

Getting the Most Use From the Xzibitware Tool Kit

The Xzibitware Tool Kit is a collection of very helpful drawing creation tools and tools that are used to Tag parts with attribute sets, help annotate parts, count and group parts, and report them via printed reports, spreadsheets, and custom drawing BOM lists.

Different Tools for Different User Needs:

As with any set of tools, they will be used in different ways by different users based upon their needs. For those who build mainly custom exhibits with virtually no 'System' parts, they may never use tools like *AutoPanel*, *AutoRail*, *AutoWall*, or *AutoFabricFrame*. But those very tools along with *Custom Panel*, *Extrude-On-Path*, and *Custom Structure* (which also works well for creating custom panel-like objects) will be used regularly by those who do use 'System' parts. For Custom Exhibits, the Tool Kit includes *Extrude-On-Path* (custom railing, extrusions, shapes all of which are tagged so they can be detected and reported), *Custom Structure*, *Custom Panel*.

There is also a built-in *CounterTop* generator to help create common countertop shapes.

For Any Exhibit Type, a Common Need Among Users:

What all users will find helpful, however, will be the ability to quickly and easily Tag parts with part category-specific pre-structured attribute sets that are linked to user-created records that include information such as part weight, part cost, part description, color, length, width, part number and so on. This is what makes ordinary exhibit parts, "Smart", so that they can be detected, counted, grouped, searched for, annotated, and reported.

For the task of tagging parts, the Xzibitware Tool Kit includes the *Block Builder* tool, *QwikBlock*, and *AutoBlock* tools. These Tools work with any kind of part not just those that are considered 'System' parts. The Tool Kit automatically tags all new parts that are created by its Tools that are mainly for those who use 'System' parts. Those Tools were named above.

Annotating Parts in Exhibit Drawings Regardless of Exhibit Type:

Whether you create Custom Exhibits, 'System', or Hybrid Exhibits, from time to time you'll need to annotate parts in detail drawings. This is especially true for one-of-a-kind custom exhibit parts and assemblies. To help Annotate exhibit parts, Xzibitware includes the *Drawing Annotator* tool. The Tool makes it possible to label parts without typing. The Tool also provides several labeling options such as added suffixes and/or prefixes to part labels, auto-incremented part label extensions, fixed label extensions, leader lines, enclosing boxes or circles or no enclosure for labels, and single or multi-label label sequencing, and so on.

Everyone Needs Material Lists:

Regardless of Exhibit type, you'll also need to list the parts going into an exhibit in a clear, consistent, easy-to-understand manner so your production Shop knows what they'll be working with to create an exhibit. Xzibitware Tool Kit provides a bi-directional interface to Excel to create materials reports inside Excel or as a custom tabular list inside AutoCAD.

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Everyone Needs Material Lists, continued:

The Tool Kit also provides individual part category-specific (metal, panel, accessory, other item type) "Pull-Sheets" and Costing Reports as well as Cost--Weight--Labor Time Summaries, Fabrication Labor reports, material Square Footage needed, and user-customizable in-drawing tabular BOM Lists (lets you create a 100 item detailed list of Metal parts in about 2 seconds, for example).

The Easiest and Fastest Way to Get Started with Xzibitware

A "Quick Start" Exercise Using Your Parts in Your Drawings

Let's assume that at this point, you mainly want to be able to report the parts found in your drawings so you don't have to sit at your workstation counting and grouping parts manually and typing for 30-45 minutes to create a BOM List or a printed materials report.

We will also assume that the Xzibitware Tool Kit has been installed and set up per the instructions in our Illustrated User Guide (a copy of this was included in your product download -- it can also be viewed from the User Interface page on our web site: www.malekko.com).

Using the Illustrated Guide for installing the Xzibitware Toolbar, we'll assume that this toolbar is now in place inside the drawing editor too. The toolbar gets to the most commonly used tools...the easiest way without wading through menus unless you use our command Menu Bars.

Now, it really would be helpful if you could take 8 or 9 minutes to view the tutorial that is an "Introduction to Xzibitware". But, you're probably in a big hurry to get started so maybe you can make time to see it later. This video really makes it clear how the part tagging, part detection, and part reporting processes all work together.

A Note About Part Categories:

The Xzibitware Tool Kit considers that all parts belong to a specific Category. Those Categories are Metal, Panel, Accessory, and Other Item type (a catch-all for any part that doesn't seem to fit into any of the first 3 categories).

As a general practice, all metal parts are categorized as being Metal. All panel or panel-like parts are categorized as being a Panel. Items such as locks, hinges, door handles, slides, tracks, pins, tubing, conduit, piping, shelf brackets, light fixtures, and so on are categorized as being an Accessory. Items like floor tiles, ceiling tiles, countertops, doors, cabinet sides/front/back, motors, turntables, waterfalls, assemblies of other parts, and so on are categorized as being Other Item types.

Just keep these guidelines in mind as you convert your parts into Xzibitware-compatible "Smart" parts.

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...So, here we go. Take any one of your AutoCAD drawings and load it into the AutoCAD Drawing Editor. Save this drawing under a new name so that it doesn't interfere with the original drawing in any way...just a common sense practice.

Start with any part in the drawing and use the *QwikBlock* part tagging tool to make that part "Smart". The *QwikBlock* Icon has the letters "QB" on it on the Toolbar.

In this process you will be adding a pre-structured attribute set to the set of 1 or more entities that make up this particular part. A category-specific data record will also be created that contains information about the part that is subject to change such as the part's color, catalog number (which you should provide), description, weight, and especially cost, where part cost is fixed, not dynamically calculated.

Once you finish creating this first "Smart" part, select the Icon on the Xzibitware Tool Bar that looks like a "?" question mark. This is the *Symbol Query* tool. It will let you view all the information that the Tool Kit knows about this part. This is the same info that can be shown later in a BOM List.

Just to make this starting exercise more interesting, you might want to focus on selecting parts that fit into just one category..metal, panel, or other item, for example. That way, you get several items grouped together and sorted in a parts list later.

Once you've tagged at least 8 to 10 parts, select the "eXTRACT Drawing Data" Icon on the Xzibitware Toolbar. It's just to the left of the "RG" (regen drawing) Icon. A data entry form will appear. It's entitled "Job Code - Booth# Entry form".

Enter 100 into the Job Code entry field. Enter 100 into the Booth# entry field. These values match the Job Code field and Booth# field values in a default Exhibit Project record provided as a sample for new users. These project records make it easy to keep information about each exhibit project such as designer and A/E names, booth target cost, comments about the exhibit, Show Name-Company Name, name of Venue where the exhibit will appear, and Design Completion Date. Right now, we just want Xzibitware to detect, count, and group all the tagged parts in your drawing.

Press the "OK" button at the bottom of the form. The form will close, the status of the data tables will be checked, and then a message window will appear with the message,

"Ready to Process Symbols". Press the "OK" button at the bottom of the form. A process status window will appear temporarily on the screen. It will show the various stages of activities going on to process part information. In just a few seconds, this status window will disappear and a new message window will appear informing you that all information for data reports is now available. Press the "OK" at the bottom of this window to close it.

To see a quick parts list created, select the Icon on the Toolbar that looks like a printer. It's located just to the right of the "RG" (regen) Icon on the Xzibitware

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Toolbar. You will next see a new form entitled "Report Selection". From the "Single Standard Reports" Section of the form, pick the category you used when tagging your parts. Then, pick the "Preview" button for that Report Section. A "Fractional Units Override" form will appear. Go ahead and press the "OK" button at the bottom of this form. This closes the form and launches a Report Preview form that includes numerous options.

At this point, you should be looking at a preview of your finished report. There is an Icon on this report form that lets you print the report to a printer. There is also an output option selection Icon that lets you select some other output device (like a PDF file, for example).

Now this exercise may have seemed like a lot of steps to get a materials report, but, after you've done this a few times, it will only take 3 or 4 seconds to get a report. It's so much faster than counting parts by hand and manually creating a materials list.

There are a lot of other Tools and Tool Options available to you. This was just a "Quick Start". There are Video Tutorials for most of these Tools. The User Guide on our web site (on the User Interface page) covers virtually all of the Tools so that you can get a quick understanding of what each one does and how it works.

We hope this information will help you get started more quickly with the Xzibitware Tool Kit. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or suggestions concerning our product (use the "Contact Us" page on our web site). Richard Maddox, Chief Developer of Xzibitware Tool Kit