ARRIS_USERS

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Welcome

Sigma Services is pleased to present the second issue of ARRIS_USERS. My goal in producing this newsletter is to provide you, the ARRIS user, with useful technica l and sales information and to assist you in becoming more productive with your ARRIS software. Topics will vary with each publication, but hopefully each newsletter will contain something of interest to both new and experienced users.

Sigma Services Update

The ARRIS community has kept me very busy this past year with ARRIS sales, technical support, data conversions and lots of ARRIS training requests. In June, I added a graphic artist (my son Jake) to the Sigma Services payroll. This has allowed me to expand my services to include two new offerings:

1. For those instances when you would prefer to have a colored version of your Elevations or Site Plans but don't have the energy or resources to get it done in time, let us quickly color them for you using Adobe Photoshop. We can even scan samples of the materials used for exterior finishes such as brick, rock, tile, shingles, etc. as well as realistic skies and backgrounds. It's amazing what a difference it can make and it's surprisingly affordable.

2. If you've been meaning to create a website for your company but never got around to enrolling in that HTML or Dreamweaver class, let us take a shot at creating it for you using your images and content. You might be surprised (in a good way) at how affordable it is.

For those of you unfamiliar with Sigma Services, here is an overview of the software sales and technical expertise we provide to the ARRIS community:

- ARRIS CAD Software Sales
- Expert InfoCAD Software Sales
- Beginning & Advanced ARRIS Training (on-site or off-site)
- Annual Telephone Support
- Database Conversions and Translations
- ARRIS CAD Implementation and Setup of Office Standards
- 2D and 3D Drafting Services
- Colored Renderings of your ARRIS Elevations
- Website and Logo Design

For more information about any of these services or to view sample renderings and website designs, please call or visit **www.sigmaserv.com.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of frequently asked questions that I have collec ted from numerous technical support calls and from the ARRIS Listserver. Hopefully you will find one or two that *you* were wondering about as well… thanks to all who contributed:

Q: Every so often, a repeated item that I place seems to be *offset* some distance from its origin point. Also, the problem seems to only occur in a specific database.

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A: The dreaded 'offset RI' problem can be easily fixed by resetting a little known RI offset value. To reset the RI offset value back to *zero*, type the following command at the ARRIS prompt line:

rip;;;0 <Enter>

(Note: As a brief explanation, *rip* is the old *repeated item parameters* mnemonic. The three semi colons serve to *enter* the command and choose the default values for the RI's current *scale* and *rotation*. The *zero* in this text string sets the offset value (of the third parameter) back to *no* offset.

Q Sometimes I am unable to use the F10 key to initiate the *Complex Window* option while editing. Is there a workaround or a fix for this?

A: Simply type the following at the ARRIS prompt line: **_escape=0**
Somehow the variable for the escape key was turned on (=1) without getting turned back off (=0).

Q: Occasionally when a sheet is loaded, the sheet appears to be in model space (i.e. the *workspace mode* box displays the word *Model* instead of *Sheet*) as if you were working in a viewport. How can I fix this?

A: Check the corresponding sheet file (such as *_a2.sht*) in the database directory using a text editor such as *Wordpad*. The problem is likely to be in the *work layer* line. You need to make sure that the work layer reference line includes the layer name that corresponds to layer number *–10* in your sheet similar to the line below:

*@*wk ;_a2_0.sht;*wk;;_a2.ly;24576;;

In this example, the name of layer –10 is *_a2*. If the work layer is set to a *model* layer, the sheet will open in *model space*.

Q: How can I add another layer in *sheet space* for placing things like revision bubbles that can be turned on and off independently of layers –10 and – 100?

A: There is an undocumented mnemonic command named *lyad_sht* that will allow you to add additional layers to a sheet. The new layer numbers must fall into a range between *–10 and –100.* You may wish to use an abbreviated combination of the *sheet name* and *layer content* as part of the new layer name so that it remains unique in the event that new layers are added to the same sheet or other sheets (example: *revs_a2.ly*).

Q: Is there a way to turn off my viewport boundaries so they don't display when they are translated to AutoCAD?

A: Salleh at Expert Infocad responds, "To the best of my knowledge, the AutoCAD viewport borders are displayed automatically by AutoCAD and cannot be turned *on* and *off*". However, Ronny Hart offered a workaround for this problem which i s to place your ARRIS viewports on a separate, specially created, sheet layer using the *lyad_sht* mnemonic (see question above) which can then be turned *off* for display in the translated AutoCAD drawing (.dwg) file.

Q: Is there a button I can add to my TOOLBAR menu that will quickly bring up the RI Pager menu and display my most commonly used RI library?

A: Sure. Just map the following command strings to any TOOLBAR menu button:

- :ril;std:your_library_name.ri [*std:* assumes library is in your *Standards* directory]
- :mn_riselect;setup [initiates RI Pager menu]
- :mn_riselect; [sets RI Pager menu
- ='lib' to *library* mode]

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Tips, Tricks & Handy Commands

- *Adding Custom Poche or Line Patterns To Your Smart Walls*

Ever needed to add a custom poche pattern such as *batt insulation* to your smart walls? Well it can be done, and it's not that difficult – just follow these steps:

1. In a generic database, such as *noname.db*, draw a rectangle to serve as a sample smart wall segment of a width and length that will adequately represent your new poche pattern (ex: 5 ½" x 10'-0"). For convenience sake, position the rectangle so that the lower -left corner is at database origin. Any pen and color will do at this point.

2. Now fill this *wall-shaped* box with your favorite poche pattern or custom line configuration at a scale and proportion that accurately represents how it should be displayed within a smart wall of similar dimensions. (Note: If you would like your pattern or cu stom lines to inherit the *current* color and/or pen each time it is placed, be sure to set your pen and/or color to *none* before drawing. If you are using a poche pattern, freeze the pattern after placement).

3. Next, erase the surrounding box lines so all th at remains is the custom wall pattern.

4. Load, or create, an RI library that resides in your *Standards* directory (and is accessible to all users) into which you will archive your new custom wall pattern.

5. Now make a repeated item using the remaining pattern . When prompted for the RI origin point, simply respond with the coordinate *A0* if you had previously placed the lower -left corner of the pattern at database origin. When prompted for the RI name, respond with *poch###* where ### is a number between *100* and *255* (inclusive).

6. This pattern number may now be specified as a valid *Poche Type* in the Custom Wall Designer when creating new smart walls that require this pattern.

- *Automatically Loading A Color Map With Your Database*

If you have ever wanted to automat ically load a customized color map (.cm) each time you load a particular drawing, try adding a line similar to this to the corresponding drawing (.dr) file:

```
*@cm      18;master.dr;cm;18;some_name.cm;l;;
```

Just make sure that the number in the 1st & 4th fie lds (*18*) is unique to the drawing file and not already used by another RI library or lettering font entry.

- *Push* and *Pop*

Here is a couple of old ARRIS mnemonic commands I still find very useful…

Let's say you are flipping back and forth between two ARRIS drawings because you can't remember some small detail from *Drawing A* which affects the completion of *Drawing B*, the one in which you are working.

Try opening *Drawing A* and zooming in to the area that contains the detail. Now type the *push* command. This will create a *screen save* of everything in the current screen display and store it in a buffer. This command has no prompts so you have to trust that something

has been saved. Now open *Drawing B* and resume your task. The next time you need to recall a certain detail from *Drawing A*, enter the *pop* command and the screen you saved with the *push* command will instantly reappear. When you're done reviewing it, use the *redraw* command and the temporary image will disappear until you type the *pop* command again. (Note: The image you *push* will be updated (overwritten) each time you enter the *push* command again. Exiting ARRIS will clear the buffer until the next session).

- *More Handy Mnemonic Commands*

  Display Commands

  - ***dpeb*** – *display everything backwards* – Displays entities in reverse order from the highest layer number to the lowest. Useful for viewing stacked entities on multiple layers.
  - ***dpea*** – *display everything in area* – Redraws (refreshes) only the entities in a user defined box. Saves time by not having to redraw the entire screen.
  - ***drf*** – *display reference* – Flashes the screen location of the current reference point.
  - ***dpN*** – *display pen number* – Displays all entities drawn in pen number (*N).* This command is typically preceded by the *clr (clear)* command which first darkens the screen. For example: *clr <Enter> dp4 <Enter>* darkens the screen and displays only entities drawn in pen #4. For pen numbers higher than 8, use *dpen* instead.
  - ***dly*** – *display layer* – Displays all entities drawn on a specified layer. This command is typically preceded by the *clr (clear)* command which first darkens the screen. For example: *clr <Enter> dly <Enter> 3 <Enter>* darkens the screen and displays only entities drawn on layer #3.
  - ***dxy*** – *display xyz coordinate* – Displays the *x,y,z* coordinate of any point by selecting the point with the cursor or keyboard entry. Handy for locating *database origin* (*0,0,0*) in *distance absolute* mode or displaying the *Z heights* of selected points in a 3D model.

  Text Commands

  - ***ctj*** – *change text justification* – Changes selected text to the current *justification* setting
  - ***ctf*** – *change text font* – Changes selected text to the current *font* setting
  - ***cts*** – *change text size* – Changes selected text to the current *size* setting
  - ***ctr*** – *change text rotation* – Changes selected text to the current *rotation* setting
  - ***ctp*** – *change text pen* – Changes selected text to the current *pen* number
  - ***ctc*** – *change text color* – Changes selected text to the current *color* number
  - ***ctu*** – *change text underline* – Changes selected text to the current *underline* setting
  - ***ctx*** – *change text string* – Changes selected text string to *user specified text string*

  Repeated Items Commands

  - ***riv*** – *repeated item view* – Darkens the screen and only redisplays entities which are repeated items. A *redraw* returns the previous display.
  - ***rid*** – *repeated item delete* – Removes specified repeated item from an RI library.
  - ***ricn*** – *repeated item change name* – Swaps the selected RI for the current RI.
  - ***rifx*** – *repeated item fix* – Recreates the display list for repeated items only. Often used after reloading a missing RI library.

- *Handy Control Key Functions*

  Use these functions by pressing the CTRL key together with the following letters:

  ARRIS 2001 Functions

  - ***Ctrl E*** – Initializes the *Extended* character set menu when placing text. Useful for placing special characters such as fractions, plus/minus symbol, diameter symbol, etc.
  - ***Ctrl R*** – Displays (at the prompt line) the last command input. Handy for displaying the name of the sigmac and/or prompt response stored behind selected buttons.

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- ***Ctrl X*** – Cycles counter-clockwise through all viewports placed on a sheet. Good for selecting a viewport for *work* while remaining in *sheet space (s*ensitive to *Lock By Sheet* and *Lock By Viewport* modes).
- ***Ctrl Z*** – Cycles clockwise through all viewports placed on a sheet (see *Ctrl X* for details).
- ***TAB*** & \ – Turns on the *cursor locking* feature in conjunction with XY Forcing.
- ***[****Square brackets****]*** – Rotates the cursor counter-clockwise and clockwise respectively. Great for dynamically rotating repeated, copied or moved items prior to placement. Cursor rotation increment is based upon current value set in *Preference* menu

New ARRIS 8.0 Functions
These can be set to emulate MS Windows functions via the *Preferences* menu.

- ***Ctrl F*** – Toggles continuous object snap mode *on* and *off*
- ***Ctrl N*** – Activates the *New Project/Database/Drawing/Sheet* menu
- ***Ctrl O*** – Activates the *Open Drawing/Sheet* menu
- ***Ctrl P*** – Activates the *Plot/Print* menu.
- ***Ctrl Q*** – Viewport/Winport cycle counter-clockwise
- ***Ctrl S*** – Activates the *Save* menu
- ***Ctrl Q*** – Viewport/Winport cycle clockwise
- ***Ctrl V*** – Paste from ARRIS clipboard
- ***Ctrl Y*** – Undo
- ***Ctrl Z*** – Redo

Microsoft Haikus

Having been erased,
the database you're seeking
must now be redrawn.

Stay the patient course.
Of little worth is your ire.
The network is down.

Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working.
Windows is like that.

ARRIS 8 Overview

Anxious to see what's new in the upcoming ARRIS 8 release? Well wait no longer. The following is a partial list of some of my favorite new features. For information on the many more features, software pricing and availability (when it's announced), please call or visit **www.sigmaserv.com**:

ARRIS 8 NEW FEATURES OVERVIEW

ARRIS CAD

- *Floating Point Coordinate Data* – Database points are now stored as double precision numbers instead of integers. This enhancement drastically improves the accuracy of coordinate data in **ARRIS 8**.
- *ARRIS Clipboard* – A user-specific *clipboard* has been implemented for copying and pasting entities between multiple ARRIS databases or between layers within the same database.
- *Notes* – A new ARRIS *notes* feature enhances the ability to manage, place and edit *notes* in both *text* and *keynotes* formats. User-defined, commonly used notes can even be stored in a *notes catalog*. Also included are new *leader* features for quickly placing single and multiple leader lines, both curved and straight.
- *Text Font & RI Library Auto-load* – Repeated item library and text font information is now stored with the entity when it is placed and is automatically loaded when absent.
- *Save As New Project* – A *Save As New Project* function has been added to the Save menu. Any or all components of the current project may be copied to a new project.

- *New Drawing Manager* – New functions have been added to the *Drawing Manager* for copying a series of layers from one floor to create a second set using the same layer naming structure. The *block* mode selection feature has also been added to several of the functions.
- *New Sheet Options* – When creating a new sheet, there is now an option to either create the sheet from a template (as before), or to copy an existing sheet from within the current database. With this option, you can swap a series of layers from one floor to another, similar to the new feature added to the *Drawing Manager* described above.
- *Text Fonts* – Text fonts are now referenced solely by name. The use of font designation letters *A — Z* has been discontinued. This eliminates confusion and more closely conforms to other software applications.
- *RI Catalog Manager* – A totally new *Repeated Item Catalog Manager* has been created to replace the previous function. Repeated Item Catalogs may now be edited using a new interface that allows easy visual creation and manipulation of *catalog* entries and *headings*.
- *Attributal Repeated Items* – Major enhancements have been made in the definition, placement and storage of attributal repeated items. The *Attribute* application submenu has been eliminated and all attribute functions are now executed from the *Repeated Item* menu.
- *And more new features too numerous to mention…*

ARRIS ARCHITECT

- *Wall Construction Tools* – Several new functions have been added to the Smart Walls Construction Tools menu including *regenerate wall* which is used to straighten out a series of collinear wall segments made crooked by moving one or more of wall endpoints.
- *Wall Alignment* – The s*ingle* and *running* wall commands now contain an F4 option (similar to *running dimension*) that offers three new choices for aligning the new wall with an existing wall.

ARRIS 3D

- *Solids Menu Construction Tools* – The Construction Tools menu under the Solids menu has been completely redesigned to more clearly present all of the complex 3D functions.

Software Buzz

- No *official* word yet on the release date for **ARRIS 8**, but Sigma Design is expected to announce the availability and pricing structure for their new product at the International ARRIS/BuildersCAD conference in San Antonio, November. 8 -10th.
- Update release **7.207** for the **Expert Translator** that includes improved support for translating True Type Fonts is due November 2nd.
- Update release **R1.02** for the **ARRISplus** is due November 7th. The enhancements and bug fixes include support for multi-level keynotes and advanced new routines to remove duplicates entities from drawings.
- A major new release of **CADminer R 5.7** is due Nov. 14th with a completely revamped user interface and a new wizard for automatically creating **CADminer** templates.

Well fellow users, I hope you found this second newsletter to be as informative as the first. If you have any questions about any technical services, support or software pricing contained within this second issue of **ARRIS_USERS**, please don't hesitate to call… *operators are standing by!*

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