



Getting the Most out of ArchiCAD Recommendations for New Users



Digital Vision Automation, Inc.
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www.digitalvis.com

Founding member of: The Virtual Building Group & The GDL Alliance

Dear ArchiColleague:

Thank you for taking the time to get started right with ArchiCAD.

We believe that ArchiCAD is one of the best investments you can make in your firm's productivity and we are dedicated to assisting you in mastering and maximizing its capabilities.

Your goals: To dedicate and discipline yourself to learn Archicad in the shortest time possible;
To become a *Digital Architect*.

Our goals: To collapse your learning curve to the shortest time possible;
To transmit years of technology and process knowledge, from our brains into yours, in the most efficient way possible.

Please take the time to read through this handbook, filled with recommendations and advice based on 16 years of ArchiCAD and digital architectural experience.

Feel free to contact us at any time if you need our help in any way. We are dedicated to assisting you become as successful as possible with ArchiCAD.

We hope this will be the start of a beautiful friendship!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John C. Stebbins'.

John Stebbins, Associate AIA
President, Digital Vision Automation, Inc.

714/865-4712

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Caitlin Leal'.

Caitlin Leal
Director of Customer Communications and Service

714/612-4547

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Winning ArchiCAD Attitudes

- Your training goal is to get to the point where you can use ArchiCAD as a creative tool and as an extension of your mind. This takes time and dedication. Don't give up.
- Inch by inch, anything's a cinch. Be patient with yourself and never stop learning.
- You are **building**, not drafting. Virtual Building (referred to by the industry as Building Information Modeling, BIM) is what ArchiCAD is all about.
- Don't worry; you can create anything you want, as long as you know how. And we are here to show you how.
- Just like in the construction process, some things are easy to build and other things are more difficult to achieve. The same is true in ArchiCAD. Don't expect everything to come at the press of a button. Like any tool, you have to learn to use it creatively.

Got Questions?

Digital Vision Quick-Contact Guide

Contact	Role	Phone	e-mail
John Stebbins	Sales/Training	714/865-4712 (cell)	john@digitalvis.com
Caitlin Leal	Sales/Customer Relations	714/612-4547	caitlin@digitalvis.com
Kevin Poulsen	First-line Training/Tech Support	602/361-7799	kevin@undecillion.com
Graphisoft Boston	NA Headquarters	800/344-3468	
Graphisoft Tech Support	Escalated Tech Support	800/238-3992	support@graphisoft.com

Tech support vs. Training support

To get your questions answered in the most efficient way possible, it is important to know if your question is training related or technical. A training question is related to "**how to**" do a certain procedure in ArchiCAD (How do I edit a slab?). Technical questions have to do with ArchiCAD performance or its interface with other devices (My ArchiCAD freezes upon launching the program. What do I do?).

- For training-related and “how-to” questions, call Kevin at 602/361-7799 or e-mail him at kevin@undecillion.com.
- For technical support questions, call Graphisoft at 800/238-3992 (available from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.). You can e-mail your questions to Graphisoft Tech Support at support@graphisoft.com. **Important:** to make sure your question is answered, we recommend that *you* take the responsibility to follow-up via phone or e-mail. Keep contacting until your question is answered; don’t give up.
- For customer service and sales-related questions or comments, call Caitlin at 714/612-4547 or e-mail her at: caitlin@digitalvis.com.

Three Strikes and You’re In

Digital Vision has a “Three Strikes and You’re In” training support policy. Here is the procedure we would like you to adopt if you can’t get an ArchiCAD task accomplished:

1. Try it; if it doesn’t work the first time...
2. Try it again; if it doesn’t work the second time...
3. Check the manual or go the “Help” menu to figure out on your own how to achieve your objective.

If, after the third “strike” you can’t get the procedure to work, call or e-mail Kevin at the above number.

No Spin (Your Wheels) Zone

Please don’t spin your wheels! After exhausting the above attempts, please contact us. Our goal is to keep you moving forward with our assistance when you really need it, but to help you become as self-sufficient as possible so that you don’t have to become overly dependent on us. If you have questions that can wait, write them down and bring them to the regular User Clinics.

What is GSReport (Bug Reporter)

GSReport (Bug Reporter) is a mini-program created by Graphisoft and available since version 6.5, found in your ArchiCAD folder, that you can run when instructed by Graphisoft Tech Support or when you crash. This program gleans valuable information from your computer and its settings that assists them in troubleshooting your computer and could lead them in discovering what might be the source of conditions where ArchiCAD crashes or performs irregularly. For more information, read the “About GS Bug Reporter” document in the ArchiCAD folder

Learn More On-line

- www.digitalvis.com: click on “Support”
- ArchiGuide Online: www.archiguide.com
- User TechTips: <http://www.graphisoft.com/support/ArchiCAD/archiguide/techtips.html>
- www.graphisoft.com: click on the “Support” tab and choose “ArchiCAD”
- ArchiCAD Technical Resource portal: <http://tr.graphisoft.com>

ArchiCAD-Talk Knowledge Exchange Forum

“ArchiCAD-Talk” is a world-wide ArchiCAD on-line forum, a free on-line user group where you can pose questions and get answers from across the world. You can join ArchiCAD-Talk Forum by

registering yourself on the <http://Archicad-Talk.Graphisoft.com> web site by clicking on the “Register” button on the upper right of the main Archicad-Talk web page.

Mastering ArchiCAD, a 12 Step Program

- 1. Attend a JumpStart Training.** We include a 7-hour complementary hands-on “Jump-Start” basics training with the purchase of ArchiCAD, held monthly in Irvine & San Diego, CA and Scottsdale, AZ.
- 2. Transfer your CAD skills** from other programs to Archicad skills. CAD principles are CAD principles...its just that different programs have different buttons terminology to accomplish the same things. Read our “Autocad/Archicad Cross-Training Guide.”
- 3. Start the *ArchiCAD 10 Interactive Training Guide workbook*.** Install the Training Guide files from Disk 2. It will place both Training Guide 1 & 2 menu items under the Help menu where you can conveniently launch them. **Hint:** click on the QuickTime icons to play movies.
- 4. Start your first project** by simply creating walls, doors, windows, slabs and furniture. Leave the roofs for later. Keep it simple, yet begin being productive.
- 5. Attend monthly User Clinics.** Start attending Digital Vision’s monthly ArchiCAD User Clinics. Consider the clinics free training and regular professional advancement.
- 6. Download tips and tutorials from www.digitalvis.com.** Click on “Support” and “ArchiCAD Tips and Tricks.” Start a personal ArchiCAD 3-ring binder notebook.
- 7. Take advantage of on-line learning.** Bookmark and visit:
 - ArchiGuide at <http://www.graphisoft.com/support/Archicad/archiguide>,
 - the FAQ section of <http://tr.graphisoft.com> and
 - Archicad-Talk at <http://Archicad-talk.graphisoft.com> regularly.
- 8. Complete the *ArchiCAD 10 Interactive Training Guide workbook*.** This will be your Intermediate self-training experience and will round out your over-all knowledge.
- 9. Get some in-house custom training.** “No Train, No Gain:” Schedule a custom in-house Intermediate or Advanced Training series with Digital Vision.
- 10. Start setting up your office templates** based on those found in ArchiCAD Templates/Additional Templates/MaxATS in your ArchiCAD folder (for assistance, print out and read *Intro to Office Standards* in the Graphisoft Documentation folder on your ArchiCAD install CD). For the latest version of the MaxATS templates, visit the Support > Downloads section of www.digitalvis.com

11. **Take advantage of “Project Assistance.”** We’ll hold your hand on a consulting basis on your first project. Once you complete an entire project in ArchiCAD and PlotMaker, the major learning curve will be behind you and the virtual building process will be internalized.
12. **Complete your first full project,** by using ArchiCAD throughout the entire architectural process: schematic design, design development, presentations and working drawings.

Repeat the Initial “JumpStart” Training

You may repeat this beginning class as many times as you want, or send new employees, as long as space permits. Call Caitlin at 714/612-4547 to pre-register and to verify the class will be held.

Jump Start Training Schedule and Locations (check our web site for dates):

- **San Diego**
9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Office of Christopher + Kacur Architects
2150 W Washington, Ste. 501, San Diego
- **Orange**
9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Thompson Building Materials Design Center
1716 Case St., Orange
- **Scottsdale, AZ**
9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Office of Digital Vision Automation, Inc.
7047 E. Greenway Pkwy, Ste. 250, Scottsdale

Attend our FREE monthly User Clinics to tune-up your ArchiCAD skills.

Push your limits, hone your skills, get answers to all of your questions, share your work, see what others are doing, enrich your self and others, have fun...

- **Costa Mesa:** first Thursday of every month
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Irwin Pancake Architects, 245 Fischer Ave., Ste. B2
(for more information, call Melisa Pence at 949/370-6037)
- **San Diego:** second Tuesday of every month
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
SPACE San Diego, 1531 Pacific Highway (across from the Star of India tall ship)
(for more information, call Phil Feinberg, User Clinic coordinator, at 619/309-9202)
- **Phoenix:** second Wednesday of the month
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Office of Digital Vision Automation, Inc., 7047 E. Greenway Pkwy, Ste. 250, Scottsdale
(for more information, call Brian Rice, User Clinic coordinator, at 480/609-0699)

Get Some Custom ArchiCAD Training...“No Train, No Gain”

Have laptops, will travel. We'll set up a training lab in your office. You provide the conference room and we provide the computers, projection system and training materials. One to four-day hands-on training programs are available, customized to meet your needs. \$750 per day.

Visit: http://www.digitalvis.com/other_training.php for details. Call Caitlin at 714.612.4547 to book your time with one of our instructors.

Project Assistance

Let us help you get started right on your first project. Call it professional hand holding. Once you understand ArchiCAD concepts and grasp the creative tools via our classes and clinics, you are ready to put your first project in the system. Once you get your first project in, you will be over the learning “hump” and your investment will really start to pay off. Call Digital Vision to book your time.

Read Additional Books on ArchiCAD

- *Step by Step Book & CD for ArchiCAD 10*, \$59.00 (available from Digital Vision)
- *Virtual Tutor for ArchiCAD 9 Training DVD*, \$120.00 (available from Digital Vision)
- *Illustrations in ArchiCAD*, \$25.00 (available from Digital Vision)
- *GDL Cookbook* (available from Objects Online)
- *Intro to Office Standards* (in the Graphisoft Documentation folder on your Archicad 9 install CD or download from the www.digitalvis.com web site)
- *Migration Guide* (free download from the www.digitalvis.com web site)
- *Project Framework*, \$49.00 (available from Objects Online)

Dedicate Yourself to Lifelong Learning

One of the great spin-offs of the high-tech digital revolution is that it necessitates a commitment to lifelong learning, given the ongoing evolution of the computer industry. If you are an AIA member, all of your learning experiences (Digital Vision trainings, User Clinics, tutorials, etc.) qualify for AIA LUs for your professional advancement.

Get Some Basic Computer Training

Think of your computer as your Virtual Office. You need to know how to properly run your office. You must be grounded in basic computer knowledge to take advantage of any CAD program and the other software tools necessary to run your office. Therefore, if you are new to computing and need to learn general computing skills, check with your local community college. They usually have low-cost introductory computer classes. Also, pick up a good introductory computer book based on the kind of computer and operating system you are using like:

Macs for Dummies or *Windows for Dummies*, both by IDG Books.

Digital Vision/Graphisoft Policies

What Keys Are For

ArchiCAD protection keys, sometimes referred to as dongles, enforce the copyright laws. Many high-end CAD companies deploy these devices to prevent illegal use of their software (e.g. formZ, 3D Studio Max, etc.) ArchiCAD will only launch if a key is properly plugged into a port on your computer. You can copy ArchiCAD on as many computers as you want, but it will only run on a computer where a key is present. Since version 7.0, Graphisoft has changed key vendors. We now use keys manufactured by Wibu (www.wibu.com). The USB version of these keys can be used on Macs and PCs interchangeably.

What to Do If Your ArchiCAD is Lost or Stolen

As of April 2001, Graphisoft adopted following policy in regards to lost or stolen Archicad keys:
The purchase of a license is intended for the perpetual use of ArchiCAD! The software, manuals, and serialized hardware protection device that comprise ArchiCAD represent a considerable investment in your business. In the unfortunate event that your software, protection key, or manuals are lost, stolen, or destroyed, you can purchase a replacement protection key and manual set for \$100 each. To obtain this, you must provide Graphisoft with a **notarized** letter on your company letterhead from a principal or officer at your firm, citing the approximate date the item(s) was lost, stolen, or destroyed, and a guarantee that it will never be used again. In the case of a theft, a copy of the police report is also required. Additionally, please indicate the ArchiCAD version, including the key number, if possible.

What to Do If Your Key Goes Bad or Malfunctions

If you consistently get a message that states “protection key not responding,” please contact Graphisoft directly and they will send you a replacement key via overnight mail.

Upgrades and Updates

About every year and a half, Graphisoft releases a major **upgrade** to ArchiCAD, which adds many new features and capabilities. Over the years, the average cost of upgrades has ranged between \$600 and \$700; these upgrades are released every year to year and a half.

From time to time between major upgrades, Graphisoft issues **updates** that fixes bugs and anomalies and improves efficiency and sometimes adds a few additional features. Updates are free to those who have the current version of ArchiCAD. Updates are always issued on-line for download at tr.graphisoft.com. To check to see if you have the latest update, go to the Help menu and choose “Check for updates.” Keys are upgraded electronically via <https://upgrade.graphisoft.com>.

Using Previous Versions of ArchiCAD with Your Current Key

Your current ArchiCAD key is designed to work with the current version of ArchiCAD. You cannot run a current version with an old key; you cannot run a previous version with a current key. However, located in a folder called “Support” on your installation CD are folders containing the last few versions of ArchiCAD that will run with a current key, enabling you to open older projects with a previous key, even though you have sent in your older key(s) when you upgraded.

Transferring or Selling Your ArchiCAD License

Graphisoft permits the transfer of ArchiCAD licenses, usually paid by the person to whom the license is being transferred to. If you wish to sell or transfer your license, the seller must draft a letter to Graphisoft stating that license/s are being transferred, with key numbers, the name, address, phone and e-mail of the person/firm the software is being transferred to. This letter should then be sent to Digital Vision and we will forward it to Graphisoft. Please advise the buyer that the fee for transferring a license is \$475. Please contact Digital Vision to facilitate the transfer process.

Referral Program: Help Us Spread the Word

If you refer a prospect to Digital Vision, we offer an incentive program that awards you “Digital Vision Credits” for each prospect referred that we have not already contacted. If that prospect buys ArchiCAD, then you will receive additional credits.

Prospect Referred = 50 DV credits

Prospect Referred & Closed = 200 DV credits

Credits are equal to one dollar that you can use to apply towards any of your CAD-related needs, including ArchiCAD libraries, add-ons, training sessions, upgrades, or even additional sites. Credits have no cash value. We maintain a spreadsheet running total of your referral credits.

You will find a Referral Form at the end of this handbook.

Recommendations

Beware of the “Brain Drain”

In a multiple person office, we would like to caution you about one or two people only maintaining the knowledge of ArchiCAD and your CAD office standards. What would happen if these “Knowledge Gatekeepers” were to leave or you had to let them go? With them would go one of your firm’s greatest assets: the knowledge of how your firm’s information systems are maintained and organized, including CADD operations. This we call the “Brain Drain.” To guard against this, we recommend that all architectural personal, especially the principals, learn ArchiCAD and have at least an intermediate level of CADD competence. Then, you will not be as dependent on “Knowledge Gatekeepers.”

Create Your Office Standards

Owning the best architectural CADD system in the world only gets you to maybe 50% of your ultimate office automation efficiency. The other 50% is based on how you use the CADD system and the how is all about creating office standards and procedures. We recommend that you establish a CADD Procedures Manual for your office. Please use the “CAD Office Standards Manual” outline in the Appendix to get started.

Font Recommendations

ArchiCAD can recognize any TrueType font you load into your operating system. If you are looking for an architectural hand-drawn font, consider the time-honored “Tekton” from Adobe (based on the hand lettering of West Coast architect Frank Ching), available at

www.linotype.com. Another popular architectural font is “Frank Lloyd Wright Eagle Feather,” available from P22 Type Foundry, www.P22.com.

Digital Vision recommends that if you choose hand-lettering fonts, use them for preliminary presentations and not for working drawings, which are technical documents. Since we are now in the “age of collaboration,” demanding file exchange with a variety of consultants and collaborators, use Arial or Times New Roman. They are easy to read and everyone has them on their computer, so there will be no need for font substitution that can cause “text shift” when CADD files are exchanged.

3rd-Party Add-ons and Library Objects

Contact Digital Vision for advice on how you can expand ArchiCAD’s capabilities via add-ons. There are thousands of library parts available world-wide to expand your object collection. We can advise you on libraries and add-ons to meet your needs. We are dealers for many of these add-ons and library collections.

Where to Get More Objects

- Directly from Digital Vision
- www.objectsonline.com
- www.gdlcentral.com
- www.webscape.com/GDL/GDL.html or call 626/793-7400 (they can create any **custom** object you desire; located in Pasadena)
- Learn to make your own GDL library parts by creating objects on-screen (download “How to Create Custom Library Parts” from the Digital Vision web site) or through scripting (download “A Taste of GDL” from the Digital Vision web site, both found in the Support/ArchiCAD Tips and Tricks section). Come to one of our periodic GDL classes. Join the GDL Alliance at www.gdlalliance.com, a world-wide movement of GDL authors and aficionados, co-founded by John Stebbins of Digital Vision.

Backing Up

We recommend that you back up your ArchiCAD and other important files regularly. For short-term back-up, secondary hard disks or DAT tape should be considered. We feel that the best long-term media for backing up files are CD ROMs. If your computer does not have a CDRW drive, we suggest that you get a CD ROM “burner” (they are so inexpensive now and CD ROM disks are very cheap). The file formats we recommend for long-term, multi-redundant storage of completed projects are:

- An ArchiCAD archive file of each project’s “virtual building” (these are .pla files created via the “Save as” command from the File menu)
- .plt files of your PlotMaker sheet layouts (these are generic HPGL2 files)
- .pdf files of your sheet layouts (these are universal PostScript files)
- Keep two copies of your important files and maintain one set of copies offsite (preferably a safe deposit box or at home), to protect against fire or theft.

Have a Back up Computer Available

You are now a digital architect and depend on having digital tools available to you at all times. If you are a sole proprietor of a small office, make sure you have another computer available to you

to run ArchiCAD in case your primary computer goes down. Best yet, make that computer a laptop.

Consider a Laptop Computer

ArchiCAD and a laptop computer create a mobile virtual architectural office! Now you can create anywhere and have a great multimedia platform for presenting your ideas to your client. Laptops (now called notebooks and many models are now marketed as desktop replacements) are very powerful and are now relatively inexpensive. **Minimum** recommended configuration: 15 inch screen, 2 GB RAM, OpenGL video card with 128 MB video RAM, 100 GB hard drive running at 7200 RPM if possible, a 600+ front side buss (FSB), a P4 or AMD Athlon processor, running at 2 plus GHz (or G5 PowerBook or MacBook Pro)., plus two min. USB 2.0 ports.

Also add a mouse, a keyboard, and a large monitor (or flat panel) for desktop use. At Digital Vision, we now do all our work and training via laptops...no more dinosaur desktops and monstrous monitors to drag around.

An added feature of working on laptops is that they have batteries, which means that if there is a power brown out/black out, you have a built-in uninterrupted power supply.

Retain a Computer Consultant

Every office needs someone they can turn to locally when their computer, network, or the operating system lets you down. We recommend that you have a consultant that you can turn to at all times who can help you troubleshoot or fix your computer, set up and maintain your network, set up and fine tune your plotter, etc. Digital Vision's role is to help you integrate ArchiCAD into your work flow and even though we know a lot about computer troubleshooting and welcome your questions, please don't rely on us to provide this function, since it is not our focus. We are aware of many fine computer consultants and systems integrators, so feel free to call us for recommendations in your area.

Fine Tune Your Plotter Before You Are On Deadline

When you get your first plotter or replace your old one, with the assistance of the company you bought it from or a networking professional, set it up and do some test plots **before** you are on deadline. Plotters are very technical and often finicky animals, so test your plotter on a few existing drawings or test sheets to make sure that plotter drivers are properly configured, line weights are correct and the plotter settings are configured properly at its menu panel. This will save you much frustration and embarrassment, so don't wait until you are under the gun to set up your plotter.

Collaborating With Other ArchiCAD Users

If you need to collaborate with others, the two most popular ways to exchange files is with Zip disks or CD ROM's. Flash USB memory sticks are also becoming popular (our favorite exchange device; they're cheap, fast, small, and really handy).

When exchanging files with other ArchiCAD users off site, make sure you make an **Archive** of your ArchiCAD project file (Save as... from the File menu and choose from the "Save as type:" pop-out menu "Archicad Archive Project"). An Archive consolidates your project, with all of the library parts you have used, into one file (creates a project file using the .pla file format).

Consider a 3-button Mouse (if you are a Mac user)

One of the nice things about the Windows environment is that you can use the right mouse button to click on things and get context-sensitive menu choices at your cursor. This same capability comes on a Mac if you Control-click, but if you get a 3-button mouse for your Mac, you can program the right button to act as if the Control button is held down while you are clicking on something, creating the effect of a right-click.

Expand Your Office with ArchiCAD

Contact Digital Vision when it's time to expand your office. We can provide:

- Additional licenses.
- Network keys.
- Leasing and financing available.

Classified Ads

Looking for work or need assistance? Have something computer-related to sell? Digital Vision maintains a free classified section on its web site. Go to www.digitalvis.com and click on "Classified." Fill in the on-line form and we'll post your classified ad ASAP.

Becoming a Digital Architect

Becoming a Digital Architect is a worthy and desirable goal. Being in command of ArchiCAD will take you a long way down this path, but you will get to the point where you will need to master complementary software as well. We recommend that you make it your goal to learn (or have someone in your office learn) the following software, to "round out" your digital capabilities:

Software	Capabilities	Price
Artlantis Render	higher-level rendering capabilities	\$595
Adobe Photoshop	image editing and photomontage for screen, web or print (cmyk)	\$599
Piranesi	Photoshop for Architects on steroids; allows you to create your won hand-drawn or painted styles for an "impressionistic" look	\$645
Adobe Photoshop Elements	image editing and photomontage for screen or web only (no cmyk)	\$99
Adobe Acrobat	creating scalable drawings, images, or documents that can be opened or printed from any computer	\$219
Adobe Illustrator	graphic design, logos	\$389
QuickTime Pro	movie editing	\$29
QuickBooks Pro	accounting, invoicing, financial analysis	\$195
Architecture Information Manager	Business management, control paperwork, project costs, time cards, billing, etc.	varies
Microsoft Powerpoint or Keynote (Mac)	slide shows and client presentations	\$450, all bundled as Microsoft Office XP
Microsoft Word	correspondence, contracts, specifications, transmittals, etc.	



Microsoft Excel	cost analysis, schedules	
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NOTE: The above policies, procedures and prices are subject to change without notice. With change being the only constant, change they will. Always contact Digital Vision for updated policy information.



Help Digital Vision continue the ArchiCAD momentum
DIGITAL VISION CUSTOMER REFERRAL FAX-BACK FORM

FAX to: 866/817-1899

or mail to address below

My following colleague(s) could benefit from ArchiCAD. Feel free to use my name when you make contact.

Your name:

Your phone:

Name of referral:

Firm name:

Phone:

The following information would be helpful to us, but only if you have it handy:

E-mail:

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP:

Relationship to referral:

Type of projects they do:

Software currently owned?

Name of referral:

Firm name:

Phone:

The following information would be helpful to us, but only if you have it handy:

E-mail:

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NOTES: