that I'd like to pick up the settings of this toilet, and place a toilet. And then there's that toilet. In this case, it actually is bringing in the setting that says the object should be labeled. But the main point is that these elements do function as visual favorites, much like the copy and paste option. [12:23]

Now the one difference is that if I select any of these elements here, they're all selected together, because they are considered in some ways a group. They're hotlinked to that external .mod file, that MOD file. Now I can grab them and I can move them around, so I can reposition the whole group to a convenient location, but I can't actually delete or change any individual element, because they're linked to that external file, they're hotlinked. [12:55]

Now the other advantage here, or actually the real advantage of doing this is that that master layer allows me to turn on and off these elements instantly. So I'll open up the Layer Dialog by hitting "Command + L" or "CTRL + L". And you can see this layer that is called "Master Module Other". That's the one that I chose, I'm going to hide it. So I'm going to turn that layer off and say OK. [13:21]

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And you'll notice that the kit of parts just disappears. Now it's not because I just turned off the furniture layer, because you can see that the chair is still visible. Is not because I turned off the plumbing layer, because the bathtub is still visible. But the one layer that controls all of these elements, which is the mater layer, allowed me to turn it off and on. [13:49]

So what this allows me to do is, for example, to create a view that says "Building without Legend". And then go back into the Layer Dialog box, and turn that Legend back on. And I can turn that legend back on, and I can go and save, "Building with Legend". So now I can easily go and double click on a view, and have it disappear, double click on another view, and have it reappear. [14:31]

Of course, we can have many different views. Some of them with the legend showing, some of them without. It's really depends upon what your needs are. But in general, for construction documents, we'd want to turn off the legend so they don't get in the way of generating either views of drawings on the layout, or sections and things like that. But when we're working on design, we may want to have the legend showing so that we have access to that kit of parts. [15:01]

Now, I just manually turned on and off the layer, and saved the view. But what we're really would want to do is to go into the Layer Dialog box and say that I'd like to, for example, create a new layer combination that is "Building With Legend", here. And then this particular view, instead of saying "Custom" for the layer combination, I would go into the settings for that view and say that I would like to make it use the one that is "Building With Legend". And so now, that view is actually using the layer combination. [15:48]

What this allows me to do is then have multiple views that at the same layer combination, and perhaps tweak that layer combination, if I decide, "Oh, when I have this building with the legend I want to turn the roofs on, or I want to turn them off", or whatever other changes I want to make. So in general, we don't recommend using something like this, where the player combination is custom, because then we can't predict or control the layers that are on or off as easily. [16:19]

So at this point, we've seen how to create a kit of parts that are a visual set of favorites. This can go quite extensively, much further for example, if we look at the interactive legends that are in MasterTemplate, you'll see whole huge categories of elements very carefully arranged. So here's a group of walls for example. And you can see that even in this very small area, I've got two different types of walls. [16:55]

I've got a piece of wall here that has got insulation, and a similar wall but without the insulation next to it, so there's 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 different walls in this very small area. Each one carefully labeled. So by spending some time to create your own legend, you can easily develop very extensive array of parts to work with. [17:26]

Now let me just show you, again, another way that we can work with this. Let's say that we created this whole set of these, and we wanted to turn this into an external Module file. So I've got a number of these elements selected, and instead of copying them, I'm going to use a different command under the File menu. It is File, External Content, Save Selection As Module. So this will take whatever I've got selected, and it will save it as a .mod file. [18:04]

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Now sometimes, if the elements are actually independent, as opposed to this Interactive Legend that I'm working with right now, you'll have an option that says, "Replace Selection With This Hot Link Module File". You don't want to use it in this particular case. So if you're following along on your own project, make sure that that's turned off. And I'll just call this "Legend Test 3". And go to the same folder that I was in, here, and save it. [18:36]

Now I'll switch back to the other file. So here in this other file, I'm going to delete the elements that I had previously put in. And I'll go and place the new, much more extensive module. So I'll use that same Master Layer. And I'll have to choose the Hotlink instead of the "Legend test 2". I'm going to go and select the "Legend Test 3" which is the bigger one. And say OK. [19:15]

So you can actually have multiple Hotlinks in a file, and this is the one that I'm using right now. Number three. And I'll place it. And when I bring this in, I'll have a choice of where I want to locate it. And now in this file, I've got the whole kit of parts. So if I wanted to pick a wall type out, I can easily go and say, I'd like to use this particular wall type, and then move back to the working area and perhaps draw some walls of that type. [19:57]

Now this extensive kit of parts does make it a little bit awkward to work with, because we have to zoom out, and then zoom into an area where we might find some components, and then we can use the eyedropper to pick up something like this chair here. And we'll have to go back to our previous view perhaps, and then go place it. And so we have to do a lot of zooming around to go back and forth. [20:30]

So in the next training series, or the next training lesson, I will be showing you one further development on Interactive Legends that we pioneered in MasterTemplate. But that you can develop for your own legend if you want to use this. And that is a way that you can actually have the legend components in a worksheet or at least function as if they were in a worksheet and have two different windows that you can go back and forth so you don't have to zoom around in the plan window between your working area and the legend. You can go back and forth between the plan and the worksheet. So that'll be coming up in the next lesson in the best practices course. Thanks for watching.