A Practical Guide to AutoCAD® Civil 3D® 2014

Rick Ellis

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About the Author

**Rick Ellis** has worked with and taught AutoCAD Civil 3D, along with Map 3D and other Autodesk products since the mid-90s. He is the Author of several critically acclaimed books on AutoCAD Civil 3D, Map 3D and Land Desktop.

Rick continues to use AutoCAD Civil 3D on projects in a production environment, in addition to teaching classes to organizations both large and small.

This practical background and approach has made him a highly rated speaker at Autodesk University, a member of the national speaker team for the AUGI CAD Camps and a sought after instructor by organizations around the world.

Rick can be reached at: rick@cadapult-software.com

About the Technical Editor

**Russell Martin** is an independent consultant who has worked with AutoCAD since 1985. He pioneered the position of Staff Geographer, and later served as CAD/GIS Manager at a multi-disciplinary engineering consulting firm. Russell has served as technical editor for many of Cadapult Software Solutions training books, and has co-authored and contributed to several other books on CAD, GIS and technical graphics software.

Russell can be reached at: russell@cadapult-software.com

Exercise Data

I would like to thank the City of Springfield, Oregon for providing the data for this book. The dataset provided is for illustration purposes only. While it is based on real world information to add relevance to the exercises, it has been altered and modified to more effectively demonstrate certain features as well as to protect all parties involved. The data should not be used for any project work and may not represent actual places or things. It is prohibited to redistribute this data beyond your personal use as a component of training.
A Practical Guide to AutoCAD Civil 3D 2014

Introduction
Congratulations on choosing this course to help you learn how to use AutoCAD Civil 3D 2014. The term "practical" is used in the title because this course focuses on what you need to effectively use AutoCAD Civil 3D 2014, and does not complicate your learning experience with unnecessary details of every feature in the product. Should you want to pursue aspects of features and functionality in greater detail than provided in this course, you are directed and guided to that information.

Each lesson contains the concepts and principles of each feature to provide you with the background and foundation of knowledge that you need to complete the lesson. You then work through real world exercises to reinforce your understanding and provide you with practice on common tasks that other professionals are performing with AutoCAD Civil 3D 2014 in the workplace every day.

You can take the lessons in this course in whatever order is appropriate for your personal needs. If you want to concentrate on specific features, the lesson for those features does not require that you complete prior lessons. With this course organization, you can customize your own individual approach to learning AutoCAD Civil 3D.

When you complete this course, you will be armed with the background and knowledge to apply AutoCAD Civil 3D to your job tasks, and become more effective and productive in your job.

Course Objectives
The objectives of this course are performance based. In other words, once you have completed the course, you will be able to perform each objective listed. If you are already familiar with AutoCAD Civil 3D, you will be able to analyze your existing workflows, and make changes to improve your performance based on the tools and features that you learn and practice in this course.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and work with Object Styles.
- Create, manage and apply Label Styles.
- Import and manage Points, and work with Point Groups.
- Create and edit Alignments.
- Define Parcels.
- Create and edit Profiles and Profile Views.
- Create Corridors and extract information from them.
- Sample Sections and plot Section Views.
- Import and leverage GIS Data in your Civil 3D projects.
- Use Queries to manage and share data.
- Layout Pipe Networks and edit them in plan and profile.
- Layout Pressure Networks and edit them in plan and profile.
- Work with the Grading tools.
- Create reports for Civil 3D objects.
- Calculate Volumes.
- Share project data with Data Shortcuts.
Prerequisites
Before starting this course, you should have a basic working knowledge of AutoCAD. A deep understanding of AutoCAD is not required, but you should be able to:

- Pan and Zoom in the AutoCAD drawing screen.
- Describe what layers are in AutoCAD, and change the current layer.
- Create basic CAD geometry, such as lines, polylines and circles.
- Use Object Snaps.
- Describe what blocks are, and how to insert them.
- Perform basic CAD editing functions such as Erase, Copy, and Move.

If you are not familiar with these functions, you can refer to the AutoCAD Help system throughout the course to gain the fundamental skills needed to complete the exercises.

Conventions
The course uses the following icons and formatting to draw your attention to guidelines that increase your effectiveness in AutoCAD Civil 3D, or provide deeper insight into a subject.

The magnifying glass indicates that this text provides deeper insights into the subject.

The compass indicates that this text provides guidance that is based on the experience of other users of AutoCAD Civil 3D. This guidance is often in the form of how to perform a task more efficiently.
Exercises
The exercises in this course have been designed to represent common tasks that are performed by civil engineers, surveyors, designers and drafters. The data included in the exercises are typical drawings, point files and other data used by professionals like you. You work with drawings, point files, aerial photos, GIS data, and much more; as you work through a road design project that also includes a sewer extension and detention pond.

Exercises provide higher level process information throughout the exercise tasks. You are given information about not only what to do, but why you are doing it. In most cases, an image is included to help guide you.

Installing the Datasets
The CD included with this book contains all of the datasets required for the exercises.

There are two ways to install the dataset:
- Use the Setup.exe.
- Unzip the files.

Use Setup.exe
Double click setup.exe and follow the instructions for installation.

Unzip the Files
Unzip AutoCAD Civil 3D Training.zip directly to the C drive. The zip file will create the following folder structure:

C:\A Practical Guide\Civil 3D 2014\n
Several folders are created below the Civil 3D 2014 folder, that contain the source data you will use for the exercises in this book.

A folder called Chapter Drawings is also created that contains a drawing that can be used to begin each exercise. This will allow you to jump in at the beginning of any exercise in the book, and do just the specific exercises that you want, if you do not have time to work through the book from cover to cover. The drawings in the Chapter Drawings folder are not necessary and only need to be used if you want to start in the middle of the book, or if you want to overwrite any mistakes that you may have made in previous chapters.

Two drawing templates called _Practical Guide Training by Style.dwt and _Practical Guide Section.dwt are also available in the template folder.
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5 - Building a Survey Quality Surface

In this chapter you will use points and breaklines from the survey data to create a survey quality existing ground surface. You will learn ways to leverage the use of Point Groups to efficiently build and edit a Surface by editing the source data and also editing the Surface itself. You will also explore various ways of editing and analyzing surfaces including the use of the preliminary surface to add extra data beyond the limits of the survey. Finally, you will learn to display and label contours working with Surface Styles and Contour Label Styles.

Creating an accurate Surface is one of the most important parts of any Civil 3D project. The Profiles, Sections, Corridor Models, and Grading as well as Volume Calculations that you create later in the project are all based on this Surface. This chapter will explore ways to create an existing ground surface from survey data as well as ways to check, display, analyze, and edit the surface.

Lesson: Building Surfaces from Survey Data
In this lesson, you will learn to build a surface from different types of surface data.

Lesson: Editing Surfaces
In this lesson, you will learn the concepts and process of editing surfaces by editing the source surface data and by editing the TIN itself.

Lesson: Surface Analysis
In this lesson, you will learn different ways to preform surface analysis that include elevation banding, slope analysis, and direction arrows.

Lesson: Working with Contours
In this lesson, you will learn to display and label contours by working with surface styles and surface label styles.
5.1 Lesson: Building Surfaces from Survey Data

Introduction
Any time you build a surface the most important step is to understand what data you have available to work with. In this chapter you will work with points that will be managed with a Point Group and breaklines that you will create based on some of those same survey points.

Key Concepts
Concepts and key terms covered in this lesson are:

- Surface
- Points
- Point Group
- Breaklines
- Surface Styles

Objectives
After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Create a Point Group for use building a Surface
- List the types of data that can be used to build a Surface.
- Describe what a breakline is.
- Draw and define breaklines.
Types of Surface Data
Surfaces can be built from a combination of many different types of data:

- Boundaries
- Breaklines
- Contours
- DEM files (Digital Elevation Models)
- Drawing Objects
- Point Files
- Point Groups
- Point Survey Queries
- Figure Survey Queries

Boundaries
A boundary is a closed polygon that limits the triangulation of a surface.

Boundary Types:
- Outer
  - Defines the outer boundary of a surface
  - Triangles outside of this boundary are removed
- Show
  - Displays the triangles inside the boundary
  - Can be used inside of a Hide boundary
- Hide
  - Removes triangles inside of the boundary
  - Creates a hole in the surface
  - Can be used for building footprints to keep contours from crossing through them
- Data Clip
  - Keeps data outside this boundary from being added to the surface
  - Must be added before other surface data or moved up in priority in the surface definition
  - Useful for limiting the size of large datasets

Non-destructive breakline boundaries
Outer, Show and Hide boundaries have the option to be created as non-destructive breaklines. When this option is enabled it trims the TIN lines at the boundary. When it is not used it erases all the TIN lines that touch the boundary.

This can be a good option if you have good surface data on each side of the boundary as it will cut a clean and straight boundary through the surface. However, if this option is used on an outer boundary where all of
the surface data is inside the boundary and the only triangle touching it are long and inaccurate, then you may be left with short triangles along the edge that are still at the wrong slope.

**Breaklines**

Breaklines define grade breaks in a surface. They are lines in a TIN that represents a distinct interruption in the slope of a surface; like road centerlines, curbs, gutters, streams, tops and toes of slopes, or any other grade break. No triangle in a TIN may cross a breakline (in other words, breaklines are enforced as triangle edges).

**Types of breaklines:**

- **Standard**
  - Defined by selecting 3D polylines, 3D lines, feature lines, or splines

- **Proximity**
  - Defined by selecting a 2D polyline, feature line or spline
  - The vertices of the breakline are snapped to the nearest point in the TIN, or closest proximity
  - Accuracy is dependent on how close the vertices of the proximity breakline are to the points in the TIN
  - Can be very accurate and efficient if you have drawn the selected object from point to point

- **Wall**
  - Defined by selecting 3D polylines, 3D lines, feature lines, splines or by selecting points.
  - You enter the elevation on each side of the wall at each vertex

- **From file**
  - Can be imported from an ASCII FLT file

- **Non-destructive**
  - Break the triangles in the TIN without changing the slope of the lines
Contour data in the form of 2D polylines can be added to your surface. Weeding factors can help you skip over extra, unnecessary vertices when the data is added to the surface. While supplementing factors will allow you to sample extra points off long contours with minimal vertices. Since by its nature, contour data tends to create flat triangles that do not accurately reflect the surface, there are several options to minimize those flat triangles. In most cases it is a best practice to enable all four options to minimize flat areas when adding contour data to a surface.

DEM Files
DEM files (Digital Elevation Models) are grid based surfaces. This is a format that is used by many different Civil, Survey, and GIS programs. DEM files are a format that is commonly used by the USGS and there is a tremendous amount of data that is available online for free in this format.

Drawing Objects
AutoCAD object that have elevations can be used to build a surface. These objects include:

- Points
- Lines
- Blocks
- Text
- 3D Faces
- Polyface
Point Files
ASCII point files can be imported directly into the surface. This is a good option for large datasets or points that you do not need in the drawing for anything other than building a surface.

Point Groups
Point groups can be used to add a specific selection set of points to a surface. It may be common that some of the points in your drawing are not related to a surface. For example, you would not want to include a point representing the invert of a manhole in the surface. A point group consisting of only surface related points is an efficient way to add only the appropriate points to the surface.

Point Survey Queries
Point Survey Queries are a dynamic reference to a selection of survey points that are included in a survey database. If the points in the survey database are updated, the surface will be marked as out of date and will use the updated values when it is rebuilt.

Figure Survey Queries
Figure Survey Queries are a dynamic reference to a selection of survey figures that are included in a survey database. If the figures in the survey database are updated, the surface will be marked as out of date and will use the updated values when it is rebuilt.

Exercises: Build a Surface from Survey Data
In these exercises, you create a new surface from point group data. You will draw breaklines from survey points and add them to the surface. Then you will view the surface in the Object Viewer to examine it in 3D from different angles.

You do the following:

- Create a Point Group of surface related points.
- Create a Surface.
- Draw Breaklines.
- Add Breaklines to the Surface.
- View the Surface in 3D using the Object Viewer.
5.1.1 Creating a Point Group to Be Used As Surface Data

Before you create the surface you need to create a Point Group that will be used to select only the points that you want to use for the surface data. Points that should not be included in the surface should not be included in the point group. Points for utility potholes or points that are part of the project for horizontal control and do not have accurate surface elevations are examples of points that should not be included in this group.

1. Continue working in the drawing Design.dwg.

This drawing contains the Points, Alignment, Parcels, and Surface from the previous chapters. Currently only the parcel lines and labels are displayed.

2. On the Prospector tab of the Toolspace, right-click on Point Groups and select ⇒ New.

3. Enter Topo for the Name.

4. Select the Raw Desc Matching tab in the Point Group Properties dialog box.

5. Select the description keys AEC, DT, DWYRK, DWYAC, GND, LP, TOE, and TOP.

6. Click <<OK>> to create the Point Group.
5.1.2 Creating the Survey Surface

1. On the Prospector tab of the Toolspace, right-click on Surfaces and select \( \rightarrow \) Create Surface.

2. Confirm that TIN surface is selected as Type.

3. Enter Survey for the Name.

4. Set the Style to Border & Contours.

5. Confirm the Surface layer is set to C-TOPO-Survey.

This layer name that includes the surface name as a suffix was setup in an earlier exercise through the Drawing Settings command.

6. Click \(<\text{OK}>\) to close the Create Surface dialog box and create the surface.

At this time the surface has not been given any data so it is not displayed. However, it has been created and you will see it in the Prospector. This is where you will access the surface definition commands and add data to the surface.

5.1.3 Adding Point Group Data to a Surface

Point information contained in a Point Group can be added to a Surface through the Prospector. Once the Point Group is added the Surface is automatically rebuilt to incorporate and display the new data.

1. On the Prospector tab of the Toolspace, expand Surfaces.

2. Expand the Surface Survey.

3. Expand the Definition node under Survey.

4. Right-click on Point Groups under Definition and select \( \rightarrow \) Add.

5. Select the Point Group Topo.

6. Click \(<\text{OK}>\) to add the point group data to the surface.

The surface is built with the point group data and displays 5 foot contours colored brown and green with a yellow border. This display is controlled by the surface style you selected when you created the surface. If the surface is not visible turn on and thaw the layer C-TOPO-Survey.
5.1.4 Creating Breaklines by Point Number

Civil 3D does not use special commands for drawing and defining breaklines the way that Land Desktop and many other programs do. Instead, you draw the breaklines with standard AutoCAD commands, like the 3D Polyline command, and then define these objects as breaklines after they have been drawn.

1. Create a new Layer named Breaklines-Survey and set it Current.

2. Thaw the layers PNTS-AEC, PNTS-BREAK, and PNTS-DRIVEWAY.

3. Freeze the layers C-ANNO, C-PROP, C-PROP-LINE, C-PROP-TABL, EX-WETLAND-LINE, and PNTS-WTLND.

The drawing will now display the surface as contours and points that you will use for breaklines. You may need to Regen to clean up the display.

4. Enter 3P at the command line to start the 3D Polyline command.

5. Enter ‘PN to change the prompt to Point Number.

Alternatively, you can also select the Point Number button from the Transparent Commands toolbar.

6. At the command line enter: 1408-1447 and [Enter] to draw the line.

7. [Esc] to end the Point Number prompt.

8. [Enter] to end the line.

9. Enter 3P at the command line to start the 3D Polyline command.

10. Use the points in the following list of points to draw the breaklines the same way that you drew the previous line. Be sure to use the Point Number transparent command to change the prompt to Point Number and to end the command completely after drawing each line. Also be sure to [Enter] after each non-sequential point number as shown below in the list.

**Point Numbers**

1448-1486
1008-1021
1191-1209
1226-1257
1258-1278
1281-1324
1295 [Enter] 1661-1710
1622-1660 [Enter] 1294
1286 [Enter] 1348-1398 [Enter] 1287
1022-1074
1075-1105
1155-1158
1159-1160
1153-1154
1143-1151
1130-1142
1121-1129
The new 3D Polylines will look like the graphic below. However, they have not yet been added to the surface as breaklines.

5.1.5 Creating Breaklines by Point Selection

1. On the Prospector tab of the Toolspace, select the Point Group Breakline.

This will display a list of all the points used in the surface in the preview window at the bottom of the Prospector, if the Prospector is docked. If the Prospector is not docked it will display on the side.

2. Find point number 1110 in the preview window.
3. Right-click on point 1110 and select Zoom to. You may want to zoom out some to see the surrounding points.
4. Enter 3P at the command line to start the 3D Polyline command.
5. Enter 'PO to change the prompt to Point Object.

Alternatively, you can also select the Point Object button from the Transparent Commands toolbar.

6. Pick point 1110 from the screen.
7. Then pick points 1109, 1108, 1107, and 1106 to draw a breakline between the TOP points toward the northeast corner of the site.

When using the Point Object transparent command to draw lines between point objects you will not see the rubber band line that you normally see with the line command.

8. [Enter] to end the Point Object prompt.
9. [Enter] again to end the line.
10. Starting at point 1116, define a second breakline along the bottom of the ditch using the 'PO transparent command and points 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, and 1120.

11. [Enter] to end the Point Object prompt.

12. [Enter] again to end the line.

13. Starting at point 1111, define a third breakline along the bank of the ditch using the 'PO transparent command and points 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, and 1115.

14. [Enter] to end the Point Object prompt.

15. [Enter] again to end the line.

16. Save the drawing.

The three new 3D Polylines will look like the graphic below. However, they have not yet been added to the surface as breaklines.
5.1.6 Adding Breaklines to the Surface


2. Pick one of the breaklines and one of the contours from the surface to isolate the Breaklines-Survey and C-TOPO-Survey layers.

3. Confirm that the Definition under the Surface Survey is expanded on the Prospector tab of the Toolspace.

4. Right-click on Breaklines under the Definition and select ⇒ Add.

5. Enter a Description for the breakline set of Collected in Field.

6. Confirm that the Type is set to Standard.

   You will not use any Weeding or Supplementing factors in this exercise. These options allow you to remove or add vertices to breaklines respectively. These are useful options if you have breaklines that have been over digitized and may have thousands of extra vertices very close together or if you need to add vertices to a breakline that has long distances between vertices.

7. Click <<OK>>.

8. Select the Breaklines with a crossing window.

9. [Enter] to add the breaklines to the surface.

The surface is now updated to include the new breakline data.

10. Select Ribbon: Home ⇒ Layers ⇒ Unisolate to restore the previous layer state.

11. Save the drawing.
5.1.7 Viewing the Surface

The Object Viewer is a separate window that will allow you to view a selected object or objects in 3D and rotate them in real-time.

1. Pick one of the contours to highlight the entire surface.

2. **Right-click** and select ⇒ **Object Viewer**.

3. In the **Object Viewer**, click and drag while holding down the left mouse button to rotate the surface in 3D.

Once you rotate to a 3D view the contours will change to 3D faces. This is controlled by the surface object style.

4. If the surface is not shaded right-click and select **Visual Styles ⇒ Shades of Gray**.

5. Continue to rotate the surface to examine it from different angles. You will notice a large hole, or spike, in the surface.

6. When you are finished viewing the surface close the object viewer window to return to the drawing editor. You should also be able to identify this hole by looking at the contours in plan view.

In the next lesson you will learn to edit the surface to fix this and other errors.